Shifting the Focus
in Anti-Homophobia Education

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Adult Education, Community Development
and Counselling Psychology
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
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0-612-29151-0
ABSTRACT

Shifting the Focus in Anti-Homophobia Education
Master of Arts, 1997
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This study identified some of the pitfalls of modernist constructs in critical education by examining the actual practices of anti-homophobia education in a social service context. Most anti-homophobia education is premised on the belief that the problem of homophobia stems from the lack of information about the other.

This study examined through a focus group and interviews the ways in which anti-homophobia educators interrogate issues of sexual identities and categories, and the use of personal experience, through the practices of panel discussions, disclosures, and using ‘out’ lesbian and gay educators. Central to this discussion is the way in which oppression and domination are understood and taken up in the education.

This research found that while educators were cognizant of the limits of the modern subject and possessed an awareness that tolerance does not disrupt, they struggled to find a pedagogy that would push beyond the limits of tolerance, and take up some postmodern implications.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There is a collective sigh of relief at the completion of this thesis. I have received an abundance of support and encouragement throughout this challenging and exciting process. First, I would like to thank members of my thesis committee: Dr. Sherene Razack, my advisor, for your thought provoking academic work that stimulated this study and for your insightful feedback; and to Dr. Janice Ristock who challenged me through numerous discussions to pursue the concepts in my thesis. I could not have completed this process without your input and analysis. I am also grateful for the constant support and encouragement you provided me as a friend throughout this process.

To all the educators who participated in this research, the energy and interest you brought to this discussion was invaluable. Your willingness to struggle to find new ways of teaching about homophobia and heterosexism is inspiring. I hope that these discussions continue.

The patience and encouragement I received from both friends and family helped me to carry on. To my friends, Gio and Karen, I am thankful for your constant encouragement, humour and for your numerous gifts of chocolate and coffee that helped to sustain me.

Finally to my partner, Jayne, your unwavering support and belief in my ability to complete this thesis, kept me focused.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Anti-homophobia education attempts to speak to the individual and systemic discrimination that gay, lesbian and bisexual people live. For some, a component of the education is also to instruct audiences about the heterosexist system that sustains and promotes discrimination and hatred of these identities. In Canada, anti-homophobia education became more focused in the 1970's, and operated within self-help groups that were forming at the time. According to the Canadian AIDS Society (1991), these newly formed groups began to confront and name gay and lesbian oppression. At this time, the education focused mainly on speaking engagements where gay and lesbian volunteers would speak to audiences about what it was like to grow up and feel different from societal expectations and norms. Speakers shared with audiences their lives as out gays and lesbians, their relationships and their struggles (Blumenfeld 1992). A decade later, this format has developed to a workshop design where participants are often given information and taken through experiential exercises intended to break down stereotypes and address individual and systemic
discrimination.

In much of the literature that today informs anti-homophobia education, the goals of equality and tolerance are prominent (Schreier 1995; Stevenson 1988; Gramick 1983). In working toward its goal of tolerance, anti-homophobia education is premised on the belief that the problem of homophobia stems from the lack of information about the other. This informational approach assumes that if people could just get enough facts about gay and lesbian identities, and the oppressive structure in which homophobia lives, they would change their discriminatory attitudes and practices. This approach ignores the relationships of power between dominant subjects and subordinate groups. In particular, that dominant subjects form their identities in relation to oppressed groups.

Therefore, critical education in contrast to an informational approach is premised on the need for a redistribution of power and requires people in positions of dominance to dramatically shift their sense of themselves (Razack 1998). This presents many dilemmas for educators who may share the goal of critical education but are confronted with resistance in people who are in positions of dominance.

This thesis argues that the goal of tolerance in itself is a problematic framework, because it always implies hierarchy. Hierarchy is evident when we examine “who has the power to tolerate whom” in anti-homophobia education (Razack 1991, 149). While the goals of tolerance and equality may seem progressive within a society that promotes hatred of homosexuality, it does little
to shift the redistribution of power and disturb the dominant system of heterosexuality.

At the heart of this tolerance approach is the presentation of a stable, unitary subject. This modernist construct is intended to humanize gay and lesbian identity, but does little to disrupt heterosexuality. Modernist ideas are premised on the belief and discovery of a universalizing truth. Western modernity partakes in universality in two ways. As discussed by Jane Flax, “it operates identically in each subject and it can grasp laws that are objectively true; that is, are equally knowable and binding on every person” (Flax 1992, 447).

Anti-homophobia education generally puts forward the least disruptive and most acceptable gay and lesbian body. The intent is that this approach will shift stereotypes and increase acceptance and tolerance for homosexuality. This thesis critically examines both the theoretical constructs that ground anti-homophobia education, and the implication of these constructs on the practice of the education.

Specifically, this thesis examines the ways in which anti-homophobia educators, working in community based social services, interrogate issues of sexual identities and categories, and the use of personal experience, through the practices of panel discussions, disclosures, and using ‘out’ lesbian and gay educators. Central to this discussion is the way in which oppression and domination are understood and taken up in the education.
Essential to this examination is the community based social service context. Progressive community based social services have been incorporating anti-homophobia education into their training for volunteers and staff to ensure that these services will be more accessible to gay and lesbian clients. Community based AIDS services also address the barriers created by homophobia and heterosexism within AIDS education, in the hope of reducing barriers for people living with HIV/AIDS, when requiring the care of health and social services.

My own interest in this study was sparked by some troubling moments and dilemmas that I was left with after both facilitating and participating in anti-homophobia education. For the most part, I have facilitated anti-homophobia education in community based social services where issues of homophobia and heterosexism were one module addressed within a larger training program for volunteers working in a feminist based resource centre. These issues became special topics within the training as a whole and were often covered in a three hour workshop. The remaining content of the training program was often silently heterosexual. The structure of this training reinforced the minority status of individuals who identify as other than heterosexual and maintained the notion of heterosexuality as the original and the norm.

One of the goals of anti-homophobia education is to assist participants to understand the consequences of homophobia and heterosexism, particularly as it effects individuals whose identities are constructed outside of heterosexuality.
facilitated anti-homophobia workshops within a training program for peer counsellors that was housed in a women's resource centre. As an informational component of the workshop, I would provide examples of some of the consequences of homophobia and heterosexism that gays and lesbians experience on a daily basis, when receiving social services. I did not use the structure of a panel discussion to provide lived examples of homophobia or heterosexism, or bring in individuals to share personal stories of their experiences. In part, this decision for me was structured by the limits of representation. I was cognizant that the experiences of these few individuals would be taken up by the audience as the universal truth about lesbian identity and experience. Despite all the cautionary notes that are made to participants about the impossibility of representing the breadth of diversity, panel members are still regarded by participants as speaking for a whole stable group (Fanow and Marty 1992).

I was also concerned about the educational dilemmas that emerge when the facilitator centers herself as the curriculum. Several times, at the completion of a workshop, participants expressed their desire to speak with a lesbian. At the time I found this curious since I considered myself to be a lesbian. Although I did not consistently 'come out' in each workshop, I used inclusive language such as the pronoun 'we' when speaking about lesbians. As well, there were other participants who identified as lesbian.

The request was for an individual to perform in the role of 'the lesbian'.
Perhaps the request can be explained because of the emphasis on experience as absolute truth, promoting the desire to speak with an 'authentic' lesbian (Scott 1992). Deborah Britzman (1992, 29) explains that "conventional wisdom such as 'we learn by experience' or 'experience is the best teacher' legitimizes the regime of experience". Britzman (1992, 29) suggests that "when experience is perceived as a map, experience seems to organize perceptions. Absent from this version is the social activity that confounds our meanings and shapes our views of the world".

In addition, stereotyped constructions of lesbian identity such as more 'butch' or androgynous in appearance with short hair, absent of make-up and sporty or tom-boyish in body structure, were obviously maintained, and I did not fit. My own appearance is considered to be more 'femme'; curly hair, jewellery and non androgynous. According to Joan Nestle (1989, 234) femmes have a history of passing as heterosexual, therefore "it was easy to lose curiosity about what made them sexual heretics, because they looked like women." Nestle suggests that femmes "became the victims of a double dismissal: in the past they did not appear culturally different enough from heterosexual women to be seen as breaking gender taboos and today they do no appear feminist enough, even in their historical context, to merit attention or respect for being ground-breaking women" (Nestle 1989, 234).

It is often assumed that I am heterosexual because of my appearance which may have required me to be more 'out' about my sexual identity in training.
In addition to the request, I consistently noticed at the completion of a workshop that participants focused exclusively on either the minority status and discrimination that lesbians, gay men and bisexuals experience or they romanticized the lives of these individuals. I was troubled that the main goal, that of challenging the dominant system of heterosexuality and our own complicity within this system, became secondary to the promotion of tolerance, for gay and lesbian identity, on the part of participants.

These dilemmas that I encountered can be contextualized through an examination of the written material that informs anti-homophobia education. Anti-homophobia educators rely on much of this written material to inform their practices. As previously mentioned, goals of equality and tolerance are prominent in anti-homophobia education, as a response to tremendous hostility. A central problem that this thesis identifies is that this approach poses no challenge to heterosexism. Therefore the theoretical construct of tolerance is further examined and challenged in this study.

Chapter 2 begins with a more detailed discussion of the limits of tolerance in anti-homophobia education. It provides a challenge to some of the key theoretical constructs, such as the provision of information and the practical application of knowing gays and lesbians, with the possibility of shifting homophobic attitudes and practices. Some of the dilemmas that I encountered concerning authenticity, the authority of experience, and the presentation of fixed, unitary subjects are critically examined in this chapter. The limitation of the
modern subject are also evident in AIDS education. Yet AIDS education and the influences of feminism in the classroom and in a social service context, bring in a political framework intended to disrupt status quo and are examined in their approach to anti-homophobia education.

Chapter 3 explores the concepts of fluid, multiple subjects and the limits of sexual categories in both feminist postmodern and queer theories. Putting forward fixed, unitary subjects is a strategic response to the very real threat of domination. Yet, the limitations of the modern subject, in creating exclusions and reinforcing heterosexuality, are discussed. This chapter explores whether it is possible to practically apply some of these ideas to anti-homophobia education.

The research methodology is laid out in chapter 4. The research of this thesis centres on educators who work within community based social services. Specific to social services, there are limitations, particularly in terms of funding, demand of services and time constraints, that have a profound impact on the content of anti-homophobia education. I will elaborate on the specificities of social services in the methodology section. An important limitation in the research is that the majority of educators in this study are white and work in more mainstream community social services. The development of my questions for both the focus group and the follow up interviews did not address the impact of whiteness in our struggles to incorporate our sexual identity into the education. As well, in the focus group discussion I neglected to frame questions on how race influences pedagogy. I address the impact of this omission in the
Chapter 5 is a synthesis of many of these ideas, as discussed with educators. The central dilemma that this chapter puts forward is that while educators are cognizant of the limits of the modern subject and possess an awareness that tolerance does not disrupt heterosexuality, they struggle to find a pedagogy that will both push beyond the limits of tolerance, and take up some postmodern implications.

Finally, this thesis concludes with implications for further work. It offers recommendations to postmodern and queer theorists about the difficulties in the practical application of postmodernist constructs in anti-homophobia education. It also offers educators room to further explore some of the dilemmas inherent in modernist constructs.
Chapter 2
Review: Approaches to Anti-Homophobia Education

The main concern of this thesis is to examine how a modernist approach shapes both theoretical constructs of anti-homophobia education and the practice of them. Within this modernist approach, a central problem to be reviewed and discussed is the goal of tolerance in anti-homophobia education, which does not help to disturb heterosexuality.

The goal of tolerance is central to the modernist constructs that structure anti-homophobia education. This chapter will examine these theoretical constructs and the resulting educational practices. Under the goal of tolerance, anti-homophobia education sets out to provide information about gay and lesbian identity, with the intent of humanizing these identities. The provision of information is premised on the belief that if people could just get enough information, they would change. This is accomplished through the practices of incorporating coming out stories, panel discussions and the use of ‘out’ gay and lesbian educators so that the audience comes to know ‘real’ gays and lesbians. These practices are based on modernist notions where subjects are presented as fixed and stable. In these practices there is a tendency to put forward the least disruptive and most acceptable gay and lesbian body.

These essential constructs assume that the experience of being gay or
lesbian can be described outside of other aspects that shape that person. It also assumes that there is an essence to that experience, and situates experience as the absolute way of knowing.

This chapter will review and examine some of these central theoretical constructs that are evident in anti-homophobia education. While AIDS education and the influences of feminism in education are also framed using modernist constructs, they are grounded in a political analysis intended to disturb the status quo. Therefore, my examination includes both AIDS education and the influences of feminism in the classroom and in a social service context, in their approach to anti-homophobia education and the possibilities of moving beyond tolerance.

The Promotion of Tolerance

Promoting homosexuality as a lifestyle and personal choice is received enthusiastically by some gays and lesbians. This support has increased in the current anti-gay climate reinforced since the AIDS epidemic has become identified with gay men in North America. AIDS has become a convenient vehicle for expressing hostility towards gay men and lesbians (Herek 1988). In a hostile society, liberal beliefs about homosexual normality are often experienced as reinforcing and affirming of gay and lesbian culture (Kitzinger 1987). Yet the promotion of tolerance does not address the regulatory power of heterosexuality.

Promoting tolerance in anti-homophobia education, as explored in the
work of Michael Stevenson (1988), is a response to the fact that few adults accept homosexuality. "Tolerate' means 'to allow so as not to hinder' and 'to permit as something not wholly approved of.'" (50) According to Stevenson (1988,50), "promoting tolerance focuses on positive change, and it must come before acceptance can be gained". Barry Schreier (1995) suggests that anti-homophobia education must move beyond a goal of tolerance to what he terms a nurturance approach. Such an approach assumes that people who are gay, lesbian and bisexual are invaluable to society. "The programmer must be able to demonstrate credibly the belief that people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual are indispensable members of our culture" (Schreier 1995, 21). While there are slight differences between the goals of tolerance and nuturance, the desired outcome of inclusiveness is the same; the overarching system of heterosexuality remains untouched.

Within the framework of tolerance, anti-homophobia education is guided by a discourse which promotes cultural understanding (McCarthy 1993). Just as in the field of multicultural education, a discourse of cultural understanding places an importance on improving communications among different ethnic groups. Anti-homophobia education focuses on improving communication between heterosexuals and homosexuals and sees the two as having different cultures that can be taught and understood. The goal of improving communication between homosexuals and heterosexuals is discussed in the literature by Elfin Moses and Robert Hawkins (1983). The authors offer that "it is
instructive to ask participants to think as a lesbian or gay person might answer the questions and how she or he might feel hearing the responses of nongay participants" (Moses and Hawkins 1983, 155). The intention is to produce feelings of empathy on the part of participants in order to assist them in understanding what it means to live as a lesbian or a gay man. However, the exercise reinforces the position of superiority for heterosexuals. To feel empathy, to put oneself in someone’s shoes, is not necessarily taking participants to a place where they can examine their own complicity in perpetuating domination.

Fundamental to this approach is also the idea of cultural relativism. That is, all social groups are presumed to have a formal parity with each other (McCarthy 1993). Within the model of cultural relativism, heterosexuality and homosexuality would be considered equal in power, ignoring the very real individual and systemic repercussions of identities outside of heterosexuality. Sexual identity is understood only in terms of individual choice or preference. The reinforcing and regulatory power of heterosexuality is neglected.

In his critique of current American multicultural educational approaches, Cameron McCarthy (1993) suggests that the focus on acceptance of cultural differences without the recognition of power differentials, "has led in recent years to a movement for the recognition of the cultural uniqueness of white ethnic groups, Poles, Swedes, Norwegians and so forth, in order to counterbalance demands for the study of African American, Latino, and Native American
In her critique of a cultural diversity approach, Sherene Razack clarifies that the problem with this approach is that it gets diluted to a “superficial reading of difference that makes power relations invisible and keeps dominant cultural norms in place” (1998,14). The point is that while critical education should be attentive to issues of representation and visibility, it must be both grounded in the realities of material distribution and unequal power in society.

Cultural relativism in anti-homophobia literature is revealed in terms of a discourse of reciprocity and consensus: "We are different but we are all the same" (McCarthy 1993; hooks 1992). The denial of any differences between counterculture groups and the dominant society is common. Generally, the success of anti-homophobia education is measured by a standardized quantitative scale designed to assess changes in attitudes toward gays and lesbians. The assumption behind the use of these measurements is the belief that people with negative attitudes are more likely to engage in acts of discrimination, harassment or violence. According to Michele Eliason, the measurement of attitudes “should be helpful in identifying potential interventions to reduce negative outcome” (1995, 74).

These measurements have been designed with the underlying assumption that attitudes can be quantified. Information is collected before and at the completion of a workshop that requires respondents to rate their level of agreement to a standardized set of statements that describe attitudes towards
lesbians and gay men. This attitudinal measurement is cross referenced with other scales that measure attitudes towards sex-roles, assessment of authoritarianism, perceived social support for their attitudes towards homosexuality, personal contact with homosexuals, and religious beliefs (Herek 1988).

According to critics, attitudinal scales suffer from some limitations which may affect their generalizability. For example, statements are worded in a negative manner that may elicit an emotional response. As well, according to Michele Eliason (1995, 83), "when scales are added up and mean scores reported, each respondent gets reduced to a single number, obscuring the complexity of differences in responding to individual items. Two respondents with the same score may have endorsed items in very different ways, [...] that would suggest different interventions."

High scores are said to indicate a decreased tendency to perceive homosexuals as essentially different and a decreased adherence to myths and stereotypes (Schwanberg 1993; Herek 1988; Schneider and Tremble 1986; Plasek and Allard 1984; Moses and Hawkins 1983). According to studies conducted by Gregory Herek (1988, 468), "respondents with negative attitudes are likely to perceive greater differences between themselves and gay men." In response to studies investigating reactions to homosexuals, Sandra Schwanberg (1993, 129) concludes that "negative attitudes were thought to exist because homosexuals were perceived as different. Gay persons viewed as similar were
liked more than dissimilar targets." John Plasek and Janicemarie Allard (1984) suggest that "acknowledging similarities between homosexuals and heterosexuals and breaking down stereotypes will increase tolerance for homosexuals" (25). Plasek and Allard (1984) continue to suggest that:

One of the most common dimensions of attitudinal scales involves the notion that homosexuals may be set apart from heterosexuals on the basis of presumed differences in attitudes, appearance, and behaviour. Frequently, negative characteristics include dislike of women, effeminacy, the relative ease with which homosexuals may be identified, promiscuity, sado-masochistic practices, cross-dressing, and the tendency to be either active or passive in sexual behaviour. (25)

The questions used to measure attitudes and the results of these attitudinal scales, are premised on modernist constructs of gay and lesbian identity. While a disruption of negative myths and stereotypes of homosexuals may be productive, it may also push those individuals who live the stereotype to the margins. Individuals who live the stereotype such as lesbians who identify as butch, effeminate gay men, drag queens and those who identify as transgender are marginalized in the pursuit of the most tolerable homosexual. The promotion of tolerance in anti-homophobia educational material presents the most acceptable homosexual body (white, male, middle class and gender appropriate) and evaluates the success of this education on a disruption of stereotypes and myths of homosexuality held by heterosexual participants.
Providing Information

Anti-homophobia education is also premised, in part, on the idea that the problem of homophobia is the result of misinformation about homosexuality or a lack of information and visibility. Considered in this way, educators concentrate on describing "values, customs, and culture and ignore power relations" (Razack 1991, 148). In promoting tolerance, Elfin Moses and Robert Hawkins (1983) suggest to participants of anti-homophobia workshops that they should "gather information through reading, talking to people and listening to music created by gays" (156) in order to lessen homophobic beliefs. The authors conclude that the problem of homophobia, a result of misinformation, can be remedied through the provision of information that would shift individual attitudes. An analysis about oppressive systems and the pervasiveness and impact of systemic discrimination is not taken up. Gay and lesbian identity is stable and fixed in the quest for information.

In describing an essential notion of gay experience, the authors put forward a norm that privileges a particular gay experience. An essentialist position assumes that there is one stable framework in which to describe gay and lesbian experience. Within this homogenous gay and lesbian culture, there is no delineation of how other sites of subjectivity, such as race and class, interact to position gays and lesbians differently and unequally.

The problem of misinformation is reiterated in a more recent article by Barry Schreier (1995), when he states that an educator "must be an informed
and accurate source of information on issues such as people in history and the current culture who are gay, lesbian or bisexual; statistics and demographics about affectional identity; information about the commonness of sexual and romantic feelings towards members of one's own gender in people of every affectional identity; and information about gay, lesbian or bisexual cultures and communities." (21) As an educational strategy, providing information about homosexuality, assumes that homophobia is the result of individual's acting out of fear and misinformation. The power of individuals to act out their fear and ignorance is glossed over, as is the systemic exclusion of individuals who identify as other than heterosexual.

Anti-homophobia literature has a special focus on increasing the knowledge about sexual identity among social service providers, particularly in a counselling context (Burke 1989; lasenza 1989; Schneider 1988). Again, the educational strategy is the provision of information about homosexuality. For some, the informational approach includes an analysis of heterosexism. Suzanne Pharr, in her book, *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*, discusses that "heterosexism creates the climate for homophobia with its assumption that the world is and must be heterosexual and its display of power and privilege as the norm" (Pharr 1988,16). Heterosexism, then is the systemic display of homophobia in societal institutions. Although the authors introduce the idea that the problem of homophobia is systemic rather than only an individual problem, they still conclude that homophobia may be remedied with information by
including gay and lesbian issues into existing coursework for counsellor education, gaining practicum experience working with gay and lesbian clients and addressing myths, fears and stereotypes on the part of counsellors (lasenza 1989). The inclusion of such material to increase knowledge and experience of counsellors is a positive step in strengthening service provision. While these steps should not be overlooked, there needs to be an analysis of how the system of heterosexism shapes relations of power.

Some scholars have noted (Razack 1991; Essed 1991) that it is not the lack of information about the other that is the problem but rather othering in itself. In questioning how dominant groups come to construct another group as unlike itself and therefore only to be subordinated Sherene Razack (1991) discusses that the problem is much deeper than simply the issue of misinformation. She writes:

Denial runs very deep, even in classrooms and courtrooms filled with progressive people. Dominant groups hear stories of oppression as irritating, sometimes trivial complaints, as unfair accusations, and as exaggerated and even malicious accounts. Such accounts are, in a word, disbelieved. They appear to challenge the moral worth of all Whites and they invite progressive people to distance themselves from the problem of racism. Other people may act this way but I don’t. (148)

In her review of Philomena Essed’s work, Razack captures Essed’s understanding of racism as an ideology that “includes the whole range of concepts, ideas, images, and intuitions that provide the framework of interpretation and meaning for racial thought in society[...]” (1991,151). The
question of human agency is brought forward; specifically whether dominant subjects can act outside of these structured systems, and whether there is a role in critical education to facilitate this process. For anti-homophobia education this may mean that when heterosexual participants have knowledge about the oppressive system of heterosexism, and its impact on the lives of gays and lesbians, there is the potential for them to resist these oppressive systems.

Yet, Razack concludes that the misinformation approach continues even when critical education consists of teaching about oppressive systems. She continues to say that the misinformation approach ignores the fact that dominant subjects create their identities by comparing themselves to subordinate groups. She explains that (1998,16),

[...]education for social change is not so much about new information as it is about disrupting hegemonic ways of seeing through which subjects make themselves as dominant. When we go about the business of subjecting these dominant frames to scrutiny in the classroom or courtroom, we should be aware of how deeply connected these ways of seeing are to identity. To disrupt how a white judge views immigrants, for instance, as foreigners dependent on the generosity of Canadians, is to call into question the judge's owns sense of superiority as a benevolent man.

In critical education, our dilemma as educators is that we are asking dominant subjects to name and to shift their own sense of themselves. Razack explains that the challenge in "radical education becomes how to build critical consciousness about how we, as subjects make ourselves, positioning ourselves as innocent in specific contexts through the use of such markers of identity as the good activist" (1998,31). Potentially, dominant subjects have a lot to lose.
Knowing Gays and Lesbians

The provision of information about gay and lesbian identity does not address the complexity of how dominance can produce denial and ignorance on the part of individuals, and can maintain the status quo. Similarly, the concept of knowing gays and lesbians presumes that the subjects can be known and managed, thus maintaining the superior position of heterosexuality.

Anti-homophobia literature that is based on research which examines the relationship between personal contact with gays and lesbians with reduced homophobia concludes that there is a correlation (Eliason 1995; Herek 1988). The educational strategy of knowing gays and lesbians is the precedent for incorporating panel discussions with gay and lesbian members and using 'out' facilitators in anti-homophobia education as a way of having participants come to know someone who is gay or lesbian.

Studies that measure changes in attitude toward homosexuality have found that respondents who know lesbian and gay men tend to have more positive attitudes (Eliason 1995; Croteau and Kusek 1992; Gramick 1983; Herek 1984). In a review of a number of studies, Michele Eliason concludes that some studies found that contact with lesbians and gay men was the most significant predicator of more liberal attitudes. "Face-to-face contact may be the most effective means of breaking down stereotypes. When an abstract concept like 'the homosexual' becomes a flesh and blood person, attitudes often change."
However, the strategy of knowing gay men and lesbians promotes the tendency for participants of anti-homophobia education to homogenize gay and lesbian identity based only on their perceptions and their experiences with specific individuals.

The use of 'out' gay and lesbian facilitation teams (Nicols and Shernoff 1983) and gay and lesbian speaker panels (Croteau and Kusek 1992) in anti-homophobia education is based, in part, on the aforementioned research and gives participants an opportunity to have contact with a gay and lesbian person. Nichols and Shernoff (1983) recommend the collaboration of an 'out' gay and lesbian facilitation team. The authors emphasize that the facilitation team "have resolved enough of their own anger that they are able to be personally revealing and nonantagonistic with a non gay audience" (148). They also suggest that participants "must feel permitted to express attitudes, feelings and beliefs that their liberal consciences tell them are 'bad', 'prejudiced', 'not nice' or politically incorrect" (Nichols and Shernoff 1983,148-151). Participants are encouraged to express all their fears and stereotypes about homosexuality through exercises that ask them to brainstorm all of the names and labels that they associate with gay and lesbian identity. The authors neglect any exploration about what gets produced in this dynamic when those fears and stereotypes are expressed to those very 'out' individuals whose identities they fear. Stuart Hall (1981) suggests that it is better to hear horrendous ideas and fears because what you do not hear, you cannot engage with. However, the impact of hearing these
fears for educators and students is just beginning to be explored. Deborah Britzman (1991) suggests that "for the gay or lesbian teacher and students who must listen as their cohorts work through or become more entrenched in their heterosexism, for the ethnic racial teachers and students who must listen to racist and sexist discourse as a precondition to convincing their peers to do otherwise, or for that matter, for any teacher or student who attempts to deconstruct any kind of repressive ideology of the obvious, the unleashing of 'unpopular things' always is problematic" (63).

Rather than simply revisiting these hateful names and labels through a brainstorming exercise, it may be more productive to explore with participants the reasons and the effects of these names, on the lives of gays and lesbians and the role that these names play in maintaining and bolstering heterosexuality.

Importantly, this educational strategy centers the pedagogue as the curriculum in anti-homophobia training. Certain issues emerge when the pedagogue centers her(him)self as the curriculum. It reinforces the notion of the authority of experience by suggesting that only those who identify as gay and lesbian can understand and speak to the effects of homophobia and heterosexism. This sets up an artificial boundary between insider and outsider, and while it may provide some participants with a platform to speak, it relegates other participants to the sidelines. Diana Fuss (1989) explains that while truth does not necessarily equate with experience, "it cannot be denied that it is precisely the fiction that they are the same which prompts many students, who

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would not perhaps speak otherwise, to enter energetically into those debates they perceive as pertaining directly to them" (118). So while the authority of experience may silence some participants, it can also empower those individuals who have had the experience.

The authority of experience is a key component of identity based politics which came out of the demand that feminist theory and practice must be grounded in the lives of women, rather than through academic philosophy and theory (Phelan 1989). Personal experience has been used in the feminist consciousness-raising (C.R.) movement where women began to name and share their experiences with other women about issues of health, violence and sexism. Through C.R. groups women began to feel that they were not alone in their experiences and feelings. The C.R. movement was a component of identity politics. An important aspect of identity politics was for theorists and activists to locate themselves and speak and organize from that specific location.

More recently, there have been questions about relying on experience as the most authentic way of knowing, over and above other forms of knowledge production such as academic theory and observation. However, the current critique of the authority of experience can seem very threatening to marginalized groups who have named their identity as a gesture of political resistance and a challenge to domination (hooks 1994). bell hooks (1994) offers that racism, sexism, and class elitism shape the classroom structure "creating a lived reality of insider versus outsider that is predetermined, often in place before any class
discussion begins" (83). There is not the need for marginalized groups to bring the boundary of insider and outsider into the classroom because it usually already exists. The assertion of essentialism from marginalized groups "can be a strategic response to domination and to colonization, a survival strategy that may indeed inhibit discussion even as it rescues those students from negation" (hooks 1994, 83). bell hooks (1994) continues to say that if experience is acknowledged in the classroom as a way of knowing, equal to other ways of knowing, then it lessens the possibility that it can be used to silence.

Joan Scott (1992) argues that because experience is so much a part of our everyday language, so layered in our narratives that it would be futile to remove it altogether. She suggests that it would be more useful to work with it, to analyze how it works and to redefine its meaning. Scott concludes:

Experience is at once always already an interpretation and is in need of interpretation. What counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straightforward; it is always contested, always therefore political. The study of experience, therefore, must call into question its originary status...Experience is, in this approach, not the origin of our explanation, but that which we want to explain. (1992, 37)

While it is essential that we interrogate the notion of the authority of experience, we must be constantly reminded that the danger of not addressing the experiences and identities of marginalized groups, is to recenter dominance. Gay and lesbian speaker panels used in anti-homophobia education provide an opportunity for these individuals to speak about their lives. Panels are also used to portray diversity, particularly in terms of race, ethnicity, class etc., within
They are intended to establish commonalities between panel members and participants of anti-homophobia education by positioning the speaker(s) as a peer. The importance of the peer aspect in lessening homophobia comes from Herek’s (1984) model distinguishing three functions of homophobic attitudes: experiential (based on actual past experience with gay men and lesbians), defensive (based on person’s own conflict or anxiety, and symbolic (based on one’s ideological concepts) (Croteau and Kusek 1992, 397). The authors point out that interaction with speakers can provide a positive experience with gay men or lesbians and can both reinforce positive attitudes and contradict negative attitudes.

One way to foster peer identification, according to the authors, is to select speakers to match particular audiences. In this format, the discourse of cultural understanding, 'we are different, but we are all the same', applies. That is, speakers generally reflect the most palatable members for a heterosexual audience. Narratives that challenge the most acceptable of heterosexuality, such as ambiguous gender identity, particular sexual practices etc. can become further marginalized in this strategy.

As previously mentioned, gay and lesbian speaker panels are also used to disrupt the notion of the essential homosexual identity by representing differences among gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals in terms of race, class, ethnicity, ability, age, etc. This point is discussed by Bryson, de Castell and
Haig-Brown (1993). In challenging essential notions of lesbian identity through representation of diversity, the authors acknowledge that they themselves have exploited friends through a similar format. The authors explain that "we call them to be ...performing parrots. Step right up: a real live Lesbian. She walks and talks and you can ask her anything you want. We expose our friends to ignorance and abuse: Black woman, First Nations woman, Woman of Asian origins, Lesbian. Come to my class and enlighten us" (Bryson et al.1993, 48). In this format the identities of these women are commodified.

In writing about the "commodification of diversity", Chandra Mohanty (1990) argues that the discourses of multiculturalism and of other anti-oppression education, functions both to de-politicize and manage differences. Mohanty observes that "the central issue, then, is not one of merely acknowledging difference; rather, the more difficult question concerns the kind of difference that is acknowledged and engaged" (1990,185). Sherene Razack points out that educational approaches to address cultural differences in critical education are often inadequate. She points out that "the emphasis on cultural diversity too often descends, in a multicultural spiral, to a superficial reading of differences that makes power relations invisible and keeps dominant cultural norms in place" (1998, 14).

The commodification of Otherness, as bell hooks discusses, has been so successful because it is offered as more satisfying than accustomed ways of doing and feeling. hooks offers that "within commodity culture, ethnicity
becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture" (1992, 21). However, the question remains whether the message that racial and ethnic difference can be exciting and pleasurable can in fact challenge systems of domination. hooks concludes that we can not uncritically accept these new images. "The over-riding fear is that cultural, ethnic, and racial differences will be continually commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate - that the Other will be eaten, consumed, and forgotten" (1992, 39).

It is instructive to see how difference is treated in speaker panels as something to be represented by 'authentic members' and re-negotiated as commonality between panel members and participants, as is evidenced in earlier examples.

Bryson et al. question whether such a format is simply tokenism and how much difference and diversity must be presented in order to address the theoretical position of anti-essentialism. And what are the consequences of such a format? They conclude that "to participate in this work is all too often to undertake a job of management" (1993, 54) in the interests of the status quo.

While there may be an association between personally knowing gays and lesbians and lessening homophobia in individual circumstances, there is no evidence to suggest that this transfers beyond the individual to a broader understanding of systems of domination and oppression.

My concern persists, that the emphasis in anti-homophobia education on
knowing gays and lesbians may do little to shift the dominant relationship between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Again, what gets unleashed is the tendency for participants to homogenize gay and lesbian identity based only on their perceptions and their experiences with specific individuals. The literature submits that individuals who know lesbians and gay men are better able than others to recognize stereotypes as inaccurate (Herek 1984; Schneider and Tremble 1986). While this outcome is positive for some, individuals who embody and live these stereotypes are further marginalized in this strategy to break down stereotypes. These individuals are seen as freaks or are described as the 'bad' gays and lesbians.

I have reviewed some of the predominant educational strategies currently used in anti-homophobia education. Central to these liberal strategies is the modernist construct of the stable, unitary gay and lesbian identity. I turn to AIDS education and some feminist teaching, both in social services and in classrooms. While the modernist construct is at the heart of both of these approaches, each struggles to examine some of the complications of sexual categories and the use of personal experience in their approach to anti-homophobia education. In addition, both AIDS education and a sampling of feminist teaching are more overtly political in their approach, with goals of shifting dominant systems and disrupting status quo.
AIDS Education

While AIDS education also operates within a tolerance or liberal ideology, it has been forced to examine some of the complications inherent in sexual categories in order to address some of the struggles that have surfaced through prevention strategies.

Initially, the leadership for community-based AIDS work came for the most part from gay men and lesbians. Before government funding became available to address the AIDS crisis, activists and health care workers in the gay and lesbian community, who were predominately white and middle class, began to establish support systems for friends who were sick or dying, and to develop and distribute prevention focused information.

The community response grew as AIDS was greeted with silence and neglect by governments, the medical profession and social services. Those who were dying; gay men, people of colour and other marginalized groups, were not considered to be part of the "general public", therefore their health was not a matter of public concern (Canadian AIDS Society 1991; Vance 1989).

When government funding for community groups became available, those who were already involved were positioned to access funds and respond to the urgent need for support services, prevention education etc. (Jackson 1996). In the early part of the AIDS movement these community groups represented and for the most part responded to the needs of white, middle class, gay men. As the disease and social realities shift, groups that are better positioned to respond
to the realities of sexism, racism and issues of poverty, in relation to care and

treatment, support services and prevention issues concerning AIDS, are finally

receiving government funding.

AIDS services and gay and lesbian communities, who produce and

facilitate some of the education, have more recently complicated their discussion

of sexual identity and sexual categories in order to address some of the denial

about who is at risk for contracting AIDS. Discussions addressing discrimination

and issues of power based on race, class and gender have become components

of some AIDS education and are integral in understanding the public's

perception of who is at risk.

Over the past decade, AIDS education has struggled to move from its

initial focus on high risk groups to high risk activities when discussing issues of

prevention. Communities who were considered to be ‘high risk’: gay men, IV

drug users, people of colour and prostitutes, were advised to be tested, thus

reinforcing the misconception of high risk groups rather than high risk activities

that can put us at risk for contracting AIDS. It became essential that AIDS

education move outside of categories of risk groups that label members of these

groups as deviant. The focus on identity, rather than practice, produces

oppositional categories of ‘innocent victims’, ‘contagious infectors’, and the

‘general public’. A false sense of safety was constructed for those who identified

as the ‘general public’, rather than with the highly stigmatized risk groups. This

produced an educational strategy that put individuals and communities at further

The danger of using sexual categories as universal constructs is discussed by Ana Maria Alonso and Maria Teresa Koreck (1993). The authors discuss the limitations of AIDS research that has been produced by Anglo-American researchers who use anglo categories of sexuality among U.S. minorities. The lack of awareness among researchers of differences in social and cultural construction of sexuality has obscured the role of HIV transmission in the meanings of sexual practices among minority groups (Alonso and Kurek 1993; Fine 1993). This research has shown that the relationship between sexual practices and the meanings attached to them are not fixed. According to Katie Deverell and Allan Prout, (1995) this has led to a "formulation of sexuality as composed of sexual identity, sexual practice and sexual desire with a recognition that there is no necessary connection between these elements" (174).

The experience of AIDS education projects that focus on men who have sex with men have learnt that it is a mistake to assume that all men have an identity constructed around their sexual practice. For example, men who identify as gay might be having sex with women, and men who identify as straight might be having sex with men (Deverell and Prout 1995). Deverell and Prout (1995,175) conclude that "this situation highlights the complexity of how people choose to identify themselves; people may share the same sexual practices but identify in different ways, or choose not to build an identity relating to their sexual practice." Unlike much of the literature that I have reviewed on anti-homophobia
education, some AIDS education initiatives are obligated to struggle with the complications around issues of sexual identity and categories, particularly that meanings attached are not fixed.

The crisis surrounding the HIV pandemic exposed racism and homophobia in new ways, revealing that the government funded system of social programs and health care were not meant for everyone. According to Cindy Patton, (1996, 8) "America needed a new model for the citizen, a tough love citizen who could be resolute about cutting federal funding without seeming cruel toward the burgeoning and increasingly organized group of people concerned about HIV whose only hope for treatment and care lay with a coordinated, well-funded federal response." By 1990, this new citizen of the national public had congealed as the opposite of the dangerous deviants who had become visible and considered as distinct communities. Health and social welfare programs received cuts as the new 'tough love citizen' protested special rights for these 'communities'. America capitalized "not by helping the needy, but by offering a new paradigm for citizenship: the compassionate, tolerant individual who, while never viewing him-or herself as susceptible to contracting HIV, could nevertheless recognize that 'some of my best friends have HIV'" (Patton 1996, 8). Deviant groups were constructed as objects of research, treatment, discrimination, hatred and even compassion. Cuts to social and health programs follow suit in Canada, along with impending cuts and even the possible elimination of the National AIDS Strategy that has come under criticism because
of the coordinated demands by 'special interest' groups (International AIDS Conference newsletter, Vancouver, 1996). The suggestion is that the funding for AIDS exceeds government funding for other diseases because of the organized lobby effort of a small group of marginalized individuals. The complex social and political reality of the disease is ignored in this argument.

Funding initiatives often ignore the continued connection that exists between AIDS and gay despite the growing educational changes and challenges from AIDS services and within gay communities that focus on practices not risk groups to explain why anyone can contract HIV. However, most of the safer sex advice that is circulated outside of gay communities suggests avoiding sex with persons who are HIV positive and is based upon a "knowledge about the other that is to be obtained through questioning, proof of antibody status, or guesswork" (Patton 1996, 80). This advice, directed toward heterosexuals, suggests that any sex act is safe with a person known to be HIV antibody negative, while no act is safe with a person of unknown or positive antibody status. This contradicts educational work that has focused on high risk activities rather than high risk groups. But outside of gay communities these activities are themselves viewed as perversions, and not properly heterosexual. The reality is that many urban gay men accept that they will have to use condoms in order to engage in intercourse, while heterosexuals continue to trust in their own capacity to distinguish the innocent from the complicit (Patton 1996). This is an example of how AIDS education has failed to disrupt homophobia, which fuels the belief
that who you are and not what you do puts you at risk.

More recently, AIDS educators' have reflected on the failures of AIDS education, in particular the limits of an informational approach in shifting the public's ideas concerning sexual identity, risk behaviours and the social realities of the disease. As with anti-homophobia education, providing people with facts is not enough to shift their ideas and address discrimination. Some community driven AIDS education has moved toward an educational model that demands its participants to reflect and interrogate their own fears, assumptions and hostilities surrounding sexual practices and identities, and implement policies that lessen the barriers created by homophobia and heterosexism.

Influences of Feminism - in classrooms and social services

Modernist constructs are central to teaching about sexual identity from feminist perspectives. Feminist education reveals many of the challenges already discussed in terms of integrating an essentialist notion of experience which assumes that the experience of being a member of a particular group is static with a meaning that is constant. Education that is influenced by feminist ideas struggles with issues of representation and how it understands multiple subjectivities.

While there are many different perspectives within feminist theories, my review will concentrate on a small sampling of some of the relevant issues that have been addressed in classroom settings and in the context of social services.
Feminist theorist Suzanne Pharr, who discusses practical teaching strategies to address homophobia and heterosexism in the context of social services, theorizes that all oppressions are interconnected. Pharr puts forward that all oppressions are "linked by a common origin, economic power and control-and by common methods of limiting, controlling and destroying lives" (1988, 53). Although Pharr states that there is no hierarchy of oppressions, her overall analysis takes up gender as the primary oppression with other forms of oppression interwoven.

Mary Fanow and Debian Marty who discuss teaching implications and approaches developed by feminists, suggest that they borrow insights from postmodern feminism to offer suggestions for changes in teaching about sexual identity. They are cognizant of the tension that emerges between validating stigmatized identities through panels, oral histories and coming out stories, while at the same time fragmenting people into distorted categories. The authors acknowledge the influences of social and cultural differences such as race, gender, social class, and sexual orientation in shaping sexual experience and meaning without suggesting a primary oppression. The concepts of homophobia and heterosexism are understood and discussed by each of these theorists as part of a larger social system. That is, articles that discuss anti-homophobia strategies and heterosexism from feminist perspectives make connections between other forms of oppression and attempt to unravel how heterosexuality is maintained systemically and how it flourishes in society.
In the book, *Naming the Violence: Speaking Out About Lesbian Battering*, edited by Kerry Lobel, Pharr provides an example of a workshop on homophobia using a feminist perspective. She suggests using a power and privilege chart to begin the discussion of "how oppressions are connected, of how homophobia is not isolated in its development, and how similar it is to other forms of oppression" (1986, 211). Under the category of power/privilege she suggests listing the following: Men, Rich, White, Christian, Heterosexual, Able-bodied etc. Under the category of the unempowered she lists Women, Poor, People of Color, Jews, Homosexuals etc. The concept that homophobia and heterosexism are connected and interact with other forms of oppression is an important point. The chart itself suggests a binary relationship between the categories listed under power/privilege and those listed under unempowered. The simplicity of the chart can be misleading as it suggests that we fit either in one group or the other, rather than making more complex the multiplicity of identity groups. That is, that one could be listed on both sides. It is through discussion that Pharr addresses these points and discusses the possibility of being on both sides of the chart. She also uses the discussion to address that often groups listed under the unempowered are pitted against each other.

However, Pharr neglects any discussion about the tendency for participants to first identify under the categories of the unempowered. This exercise produces, at least initially, a "race to the margins" where participants develop their thinking only from positions of oppression. This precludes an
examination of the categories of power and compliance in a dominant structure (Razack 1994). Further to this, Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack (1994, 1075) write:

Difference and diversity, understood as variety, are not an analytical framework that enables women to explore and confront their complicity in each other's subordination. At worst, it leads us to consider that women are equally different; at best, we come to see degrees of oppression, as in doubly or triply disadvantaged, but we do not then ask about our complicity and responsibility.

A weakness of the chart that Pharr describes is that it suggests that all oppression operates in the same manner and therefore has the same impact on individual lives. Trina Grillo and Stephanie Wildman point out that "when socially-subordinated groups are lumped together, oppression begins to look like a uniform problem and one may neglect the varying and complex contexts of the different groups being addressed" (1991, 404). A more complicated discussion would take up some of the differences in the ways in which various forms of oppression are instituted and maintained.

As a result of feminist influences in classrooms and in social services, one of the ways that differences are examined, in order to assist participants to understand the experiences and realities of others, is through the use of analogies. It is common practice to make an analogy between discrimination based on sexuality to the impact of sexism or racism. Grillo and Wildman (1991) critique the use of analogies and suggest that an analogy allows dominant groups to focus on their own experiences of oppression, rather than
examining their own complicity in domination. The use of analogy exacerbates the desire to have our own struggles receive recognition. By convincing ourselves that another’s experience is just like our own, we are off the hook from having to fully comprehend that experience. In speaking about racism/white supremacy, the authors explain that “whites must confront their role as oppressors, or at least as beneficiaries of the racial oppression of others, in a race-based hierarchy (1991, 408).

In another exercise, Pharr provides participants with an opportunity to list all of the names they have ever heard that refer to homosexuals. She suggests that such an exercise provides people with an opportunity to say the unspeakable and to put it out in an 'acceptable way' (Pharr 1986). The purpose in recording what has been ingrained in most people, is questionable. Pharr neglects to consider what it means for both participants and facilitators who may identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual etc., to record and hear such statements. However, the discussion that follows strengthens this exercise as it attempts to show how issues of gender, race and ethnicity are woven into these epithets. For example, Pharr engages in discussion about how some of these names are used to maintain gender rules or norms (sissy, butch, fairy etc.) "The words are used to remind us what will happen to us if we step out of line, if we are too vocal, if we demand our rights, if we forget to be quiet, to pass, to be invisible" (Pharr 1986, 215).

To address myths and stereotypes about lesbians, Pharr introduces
exercises similar to those used in other materials. The concern remains that those individuals who embody particular myths and stereotypes are further marginalized in these exercises. As Judith Butler theorizes, in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion* (1990), an alternate approach would be to discuss the operation and maintenance of the constructs of sex, gender and desire that ensure the normalization of heterosexual desire, leaving other forms of desire as outside the norms of cultural intelligibility.

Certainly, the critique of the material by Suzanne Pharr is similar to the concerns already discussed. However, Pharr's work was considered to be ground breaking, particularly for feminists who were working in the area of sexuality, in that it solidified how sexism and other forms of oppression were intimately connected to homophobia.

As previously discussed, Fanow and Marty reflect on teaching approaches developed by feminists concerning sexual identity. Similar to Pharr, they encourage participants to be more self-reflective of their own sexuality while being more aware of other forms of difference that are often divisive. Yet they go further than Pharr in that they shift the focus of analysis from homophobia to heterosexism through the process of deconstructing heterosexuality.

This is accomplished through a number of experiential exercises where students are asked to engage in role playing exercises and write 'coming out' letters to parents where they are to examine how heterosexuality is embedded as the norm. Contrary to previous articles, the authors discuss the importance of
providing historical information about the development of romantic friendships between women. They also engage in an examination of the "economic and social changes in the 20th century that made it possible for women and men not only to choose a gay identity but also to begin to build communities and construct a politic around such an identity" (Fanow and Marty 1992,159).

As with previous articles, the authors invite guest speakers to discuss issues related to their lesbian identities in a panel format. The authors suggest that the "opportunity to speak allows panel participants to name and define their lives in accordance with their experience" (1992,160). Generally, speakers issue a disclaimer that they are speaking only for themselves and their experiences cannot be generalized to all lesbians. Despite the disclaimer the authors are cognizant of some of the difficulties in this format.

While this standard caveat may release lesbian speakers from intellectual accountability as token representatives of all lesbians, it does not release most speakers from the social and emotional cost inherent in the responsibility of conveying corrective information to a potentially begrudging and sometimes hostile audience. Communicating about the lives of lesbians presents a central challenge, since one of the most prevalent misconceptions held by students insists that lesbians are solely defined by their sexual orientation. We ask them, as members of a social group whose membership is determined by sexual criteria, to speak about their experiences in ways that transcend audience stereotypes based on sexual categorization. (Fanow and Marty 1992, 161)

The authors acknowledge that for lesbian experience to be evaluated by dominant perceptions of normality is risky. Their solution is to simultaneously
examine the institution of heterosexuality along with the panel presentation of lesbians. Fanow and Marty maintain that lesbianism must first be reclaimed from dominant stereotypes and presented as a fully 'normal' experience. The educational strategy is that once participants recognize the "normalcy of lesbian humanity, heterosexual identity cannot remain unproblematic. If lesbians are "normal" people, then the heterosexual claim to exclusive normality is dispelled" (1992, 165).

As discussed in an earlier section, Razack puts forward that the misinformation approach continues even when we say that critical education is also about teaching about oppressive systems. (1991) The dilemma that the authors do not consider is that dominant subjects shape their identities in comparison to subordinate groups. The problem that emerges is their desire to hold on to their identity and to deny their own complicity in upholding oppressive systems.

Still within this informational approach, Fanow and Marty propose some first steps to initiate a process where participants begin to understand oppressive systems. Fellows and Razack (1994) note, that this process must ensure that there is a framework to enable participants to examine and confront their responsibility in others oppression. Without an analysis of complicity, Fellows and Razack caution that "we operate with an analytical framework in which systems oppress but people do not" (1994, 1075).

Concerning the practice of panel discussions, Fanow and Marty, spoke
with other feminist instructors who initiated heterosexual panels, for the purpose of making visible the unquestioned power of heterosexual identity. As with lesbian panels, women who identified as heterosexual were asked to discuss issues that related to their heterosexual identity. This exercise requires both the panel and the audience to pay attention to how heterosexuality is generally assumed and unquestioned. This kind of exercise is similar to the use of a heterosexual questionnaire which reverses questions that are often asked of gays/lesbians/bisexuals.

While Fanow and Marty challenge modernist constructs that structure subjects as stable and unitary with a fixed meaning, they struggle to find ways of negotiating between decentered, multiple subjects while validating these stigmatized identities. The authors attempt to negotiate between the use of panel discussions, oral histories and coming out stories, while acknowledging the fragmentation of people into rigid categories. They conclude that it is essential that instructors reject dominant discourse about sexual identities and attempt to create a space where participants might explore how they name themselves. They suggest that students be offered "both resistance and identification strategies for engaging in personal and social change - resistance against rigid categorization and simultaneous identification with the diversity inherent in humanity" (1992, 167).

The struggle that emerges is whether to essentialise these stigmatized gay and lesbian identities because they are being threatened with erasure.
through acts of violence and social and legal sanctions that are regulated by homophobia and heterosexism. An essentialist understanding of gay and lesbian experiences is limited in that it does not examine how other social narratives interlock to shape how gays and lesbians experience their sexuality. The insistence on fixed gay and lesbian identities imposes rigid borders and results in exclusions. The presentation of the most tolerable homosexual body is reinforced, within this modernist approach.

The following chapter is organized around the theoretical constructs that define anti-homophobia education, as discussed in this chapter, and some of the resulting educational implications. Some of these implications are taken up within queer and feminist postmodern theories, in particular the limits of sexual categories and the authority of personal experience. The central dilemma discussed in these theories is whether the emphasis on fixed, essential identities and the authoritative use of experience can resist acts of violation and discrimination without reinscribing other forms of exclusion. Following is a discussion of a small sample of queer theorists and the work of some feminist postmodern theorists who interrogate some of the concepts that structure anti-homophobia education.

Much of what I have reviewed so far rests on liberal or modernist assumptions. I look to queer and feminist postmodern theories to examine what these theories can offer to the educational dilemmas evident in anti-homophobia education.
Feminist Post Modern and Queer Theories

Feminist postmodern and queer theorists offer a challenge to essential notions of identity that put forward stable, unitary subjects. The notion of a unified authoritative experience held by subordinate groups is discussed and critiqued in this literature. In particular, the challenge of queer theory and politics is primarily in its disruption of sex and gender identity boundaries and the deconstruction of identity categories.

Queer theory grew out of the critique about the dilemmas inherent in identity based politics. It came out of resistance to the fixed categories of gay and lesbian, and encompasses more than sexual identity. Rather, it reclaims a pejorative label of ‘queer’ and has an ‘in your face’ disruptive quality.

Lesbians and gay men have made themselves an effective force over the past several decades largely by giving themselves what civil rights movements had: a public collective identity. In an identity based politic, clear categories of collective identity are necessary for successful resistance and political gain. White lesbian identity that grew out of feminist theory in the 1970s established categories that enforced beliefs about authentic lesbian existence and identity. According to Shane Phelan (1993), feminist theorizing about lesbianism began from the premise that the personal is political. Phelan continues by stating:
This view has been manifested in the idea that lesbians are 'better feminists' than heterosexual, bisexual, or asexual women, in the belief that men, nonfeminist women, or nonlesbian feminists cannot be trusted as allies; in the arguments that problems of racism, classism, and other systems of discrimination are the result of sexism and therefore are lesser problems among 'woman-identified' women. (1993, 765-66)

Lesbian theorists have recognized the exclusions and limitations inherent in this analysis. Feminist theorists such as Gloria Anzaldua, Cherrie Moraga and Audre Lorde have provided new interpretations of lesbian sexuality and identity that incorporate the multiplicity and crossing of identities along lines of race, ethnicity, and class (Anzaldua 1987; Lorde 1988; Morago 1983). Audre Lorde states:

Within the lesbian community I am Black, and within the Black community I am a lesbian. Any attack against Black people is a lesbian and gay issue, because I and thousands of other Black women are part of the lesbian community. Any attack against lesbians and gays is a Black issue, because thousands of lesbians and gay men are Black. There is no hierarchy of oppression. (1983, 9)

Similar to Lorde's standpoint feminism, other theorists like Judith Butler challenge the notion of a lesbian essence, existing outside of time and place, but as a critical space within social structures (Butler 1993). Shane Phelan concludes that "all these theorists share in the process of feminist discourse on lesbianism but focus on the differences, the gaps and shifts, among women. Those differences and gaps do not preclude alliances and shared interests, but they make these alliances something to produce rather than a given: being lesbian provides a basis for mutual recognition, but it does not guarantee it"
Lesbian and gay identity-based politics have as their object 'the homosexual'; a stable, unified, and identifiable agent. Drawing from the a number of critiques, queer theorists argue that identities are always multiple or at best composites, with an infinite number of ways in which identity-components can intersect or combine. Any specific identity construction is arbitrary, unstable and exclusionary (Seidman 1994). Queer theorists posit that sexual categories such as 'lesbian' and 'gay' for example, create false boundaries and that sexual identity is much more fluid. Queer theory points out that the use of strict categories can not possibly accommodate the diversity and variation inherent in communities. Therefore such categorization often results in exclusion and the portrayal of the most acceptable in communities and groups. That is, mainstream gays and lesbians have often sought ways to appear 'normal', which usually means ways to appear 'heterosexual'. This is achieved by constructing stable, visible identities that fit within this political rhetoric. Fixed and stable categories create, as queer theory suggests, a binary relationship between homo and hetero, while still maintaining heterosexuality as the norm and the original.

As previously discussed, the tendency in anti-homophobia education is to present sexual identities and categories in an uncomplicated manner, that is, as fixed and stable. In some instances, it is presented as a known but repressed fact, as in 'I always knew I was X'. Strategically, such a presentation is intended to impart more empathic views from dominant society. The suggestion is that
homosexuality is biologically determined, thus removing the element of choice. A biological determinism argument aims to weaken this blame-based response. Perhaps this strategy has been successful in individual circumstances, but sexuality must be analyzed within systems of power. An analysis that presents the homosexual as being born 'that way' and unable to change, manages to solicit feelings of acceptance from dominant society, but leaves unquestioned the power inherent in the regulation and maintenance of heterosexuality.

Part of this presentation is rooted in essentialist as well as constructionist approaches and their relationship to sexual identity. A constructionist approach understands that gender and sexual identity are not private or solely the product of biology but are created through the intersection of political, social and economic forces that vary over time. Rather than posit these arguments in total opposition to one another, Diana Fuss (1991) successfully weakens the essentialist/constructivist binary that has existed in some feminist theory and in the theories that have structured anti-homophobia education. Essentialist arguments assume an ontology which stands outside the sphere of cultural influence and historical shifts. No allowance is made for the historical production of the categories, including the categories that are used in anti-homophobia education to define sexual identity. Fuss suggests that essentialist arguments are not necessarily ahistorical, but they frequently theorize history as an unbroken continuum that moves across cultures and time without in any way redefining or re-constituting them. Although constructivists take up historicity as
a way to challenge essentialism, Fuss notes that it is often with uncomplicated or essential notions of history. For example, she suggests that while a constructivist presentation might recognize that 'man' and 'woman' are produced across discourses, the categories of 'man' and 'woman' still remain constant. (Fuss 1989)

As previously discussed, feminist theorist, bell hooks, suggests that a totalizing critique of 'subjectivity, essence and identity', that is presented by Diana Fuss, can seem very threatening for marginalized groups for whom naming one's identity is part of the struggle against domination. hooks is critical of Fuss for neglecting to examine how dominant groups also perpetuate essentialism. Instead Fuss offers examples of individuals invoking the 'authority of experience' who are members of groups which historically have been and are oppressed and exploited. (Fuss 1989, 81)

There are obviously political grounds to articulate essentialist and constructivist accounts of gay and lesbian identity. There are also grounds to continuously critique the legitimacy of both of these accounts. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990) proposes that we must repeatedly ask how certain categories work, what they are enacting, and what relations they are creating, rather than what they essentially mean. She insists that there is currently no framework in which one can ask questions as to the origins or causes of homosexuality without the outcome being the eradication of gay/lesbian/bisexual identity. Sedgwick states that:
...for gay and gay-loving people, even though the space of cultural malleability is the only conceivable theatre for our effective politics, every step of this constructivist nature/culture argument holds danger: it is so difficult to intervene in the seemingly natural trajectory that begins by identifying a place of cultural malleability; continues by inventing an ethical or therapeutic mandate for cultural manipulation; and end in the overarching, hygienic Western fantasy of a world without anymore homosexuals in it. (1990, 42)

That is, in a hostile world, the acknowledgment that homosexuality is constructed instead of a product of biology, is likely to promote interventions that would end its construction. It is against this set of dangers that essentialist understandings of sexual identity gather some momentum. Resistance to this threat is to offer a fixed, unalterable, homosexual body. Yet establishing identity on the grounds of biology or essential nature is not a stable way of insulating it from societal interference. The belief that homosexuality is genetically or biologically based triggers the same fantasy of a world without anymore homosexuals. (Sedgwick 1990, 43) Therefore, whether homosexuality is promoted as socially constructed or genetically determined is of little significance in a homophobic society.

Perhaps the only way to disrupt the discourse of causality of homosexuality, which is framed in essentialist/constructivist theories, is to talk about identity and sexual categories in more complex ways. Incorporating Sedgwick's ideas, anti-homophobia education could ask how categories work and what happens in the performance of these categories, rather than what they
Ki Namaste (1994) speaks to this when she questions what the play between hetero and homo means for people who identify as neither heterosexual nor homosexual. Namaste suggests that the category of homosexuality cannot be the only site of resistance to heterosexual hegemony. Namaste asks where bisexuals and transgenders fit into a binary relationship between homo and hetero. Instead, an emphasis on the particularities of gender and sexual practices allows for the inclusion of a variety of identities: transsexuals, bisexuals, drag queens, fetishists, lesbians, gay men, queers and heterosexuals. An emphasis on the multiplicity of identity has the potential to expand beyond a hetero/homo opposition. Namaste proposes that "by unsettling much of the lesbian and gay response to heterosexism, and by suggesting that many nonheterosexual positions are available, such activism focuses its attention on displacing heterosexuality, homosexuality, and the relations between the two" (Namaste 1994, 230).

Namaste suggests further that shifting gay and lesbian responses to heterosexism might dislodge the binary relationship between hetero and homo. Diana Fuss (1991) posits that the fear of the homo continually rubs up against

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1 As defined by Namaste, transgender "is used to designate the lives and experiences of a diverse group of people who live outside normative sex/gender relations i.e. where the biology of one's body is taken to determine how one will live and interact in the social world. The transgender community is made up of transsexuals(pre-,post-, and nonoperative) transvestites, drag queens, passing women, hermaphrodites, stone butches, and gender outlaws who defy regulatory sex/gender taxonomies". (1994, 228)
the hetero and presents the very real possibility of a collapse of boundaries and a confusion of identities. Heterosexuality can never fully ignore the close proximity of homosexuality, just as homosexuality can never entirely escape the constant social pressures and insistence of heterosexuality. Heterosexuality needs homosexuality for its own definition: a macho homophobic male can define himself as 'straight' only in opposition to that which he is not - an effeminate gay man. Homosexuality is not excluded from such homophobia; it is integral to its assertion. (Namaste 1994) Some of the educational tools used in anti-homophobia workshops, as previously discussed, such as the use of 'out' facilitators and panel discussions fuel this dynamic.

In addition to anti-homophobia education preserving the homo/hetero binary targeted as problematic in queer and postmodern theory, such education relies on a notion of experience also critiqued by queer and postmodern theorists, as not addressing the multiple narratives that shape and impact how groups come to develop their identities.

The purpose of sharing experiences or story-telling in anti-homophobia education is to humanize gay men and lesbians for a straight audience, by challenging homophobic constructs with the intent of reaching across differences. Educators have been resistant to reflect on power relations that are sustained in this process, and to evaluate whether the goals of sharing experiences are realized.

In discussing the practice of story-telling, Sherene Razack writes that
educators need to attend to the "difference in position between the teller and the listener, between telling the tale and hearing it" (1993, 56). Differences in power between the teller and the listener, if unacknowledged, may simply reassure the listener of their own tolerance. In anti-homophobia education and AIDS education audiences are easily captured by the personal stories shared by gays and lesbians and/or persons living with HIV/AIDS. Despite their interest, the response may be one of compassion, which maintains their position of superiority. Razack (1993, 66) states that "as a listener, one can be drawn into such a process very easily. I have seen students literally feeding off the tears of stories from the Third World, basking in the sense of having visited another country so easily and feeling no compulsion to explore their own complicity in the oppression of others."

Recognizing the limits of story-telling, in terms of accountability of the listener, Razack proposes that we "concentrate on how we are 'processing' this information differently based on our respective subject positions" (1993, 68). The problem then is how to get the listener to experience difference, differently.

Importantly, the authentic voices used for sharing life stories in critical education depend on the listeners conception of the self as stable and coherent. The complicity of each of us in the oppression of others cannot be taken up through story-telling.

It is not enough to theorize that issues of race, class or sexuality simply combine with gender to understand differences in experiences. In exploring the
limits of an essentialist understanding of women's experience, and the purpose of anti-essentialism, Sherene Razack writes:

Given the many ways in which women are implicated in each others lives, anti-essentialism as a methodology takes us well beyond a politics of inclusion. That is, we can no longer devise political strategies that start with something we might call women's experience, on to which we would then graft the special strategies that would apply to women with disabilities, women of colour or lesbians. To do so is to install a norm that privileges one group of women at the expense of others. A more fruitful approach is to ascertain how, at specific sites, patriarchy, white supremacy and capitalism interlock to structure women differently and unequally. (1998, 376)

For anti-homophobia education this means moving beyond the rhetoric of difference and diversity when examining the oppressive effects of homophobia and heterosexism. It also requires a more thorough interrogation of the differential impact of sexism, racism, economic exploitation and ableism in the lives and gays and lesbians. Importantly, integrating personal experience in anti-homophobia education must be examined according to what it produces.

I have reviewed some of the current writing in postmodern and queer theory that present challenges to both the theoretical constructs of anti-homophobia education and the practice of these constructs. In particular, the modern subject cannot address the multiple sites that shape gay and lesbian experiences, and the existing practices in anti-homophobia education do little to disrupt heterosexuality. My research will explore whether there is practical application of these concepts for anti-homophobia that is instructed in the context of community social services.
To address some of the theoretical constructs laid out in the previous chapters, this research takes a qualitative approach in exploring with community based educators their analysis and practice in conducting anti-homophobia workshops. Specifically the research was conducted with service providers in Winnipeg, using the following methods: a focus group; follow up face to face interviews; an examination of training materials used by educators; and my own journal. I have used multiple research methods in this study which has enabled me to view the topic from different angles (triangulation) which provides a “richness to the data”, which I will explain later in this chapter (Ristock & Pennell 1996, 51; Lather 1991). The focus group provided an opportunity for educators to explore with one another some of the issues they are confronted with in doing anti-homophobia education, many of which are discussed in the literature review. Some of the themes that emerged in the focus group were explored further in the follow up interviews. The interviews provided an opportunity to assess whether the focus group discussion had any impact on educators’ practices. The educational material that was collected from research participants provided me with concrete examples of articles and videos that are used to inform anti-
homophobia workshops. Finally, my journal keeping was to engage in self-reflexivity. It helped to keep me on track with the process of the research and assisted me in keeping my own agenda in check. Importantly, the process of both the focus group and interviews with participants clarified and sometimes shifted my own thinking. These reflections and observations on the process and content of the research were recorded in my journal.

The research was conducted with service providers who facilitate anti-homophobia education in the agency in which they are a staff or volunteer member. The social service context of the research must be understood and is taken up as part of my analysis of the larger context that informs their work.

Social Services

This research focuses on educators' who work within community based social services in Winnipeg. Within social services there are limitations, particularly in terms of funding, demand of services and time constraints that have a profound impact on the shape and content of anti-homophobia education. Community based social services are struggling to maintain operational funding which provides both security and greater independence regarding the kind of programs and services that are offered. As operational funding from government and private sector has diminished, agencies are forced to seek out short term project directed funding. Project funds are available for time restricted concepts that have clearly mapped out goals and objectives. This short-term project
funding may allow an agency to provide anti-homophobia education within specific parameters and over a short term period. While stable operational funding for social services has diminished, the demand for services has increased. Increases in need and demand of services has put additional strain and time constraints on agencies and staff. Social service agencies are not in a position to take on new educational initiatives and are often so overburdened that they are unable to thoroughly evaluate and reflect on existing educational workshops that they offer. Community services might integrate anti-homophobia education within a training program for volunteers or as a component of professional and staff/board development. In this context, anti-homophobia education is incorporated informally in a few progressive services. Most social services in Winnipeg have yet to synthesize, formally or informally, any kind of anti-homophobia education (Balan, Chorney and Ristock 1995).

There may also be differences in the goals of educators who facilitate workshops and the goals of the agency in which they are employed. An agency goal may be to increase acceptance and tolerance for gays and lesbians, while the educator may want to challenge participants to examine how sexuality and normalcy is a social construct. This goal is intended to move participants beyond the ideas of tolerance and acceptance for homosexuality, and provide a framework to challenge social norms and regulations that promote heterosexual normativity. In addition, government and private sector funders have established goals and objectives for services that may be contrary to the goals of educators.
For the most part I think that social service agencies and funding bodies primarily support the goal of tolerance. Many agencies minimally want to ensure that their programs and services are accessible to gay and lesbian clients as part of their liberal philosophy that they are open to everyone (Balan, Chorney and Ristock 1995). The negotiation of these differences between the goals of the educator and the goals of the agency in anti-homophobia education must also be considered. Therefore, the context in which anti-homophobia education is provided must be acknowledged.

Winnipeg is a city with a population of approximately 650,000 people. There are a range of community based social services including a handful of AIDS service organizations (ASO's), feminist based community and health services, a small number of Aboriginal and multicultural services, and one gay and lesbian resource centre. People working within these services generally know one another and are somewhat familiar with the work of other agencies in the city. Among the services that I have listed, there are only one or two agencies that provide much of the public anti-homophobia workshops and staff training for community based services. Generally, other agencies integrate a session on anti-homophobia education in their volunteer training programs. Winnipeg is not representative of social services in other cities, nor does it reflect what exists in rural and northern Manitoba. This was a good site for my research because of my own history in the social service community. I worked in a women's resource centre as a counsellor for over eight years. This work kept
me in contact with a number of community based social service agencies. My current involvement in an AIDS service organization provides me with connections and regular contact with other AIDS services and related programs. While my paid and volunteer work history has provided me with connections to a number of community based social services and a general familiarity with their work, I am aware that as a white lesbian, my access to organizations that work predominantly with Aboriginal people and other multicultural groups is more difficult. In addition, my access to street outreach projects that work with groups with very complicated social issues, is also more difficult. My experience and background both facilitate insight into the research and create some limitations.

Participants

I established criteria for participants' involvement in the study before recruiting volunteers. First, all research participants needed to be facilitating anti-homophobia workshops through the format of public education and/or in house volunteer training programs. Second, all participants needed to be either a staff or a volunteer in a feminist oriented and community based service. Finally, it was required that services be Winnipeg based.

In selecting potential services for the research study, I used the most recent edition of CONTACT Community Information: Community Resource Guide for Winnipeg. As an information and referral service, Contact gathers information on community programs, self-help groups, government agencies and
other groups, to produce a comprehensive resource book each year. In the CONTACT guide I selected potential services that were listed under the categories of Health: Community Health Clinics and AIDS services, Women: Resource Centres, and Homosexual: Gay and Lesbian services. All of the organizations listed and contacted under these categories had the potential and have fit within the above mentioned criterion.

I called nineteen organizations that fit within the criterion, introduced my research project and asked them if they provided anti-homophobia education. Those organizations that provided some form of anti-homophobia education were asked if they might be interested in participating in a focus group. For those twelve organizations who voiced an interest, I sent out a letter that described my study, put forward clear objectives and detailed their participation. (See Appendix A)

As discussed in the letter, I telephoned each of the organizations two weeks after sending the letter. The purpose of this call was to answer any questions, clarify both the interest of the organization and the staff/volunteer representative(s), and to discuss time availability for the focus group meeting. At this point, eleven organizations voiced their interest in the study. Once a date was secured that suited most participants' schedules, I called back with the information. In this phone call I reviewed the discussion topic again, details of the focus group such as time, date, location and a reminder to bring with them their training material and consent forms; the latter was sent out after I received
verbal confirmation. I could not find a time for the focus group that met the needs of all participants. In order to include the ideas of all potential participants in the research I set up an alternate method. There were two participants who were unavailable during the scheduled time of the focus group. I suggested that we conduct in person interviews after the date of the focus group discussion so that I could incorporate some of the discussion of the focus group into interviews with them. One participant agreed to the interview; the other declined this option. In total, eleven people participated in one focus group and I conducted twelve in person interviews. All participants were sent a package of information prior to the focus group that included the following: the details of the focus group (See Appendix B), a consent form (See Appendix C), a discussion guide of questions (See Appendix D), and my own dilemmas and thoughts concerning some of the objectives of the study. (See Appendix E)

I asked participants to complete a form that asked demographic information. Seven participants self identified as female, four as male and one identified as butch. The age of the participants ranged between 20 - 49 years with eight participants falling between 30 - 39 years old. Two of the participants were people of colour, who identified as Latin and Metis, and ten were white, two of whom also identified as Jewish and Italian. Four of the participants self identified as heterosexuals, one of which identified as both bisexual and heterosexual, five as lesbians and three as gay. The level of education ranged from grade twelve to masters degrees in a number of disciplines. All participants
have been providing some form of anti-homophobia education for between one year and ten years, with the majority at the five year mark. For most of the participants, facilitating anti-homophobia education was a component of their paid work.

The participants also represented a range of social services, with some representing more than one social service agency. Included were AIDS service organizations, community health clinics, women's services, multicultural services, a university based service and a gay and lesbian service. The range of training that is provided included training volunteers to provide crisis and ongoing counselling, information and referral phone line services that address a range of issues from birth control to HIV/AIDS and public workshops for schools and organizations.

Procedure and Methods

Focus group: The structure of a focus group provided the opportunity for educators to come together and exchange ideas and thoughts with one another. From my own experience, the work in community based social services can become overwhelming and at times insular. Due to shrinking resources and increasing work demands there is limited time to reflect on training practices and to evaluate the outcome. For these reasons it was essential that the research process be meaningful for the participants. The focus group structure allowed me to hear a number of ways that educators facilitate and negotiate training
material for anti-homophobia workshops.

Focus groups provide possibilities for meaningful interactions as participants tend to be influenced by the comments of others and their engagement to the material is often enhanced by their interactions with others (Krueger 1988). Importantly, the purpose of the focus group was not simply to affirm the work of educators, but rather to enable educators to examine, challenge and further their analysis and practice concerning anti-homophobia education (Fine 1993). My hope was that the process of research would offer a chance for reflection on the theories that structure how participants' teach and possibly disrupt some of their ways of thinking.

The questions for the focus group discussion (Appendix D) came out of some of the dilemmas that I had experienced as a facilitator of anti-homophobia education. The questions asked participants to discuss a range of issues including their goals for the education and whether they are realized, how they incorporate both their own and the participants' experience into the education, the ways in which they instruct about sexual identities and how they discuss intersections of race, class and gender with sexuality. I was particularly interested in how educators' negotiated their own identities and experiences in the training and how they determined the success or failure of workshops. Some of the questions emerged from queer theory, AIDS education and feminist material that is discussed in the previous chapter. The discussion questions were all framed within a social service context. That is, the content of the
discussion would consider the audience, the agency in which the participant is employed and some of the realities that must be considered when doing this work within social services. The discussion guide was a tool to spark conversation and ideas and to promote meaningful interaction among participants.

My role was to facilitate the discussion, ensure that we were able to cover most of the material in the allotted time and look after the comfort aspects of a group. I paid attention to people's participation in the discussion and their interactions with one another. My participation was also interactive as I participated in the discussion.

The focus group was audio taped and transcribed. Participants brought their signed consent forms with them to the focus group. Prior to the focus group discussion, issues of confidentiality were reviewed. The group brainstormed all of the things that would comfortably allow them to speak in the group. These ideas were recorded on a flipchart and incorporated into the group discussion. I briefly reviewed the information that was sent to all participants and reiterated that the discussion questions were only a guide to the conversation and asked participants if there were any comments or additions to these questions. Participants suggested that they were satisfied with the question guide and all participants proceeded to introduce themselves, the agency they represented and described the context in which they facilitate anti-homophobia education.

The focus group discussion was three hours long and at the conclusion
participants were asked to complete a one page questionnaire requesting demographic information (Appendix F) and to choose a time for a follow up interview. I had put together a schedule of available interview times two to four weeks following the focus group.

**Interviews:** The follow up interview was intended to take the focus group discussion a little further. This allowed participants time to reflect on the discussion and its implication for their own practices. The interview allowed me to explore with participants whether the discussion provoked changes in how they might instruct anti-homophobia education.

The interview sessions were structured by a set of questions that were designed to act as a guide to explore themes that arose in the focus group. They were intended to stimulate an interactive conversation between myself and the participants. The interview questions required participants to reflect on the focus group discussion and speak about their perceptions about the differences and similarities in educators' theories and methods in facilitating anti-homophobia education, the kinds of written and theoretical material that guided their own educational practices, and whether the focus group discussion shifted any of their ideas and practices in facilitating anti-homophobia education.

The interview questions were developed after listening to the tape of the focus group and identifying issues that warranted further explanation. Common themes emerged from the discussion that I thought could benefit from further discussion. The questions also evolved from my own journal notes taken.
following the focus group. Time constraints for the focus group meant that certain issues did not get a chance to be fleshed out, so that some of these issues were brought back through the interview questions.

While I followed an interview guide for each interview, I integrated into later interviews, pertinent issues and ideas that emerged in earlier ones. The interviews became conversations where the questions and themes were addressed through a dialogue between the interviewer and the participants. The process followed an interactive interviewing practice (Ristock & Pennell 1996).

Each participant scheduled an interview time with me after the focus group meeting. Interviews were scheduled two to four weeks following the focus group. This interval allowed participants enough time for reflection while still keeping the focus group discussion relatively fresh in their minds. All interviews, with one exception, took place in the organization in which the participant worked. One interview was re-scheduled and took place in my home.

Before each interview, participants were given the follow up questions to preview and provide comments before beginning. Interviews were thirty to forty-five minutes long and all were tape recorded and transcribed. Each participant was sent a copy of their transcription to allow for feedback and to ensure that the interview accurately captured their thoughts and ideas. I telephoned all participants two weeks after sending the transcriptions and made any changes and/or additions that they requested.

One participant who was unable to attend the focus group discussion,
agreed to a one hour interview which took place at his work. The discussion guide of questions used in the focus group was followed for this interview. I followed similar procedures for this interview as with the other eleven.

**Educational Material:** I collected various educational material from participants. The educational material assisted me in noting differences and similarities between what educators' discussed in the focus group and interviews in terms of their educational practices and whether the material reflected these ideas. I was interested in the ideas that are reflected in the information that is given to participants of anti-homophobia education.

Participants provided me with materials that informed their training. The material collected is varied; some participants worked in a more informal structure and utilized little educational material. The material included the following: articles that inform the way educators' instruct the training; training agendas; and articles and videos used to educate the participants of anti-homophobia education. Some material was collected from participants at the completion of the focus group, the remaining material was collected during the follow up interviews.

**Journal:** My role as the researcher in this study had many complications. I had both a peer relationship with participants as well as a researcher/participant relationship. The content and direction of the research was informed by my own experiences in facilitating anti-homophobia education within social services. As well, both practical and theoretical literature helped to construct a critique of
some of my own teaching practices. I entered into this study with some concrete ideas and expectations. My journal keeping throughout the research process provided me the opportunity to reflect on many of these complications.

I used the journal to keep track of the ideas and thoughts that were triggered for me during the process of the research. The journal keeping ensured that my own agenda was kept in check and allowed me to reflect on the differences in my position as both researcher and peer. Although many of the participants in the research are my peers, I was aware that my role as researcher put me in a position of power. I discussed my hesitations and concerns with participants in both the written material that I circulated as well as through interactive discussion in the focus group and interviews. The practice of self-reflexivity in the research process provided me with some clarity on power relations as a component of the research. In making myself part of the research, my social location and identities must be laid out and examined since as the researcher I inform and shape the research process (Ristock & Pennell 1996; Kirby & McKenna 1989). This reflexive work required me to pay attention to my own thinking and agenda and the impact of this on the participants in the study. It was imperative that I was able to hear what participants were saying even when it went against my own expectations and interests (Fine 1993). I also reflected on my own experiences in facilitating anti-homophobia workshops, which were often triggered by remarks and concerns voiced by participants.

Importantly, in the research process I paid attention to issues of validity.
through the practice of self-reflexivity and triangulation of research methods. Using the definition of validity as discussed by Ristock & Pennell (1996), I wanted to ensure that the research process had integrity and that the findings resonated with the experiences of the participants. I was concerned with what Lather describes as face validity, and the inclusion of catalytic validity (Lather 1991). The purpose of face validity is to ensure that the material makes sense to others and this process is done by redirecting the data, emerging analysis and conclusions back through a sub-sample of participants (Lather 1991). I paid attention to this criteria for validity by ensuring that all interview transcripts were mailed back to participants to ensure that the data was an appropriate reflection of their thoughts, ideas and practices. All participants provided me with feedback, and their suggestions for change were incorporated into the transcripts.

Catalytic validity represents the degree to which the research process helps to focus and energize participants to transform ideas and practices (Lather 1991). This research process was structured, in part, to assist participants to gain self-understanding and motivation to shift thinking and practice. Concerning self-reflexivity, the process of journal keeping and reflections helped me to keep my own agenda and ideas in check, which ensured that the participants' experiences and ideas were reflected in the research.

Triangulation, the use of multiple research methods, helped to establish the data as credible and it provided the opportunity to view the research from
different perspectives (Ristock & Pennell 1996; Lather 1991). Through dialogue with educators, the focus group captured a broad perspective of key issues and dilemmas, while the follow-up interviews allowed for further reflection and clarity from educators. Through the document analysis I was able examine how the concepts of homophobia and heterosexism, and gay and lesbian identity were articulated in written and visual material used by educators. The practice of journal keeping helped to focus and keep the research on track.

Data Analysis

The data analysis combines the comments and interactions between educators from both the focus group and the face to face follow up interviews. I attempted to incorporate comments and ideas equally from all participants. However, the logistics of equal voice is difficult as some participants were more actively engaged than others, in the discussion of the focus group, as reflected in the selected comments.

The organization of the data does not indicate interactions between educators nor does it properly describe the dynamics of the focus group. The focus group provided educators with an opportunity to talk with one another about how they understood anti-homophobia work and the kinds of educational strategies that are used to meet some of their goals. Despite the fact that the participants were all educators working within community based social services, they all have different mandates and therefore would not have been a group of
people who would have naturally come together to talk about what they do. At the end of the focus group most participants wanted the opportunity to continue the discussion in more depth. "People all said that it's a good beginning but they want more opportunity to talk with one another about why we do what we do, what it is achieving." (My journal reflection, post focus group)

The interactions between educators was lively and at times challenging. Participants suggested that both the focus group questions and the discussion itself provided a disruption and a challenge to how they facilitate this work; it required them to critically reflect on their practices. Since the majority of educators identified as gay and lesbian, there was personal and meaningful conversation about the role of their sexual identity in anti-homophobia work. My own reflections suggest that the focus group "provided some with a disruption to think about how they use their own sexual identity in the training - had not thought of some of the dangers and problems. [...]There were comments that my questions and discussion triggered interest on their part but they felt very disconnected from all of these ideas because of the isolation of doing the work. There isn't the time to reflect on many of these ideas." (My journal reflection, post focus group)

For those educators who identified as heterosexual there was a sense of struggle in identifying the role that their sexual identity played in this work. "There is a difference in the way in which we talk about issues of homophobia and heterosexism as gays and lesbians, and then as individuals who identify as
Some wonder what their role is as an anti-homophobia educator because they can't bring in their lived experiences.” (My journal reflection, post interview.) The focus group also provided a space for people to speak about their struggles with shifting ideas and concepts, which for some was in contradiction to their work environment which remained static or uninterested in these ideas.

The collected data was analyzed using the following areas as a guide:

In each of the research methods (focus group, interviews, and educational material) I examined how specific concepts and theories position anti-homophobia education and shape the educational tools. The material is examined with attention to particular issues which arose based on my own work in the area and on the anti-homophobia literature. Based on these sources, the data was examined with attention to the following areas: an analysis of power and how this analysis is integrated in the education; issues of sexual representation and categories; and the authority of experience. In addition to these key areas, other categories emerged in the process of analysis. I reviewed the focus group and interview transcripts a number of times. During this review process, central categories emerged from the data. Each of the emerging categories were color coded. The data was organized according to these larger themes, which were then broken down into smaller categories within each theme.

While it is essential that the process of the research and the findings
resonate with participants, the process is in contrast to grounded theory that
tends to over value the area of experience by ensuring that the voices of
participants come forward in the analysis, without challenge (Ristock and Pennell
1996; Lather 1991). An essentialist outlook assumes that the experiences of
being a member of a particular group are stable and fixed with meaning that is
constant. In contrast to an essentialist notion of experience, the process of this
research took into account the constructed nature of experience that is
transposed by different historical, social and personal contexts. The voices of
participants are not simply taken at face value but are contextualized. As one
example, I paid attention to the possibility that participants presented themselves
as good educators and/or progressive, both to myself and to their peers, since
they may have felt evaluated in the research process according to these
indicators. The voices of participants are understood as personal accounts,
rather than taken up as truths. These accounts are historically and socially
constructed, and change over time (Ristock and Pennell 1996).

Importantly, the purpose of this research was not to simply affirm the work
of educators, but rather through the dynamics of a focus group discussion offer
challenges to the modernist constructs that ground anti-homophobia education
and the practice of it. My inquiry examines whether there is practical application
in anti-homophobia education for the contradictions and complexities that are
discussed in postmodern and queer theories.
Chapter 5

Dilemma’s and Implications: Tolerance and Essentialism in Critical Education

This chapter is grounded in the realities and constraints of facilitating critical education in a social service context. A central finding in the data is that while educators are cognizant of the limits of the modern subject and possess an awareness that tolerance does not disrupt heterosexuality, they struggle to find a pedagogy that will both push beyond the limits of tolerance and take up some postmodern implications. The findings indicate that educators seem to be trapped in a language of tolerance, their best intentions notwithstanding. This chapter will begin to lay this out and offer some analysis to understand why this is and how a discourse of tolerance is evident in educational activities.

The chapter examines the data that resulted from the research and provides a context in which critical education takes place and some of the inherent constraints. What follows is a discussion among educators who work within different theories of power in teaching about homophobia and heterosexism and the resulting implications. Educators then take up the difficult theoretical problems of sexual categories and representation and the use of
personal experience. Central to these discussions is the need to essentialise gay and lesbian identity for political purposes and in the face of very real threat. Educators are cognizant of the dilemma; an essentialist understanding of gay and lesbian experience creates a very strict membership around the group, which creates exclusions and privileges the experiences of one group of gays and lesbians at the expense of others.

Following this is an examination of some educational tools that are used by educators in this research and in the literature review. These educational tools are premised on modernist notions with the intent of promoting tolerance. Therefore they reveal some of the theoretical problems of essentialism and the problematic of the authority of experience over other forms of knowledge production.

The Context of Critical Education: The Constraints and Realities of Social Services

Anti-homophobia education in this research is conducted within the parameters and realities of social service agencies. For the most part the services that the research participants work within are seen as being progressive community based social services who integrate anti-homophobia work as one component of critical education that attempts to address barriers and injustices. In describing anti-heterosexist education in human services, Cheryl Clarke concludes; "Education is desperately needed. Straight human service providers
have almost as much at stake as queer human service providers, particularly as we face the anti-sex beliefs, practices, and discourses that have such virulent currency at present" (1995, 97). This holds true for participants in this research who hope to impact homophobic and heterosexist ideas and practices.

Most of the social service agencies that participated in the research rely on a combination of government and private sector funding. The funding level ranged from small university groups who rely on student fee contributions to larger community health and social services who receive provincial government funding through the departments of Family Services and Health. While funders do not monitor the content of programs and services, including training, there is a reciprocal relationship between services and funders that may present restrictions and contradictions in service delivery. While the funder/agency relationship was not a major component of this research, the realities and sometimes limitations of social services must be integrated in order to understand the political analysis that informs anti-homophobia education and the educational strategies that are used to achieve goals.

There may be disparity between the goal of the educator and the goal of the agency who is constantly negotiating between funding and services. In some instances this tension is subtle and reveals agencies and staff who operate within a discourse of tolerance yet at times perpetuate homophobic and/or heterosexist ideas. One educator spoke about the difference between her goal as an educator to effect larger, more systemic change, and the agency
goal of tolerance.

I don’t want to bash my own agency but I think we have a long way to go, relative to some of the other places. And it’s something that I’ve been pushing. I’m not personally powerful enough, but pushing more of an analysis, a bigger picture analysis. [...] I think it should be more connected to classism, racism, sexism and how it effects our sexuality. And so when you asked how do you censor yourself, I censor my feminism here. I call it feminism, but it’s an analysis of power and injustice between women and men, between people of color and white people. We’re feminist friendly, the executive director likes to have a feminist around, but not necessarily to integrate.[...] So when the group was talking about [...] tolerance is not enough, we go to the tolerance point, we don’t go beyond. (Interview, Karen)

Another educator spoke about how the subtlety of everyday homophobia and/or heterosexism is lost on some co-workers who live and work within a tolerance paradigm.

[My agency] talks about being a pro gay and lesbian agency, so I think it’s something that is pretty visible, in the volunteer program and with staff as well. [...] One of my co-workers was saying, 'I guess I live in a protective world because I work here, and I just don’t see the kind of homophobia that’s out there'. Because different ones of us have talked about how our families react to us or that kind of stuff and her point was I know homophobia exists but I don’t really see it. She’s still not quite believing that stuff because she’s still asking for examples. And so I said to her one day, your partner set a beautiful example of that when he said, 'oh they went on a holiday with these two guys who were in a relationship' and he said 'well, they’re really a straight gay couple. I said 'boy, that sure hits me like a homophobic comment!'. Like they are more mainstream, they’re not stereotypical, they aspire to work on their house. They live quite similarly in lots of ways. (Focus group and Interview, Mary)
A common practice in anti-homophobia education, as discussed in the literature, is an attempt to break down stereotypes of homosexuality and acknowledge similarities between homosexuals and heterosexuals in order to increase tolerance for homosexuality. In this example, there is tolerance for the most acceptable homosexual body (white, masculine, middle class), one that most closely mirrors mainstream heterosexuality.

Attitudes of co-workers often reflect the discourse of tolerance that is practiced within the agency, as discussed in the following passage.

One of my colleagues has a gay son and she feels compelled to talk to me about him and I see that as just pure homophobia. And I think if I told her that, she’d freak because she wouldn’t get it. And it’s like why would I care about your son, I don’t know him. I think it’s for me that she’s doing it. And it’s kinda patronizing, it’s really annoying. (Interview, Lisa)

While this example may not be self-evident as 'pure homophobia' to some, the participant is describing being "anthropologized" (Essed 1991, 115) and identified as the voice of difference within an agency that strives towards an ideal of tolerance. Under the guise of tolerance the gesture seems more like a practice of othering. This educator notes that should homophobia be named in this example, the colleague would be shocked or perhaps outraged. In reviewing Philomena Essed's work in understanding everyday racism, Sherene Razack notes that the "ideal of tolerance becomes the mode by which the dominant group secures its position; few notice that this ideal contains within it a hierarchy: who has the power to tolerate whom and what is the price of
tolerance? [...] Officially tolerant, liberal Whites are outraged when racism is
named since it is not supposed to exist" (Razack 1992, 149). There is
application for this analysis in the previous passage.

Another reality and limitation inherent in community based social services
is the imposition of time constraints in order to meet very specific program or
project goals. This often results in a sense of isolation in the work and
sometimes an oversimplification of complex ideas and concepts. Again,
although the goal of tolerance and acceptance of homosexuality was reviled by
most educators, they were often trapped in a discourse of tolerance in their work,
in part, so that they could meet demands and deadlines, and remain accountable
to their agency.

In some instances, training agendas provided to me by educators,
combined discussion about sexuality with sexual orientation and homophobia, to
be covered in a three hour session. Educators acknowledged that it was
impossible to cover the topics with any depth. The complex nature of the topics
were noted by most, who conceded that "for many people it is the first time
they've heard or thought about these issues, making these connections."
(Interview, Mary) In order to accommodate the agenda within these constraints
educators were obliged to "find readings that are like popular press." (Interview,
Sheryl) Within the topic of sexuality, the goal described in the training material
was to initiate discussion about the range of practices, beliefs and values around
sexuality. Educators were positioned to encourage tolerance for many points of

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view about sexual activity.

Critical education within social services is positioned within a discourse of tolerance despite the resistance of some educators. Some educators felt that there was little room to manouevre outside of the promotion of tolerance. The constraints and as a result the lack of critical reflection about what the education is achieving was regarded as an obstacle by one participant. She goes on to say that one barrier "is a sense of intimidation about what could that theorizing mean, what does it mean to deconstruct ideas, to think about what's happening, what's working and what isn't." (Interview, Lucy) Another participant acknowledged that while her ultimate goal is revolution; no longer to be driven by a capitalist economic agenda, she conceded that there is also value to the smaller movement towards tolerance. She points out that "there's kind of large goals and then the small ones. I guess I need the smaller goals so I don't get discouraged." (Interview, Lise)

In addition to the overall social service context, the context in which anti-homophobia education is conducted influences how it takes shape including how relations of power are discussed and the way that educational tools are adapted to training. The direction and depth of the education is dependent on such things as whether the training is ongoing or a one time public speak, the make up of the audience and the cultural context. Educators set parameters and define goals for anti-homophobia training, in part, according to whether the workshop is a component of an in-house volunteer training program or a one
time public presentation.

A time limited public presentation was viewed by educators as an opportunity to introduce the concepts of homophobia and heterosexism, and provide participants with information about the impact of individual and systemic discrimination on those individuals who identify as gay or lesbian. In some instances, the lived experiences of educators, as gays or lesbians, becomes the focus for the workshop rather than educating participants about their role in maintaining the power of heterosexuality and the relations between systems of domination. As I discussed in the literature review, anti-homophobia material proposes that the problem of homophobia is the result of misinformation and can be remedied exclusively through individual attitude change (Schreier 1995; Moses & Hawkins 1983). Most educators in this research practice within a political analysis that takes up the pervasiveness of heterosexuality, and do not agree that homophobia is the result of misinformation. In order to promote complex ideas that require participants to be self-reflective about their own role in maintaining oppressive systems, educators require more than a one time workshop. As a response to imposed limitations, educators turn to information and exercises that may influence individual attitudes, and promote tolerance and acceptance of homosexuality. Educators did not believe that homophobia is because of the lack of information, but provide information themselves as a starting point when there is limited time.

Most educators, more or less, felt that there was little room to manouevre
given the conditions under which critical education takes place. Most negotiated within the confines of strategies that promote tolerance and acceptance despite their theoretical position to move outside of such a discourse.

How Educators Understand The Work

Although there is significant consistency in how educators discuss both how they understand this work and some broadly defined goals, there were also some differences. For the most part, educators hope to completely alter how participants think about sexuality and to make connections to systems of oppression based on race, class and gender. Cheryl Clarke, an anti-heterosexist educator understands that "sexuality is one part of the politics of lesbian-gay liberation: we are not only fighting for the 'right' to sleep with who we want to but for the opportunity to fashion a future, to shape events, to influence the world as proud lesbian-gay-bisexual people. Our work, like the work of feminists, is also to unhinge and change the power dynamic of sexual politics in this culture, not merely to be accepted into the military or the church." (1995, 98-99) Similar to Clarke, some educators spoke about "hoping to completely alter how people think about everything in their life beyond sexuality to race and class oppression in general and privilege in general." (Focus group, Shayla)

While the goal of most educators is to shift systems of power they concede that these goals are more than what is possible to accomplish within the current parameters of anti-homophobia education. Most educators resign
themselves to achieving tolerance and acceptance of homosexuality but they continue to challenge participants to be self-reflective about language, values and assumptions.

People need to share how they feel about issues like homophobia, or racism, or classism or being able bodied, you have to be able to share that struggle. And it should be a struggle, it should be difficult for straight people to sit through an anti-homophobia workshop, they should feel uncomfortable. I think we often don’t want to make them feel uncomfortable. (Focus group, Shayla)

[Our training] challenges people because I think coming into training, they are here and all these other groups are ‘other’ and part of what we try to do is break that down. At the beginning of training, people are really confused because who they thought they were is in relationship to all these ‘others’, and that’s part of what we try to do and I think it’s really successful. (Focus group, Sheryl)

And for everyone to also acknowledge the place where they do have power and how are they using that power in their lives. Not only to identify with oppression, but also with power. (Focus group, Fran)

A number of educators in this research ground anti-homophobia and heterosexism work within an analytical framework that takes up other forms of power and oppression based on race, class, gender, ability. The complexity of domination and subordination is not reflected in some of the educational material that was given to me by participants. In an attempt to link systems of domination, some of the material which is based on liberation theory and practice, names dominant and subordinate groups. Similar to the critique of Suzanne Pharr’s work in an earlier section on feminist influences in teaching
about sexual identity, this material suggests that there is a binary relationship between the categories, rather than a more complex reading of the multiplicity of identity groups. The impact of these categories are discussed in the material in terms of people being doubly or triply oppressed, without unraveling the ways in which these narratives come together to shape experience.

Most educators acknowledge that they are not able to get beyond individual tolerance, particularly given the conditions in which critical education takes place. For the most part, they seem to believe that tolerance remains a worthwhile but limited goal.

A lone voice among the educators suggests that his goal is simply to influence change in individual attitudes and opinions concerning homosexuality without interrupting heterosexism.

I guess that the biggest thing that we do is in attitude clarification and making sure that people are aware of different opinions out there. They don’t actually have to believe them, we’ve not trying to change their opinion, we’re just trying to let them know that there are many opinions out there and that they will not be given the option to be judgmental. [...] They would feel like we were hitting them over the head with a shovel if we talked about oppression and where it came from. I think a lot of the students that get involved with the program have far too conservative backgrounds to understand it. (Interview, Greg)

Working Within A Theory of Power

Anti-homophobia workshops are fashioned from a particular political ideology that is loosely shared by most of the educators. Most educators self-
identify as feminist and work within a social analysis that addresses relations of power. Educators attempt to unravel how relations of power work in specific contexts, and to develop political strategies that will interrupt their operation. Connections are drawn between the operation and impact of racism, sexism and economic exploitation to issues of homophobia and heterosexism. Several educators use the work of Audre Lorde to define both heterosexism and the concepts and levels of homophobia.

One of the barriers to having participants understand the full complexity of these power structures, are the realities and limitations imposed by the structure of community social services. Educators acknowledge that they did not explore the complexity of how power is organized in society and how these systems interlock to structure particular experiences because of imposed limitations that left them with little room to manoeuvre.

According to training agendas provided to me by educators, a great deal of material is covered in a three or four hour section on homophobia and heterosexism. For some educators who are employed in AIDS services, an additional section of training that covers the interrelationship and impact between homophobia and AIDS, is included. As is evident in training outlines, there is an opportunity for participants to discuss and integrate more complex ideas.

Some educators voiced their dissatisfaction with the depth of the discussion that is reached in the anti-homophobia education. Educators are challenged to shift the consciousness of participants from an individual
acceptance of homosexuality, that maintains relations of power, to a critical analysis that recognizes how the practices of domination are driven by various systems.

Educators discuss differences in their analysis and reflect on the political framework that guides their work. Some participants spoke more broadly about a framework that acknowledges differences in power based on identities and social and economic conditions and how this impacts on people’s lives. A discussion of homophobia and heterosexism fits within this broad analysis.

Educators struggle to ground this analysis of power with the everyday impact of homophobia; to get beyond the liberal rhetoric of individual acceptance.

Homophobia fits into the bigger picture. Homophobia has to do with racism and gender issues, sexism, it’s all part of the discussion about the power differences between people and how that impacts on their lives. One of the things I’d like to see our training do more of is really challenge people to move beyond the 'I’m okay, you’re okay'. (Interview, Karen)

We look at a larger picture of oppression, systemic abuse, we look at it in a broader way. We do a couple of sessions on feminist awareness and we look at culture and power within that. (Interview, Mary)

Another participant constructs his work which is within the context of AIDS education, around the present and historical realities of colonialism. Anti-homophobia and AIDS education is positioned within the realities of racism and the loss of Aboriginal culture. This analysis of power and loss has a central role in the education in explaining high transmission rates of HIV among Aboriginal populations. Many Aboriginal leaders and communities continue to believe that
HIV/AIDS is a white, gay, urban disease. The struggle is to shift some of these stereotypes and address injustices.

We try to hook into a historical perspective and try to identify, especially for Aboriginal communities, to try to identify the evolution of how Aboriginal people got to be where we are today and some of the issues that are directly related to AIDS issues and risk of HIV infection. A lot of that deals with the historical events that took place around indoctrination into European values and European religions, the loss of traditional advisors, medicine people, the loss of traditional practices. (Interview, Darcy)

Another educator positions economic exploitation as primary in his analysis of power. He concludes that other injustices that are a result of race, gender, sexuality are driven by a capitalist system.

I have a strong socialist analysis, so I see the interconnectedness of homophobia and racism and misogyny and poverty because I see them as coming from the same point. I don’t have a lot of patience for an analysis of the world that doesn’t include an economic analysis. The way that we relate and the injustices in society are economic injustices. (Interview, Victor)

Most educators in this research try to get participants to personally engage with the impact of systemic discrimination. Many attempt this by making an analogy between discrimination based on sexuality, to the consequences of racism, sexism, classism as cited in the following passage.

In teaching about homophobia we suggest to people in the crowd, if they are women or if they are people of color or whatever the oppression is that they can relate to most directly, to try and make translations to homophobia. [...] As a white person I’ve had to learn that when a person of color says something to me about white people being racist, I
have a responsibility as a white person to hear that and not say ‘well, I’m not, I’m working hard’ and get all defensive about it. I’m still part of the dominant culture, I have a role to play, I still need to hear that criticism, whether or not it applies to me as an individual is irrelevant. [...] So it’s two things: politically identifying privilege and power and who is winning. (Focus group, Shayla)

The use of analogy as a teaching tool to assist participants to understand the experiences and realities of others, poses some danger. Analogies actually allow dominant groups to focus on their experiences of oppression, rather than looking at their complicity in upholding dominant systems. The use of analogy may initiate the ‘race to the margins’ and exacerbate the desire to have one’s own struggles receive recognition. By convincing ourselves that another’s experience is just like our own, we are then off the hook from having to fully comprehend the experience (Grillo and Wildman 1991). In speaking about racism/white supremacy, Grillo and Wildman maintain that “whites must confront their role as oppressors, or at least as beneficiaries of the racial oppression of others, in a race-based hierarchy” (1991, 408).

In this research I neglected to explore, with any depth, how my own whiteness and that of most educators in this research influences our pedagogy. Perhaps the common use of analogy and the lack of reflection about the practice among educators in this research has a relationship with our dominant identity as white. In this study we did not reflect on or speak to the danger of analogy, in re-centering dominance. By using analogy, both educators and participants focus on the ways that they are marginalized, rather than their positions of dominance.
The tendency for dominant groups is to examine and reflect on marginalized aspects of our identity, rather than the aspects that provide us privilege. This dynamic fueled the lack of reflection and discussion on my part about how my own whiteness, and that of most educators in this study, shapes our practices when facilitating anti-homophobia education. When provided with this critique about the use of analogy, educators are left with the dilemma of weighing out the benefits of using analogy with the dangers that it presents.

Educators in this research situate anti-homophobia and AIDS education differently according to an analysis of power and injustice that frames their work. Yet, despite these differences, the outcome is similar: tolerance and acceptance of homosexuality on the part of participants is more easily attainable, than is an acknowledgment of systemic injustices and the role that dominant subjects play in sustaining them. While the achievement of tolerance in an environment that promotes hatred and discrimination of homosexuality, has its merits, the struggle to get beyond it persists.

Theoretical Challenges

The following section is a discussion and some analysis about how educators work within certain educational themes that were identified in the literature review. To begin, I am particularly interested in how educators teach about sexual identity, and whether sexual categories are useful in their teaching. I bring forward to the discussion the question of whether modernist constructs of
sexual categories like gay, lesbian, etc. create more exclusions than they are beneficial in the struggle against domination.

Sexual Categories and Representation

As discussed in the review of literature, AIDS education is an example of how the use of sexual categories can create exclusions and put individual at risk. In my own experience one of the goals in educating about HIV and AIDS, is to challenge participants to think about the danger in using risk groups. This challenge includes confronting the association of AIDS with unacceptable and undesirable identities and behaviors. AIDS education projects that focus on men who have sex with men have learnt that it is a mistake to assume that all men have an identity constructed around their sexual practice. People may share the same sexual practice but identify in different ways (Deverell and Prout 1995).

In the following passage, one educator discusses the limits of sexual categories within a cultural context. In this example, HIV and AIDS education is positioned within a present and historical reality of racism, and the legacy for Aboriginal people of labeling and the imposition of jurisdictions by white, mainstream legislation.

[...] In explaining categories we talk about AIDS. I talk about the acronym of AIDS and how that has become a label, even though it was a medical term, and it’s not why the term was developed. It was developed by the medical and scientific community and now it’s so filled with emotion and fear and it means different things, to some people it means faggot, or it means death, or there’s alot of moralizing that
just goes around the term AIDS and so that’s where I talk about labeling people. [...] For Aboriginal people, the experience of labeling and jurisdictions is not a positive one. The whole treaty - non treaty, Metis; our history is filled with barriers and walls and jurisdictions that have separated people and then now when you come to something like AIDS, or being gay or bisexual or transsexual, transgender, the whole approach is new for Aboriginal people. [...] Initially you’re seen as a family member, so you have your family name and initially it was connected to a clan name. For alot of people that no longer exists but now we have family names and Aboriginal people have huge dynasty of families, like 300 people, you know that you belong to this. That’s your sense of who you are. And I think that’s the whole difference with the gay movement in identifying yourself as gay or lesbian. For Aboriginal people that would be odd or strange to identify your sexuality above your name or your family name. (Interview, Darcy)

Some educators recognize the limitations of sexual categories and discuss sexual identity as only informing who they are rather than producing a fixed, stable identity. There is some agreement with queer theorists who suggest that the use of strict categories cannot possibly accommodate the diversity and variation inherent in communities (Seidman 1994).

Being a gay man is an aspect of who I am, but I want to find out the whole of me. Sometimes I feel the constrictions of ‘he’s a gay man’. I think I find that in popular culture. I am defined by my orientation. Orientation does not define me, it informs, who knows what the hell it really would be if I didn’t live in this culture. (Interview, Donald)

I define as a lesbian, somebody else who lives the same lifestyle may not, that’s a matter of choice. (Interview, Sheryl)

Sometimes in a session on homophobia that discussion on identities and categories comes up in the whole question of why are we so concerned with categories. What does it
mean? Why do we need to separate ourselves out like this? And that’s where I try to bring in some of the fluidity stuff and just talking about this, it get to a broader discussion of categories, why do we need to categorize people? (Focus group, Fran)

Some educators were resistant to the critique of sexual categories put forward by queer theory. Specifically they were challenged by the notion of a binary relationship between homo and hetero that gets set up when we structure fixed borders around sexual categories. Queer theorist Ki Namaske questions where bisexual and transgender people fit within this homo and hetero binary. (1994) The response by some educators suggests that sexual categories are essential to understand the very real repercussions of a gay and lesbian identity, and to abolish such categories would deny the personal and political reasons for these categories.

Oppressed groups are faced with a terrible dilemma about essentialism. Groups need to essentialize for political purposes and in the face of threat to their very existence. Educators understand that gay and lesbian identity comes up against questions of authority and evidence. They resist these authoritative challenges by putting forward identities that are fixed and stable. Yet, to essentialise is to draw a very strict membership around the group. For example, some educators take a very strict line on bisexuality as a result of this dilemma, as evident in the following passage.

I think we do it for survival. [...]The tools that I have used to survive are not something I want to give up because this whiney bisexual is telling me that they’re not included in
'Swerve', and it's like you write fucking Cosmopolitan and tell them that your voice isn't included in Cosmo, because I think that in some ways homosexuals are more vulnerable to those kinds of attacks. I just think that bisexual writers who I have read who spend a lot of time criticizing gay community for not accepting them, would better direct their energies towards challenging the wider status quo. (Interview, Victor)

A similar critique is offered of the term 'queer'; suggesting that it ignores the everyday impact of living as a gay or lesbian person. Some participants who opposed the use of the term queer, articulate the necessity of the stable, unitary subject and challenge that a postmodern construct does not take into account the day to day realities of living as gays and lesbians. Both the term and the politics do not address the constant negotiating of their identity as gays and lesbians in the face of discrimination and threat, as evident in the next passage.

[...] That straight people take on the label of queer, I find that very disvalueing as a lesbian. It's taking on a label [...] without the kind of knowledge of daily struggle of being that kind of person. (Interview, Shayla)

Some educators acknowledge the limitations and artificial nature of categories, yet recognize that naming one's identity and drawing boundaries around membership is part of the struggle against domination for oppressed groups. This dilemma is articulated in the following passages.

It's like the categories are artificial but they're necessary and so you kind of hold on to the necessary part of those categories because you need solidarity in relation to the oppression. But when you're honest with yourself and within your own community you know that those categories are kinda bullshit, you know there's a whole bunch of other stuff, but to the outside world you need to put that out, because of the oppression you face. (Focus group, Karen)
It is homophobia and heterosexism that create strict gender identities and sexual identities and that is unfortunate for everyone, not just for homosexuals but for heterosexuals as well. (Interview, Shayla)

[...] A political context needs to come in. Because the reason we do (use categories) is because there is this power that is set up. [...] That comes through in training, 'I'm not into labels', 'whatever anyone does that's fine with me', 'I'm not into that', 'I love you guys'. Great. But that’s like saying there is no racism because we should just love each other. I totally agree, but there is this system and that is set up and in reality it’s very different from that. (Focus group, Mary)

Queer theorists maintain that the sexual categories of 'gay' and 'lesbian'
create false boundaries and that sexual identity is more fluid than these
categories allow. Strict categories cannot possibly accommodate the diversity
and variation inherent in communities. Yet, postmodern and queer theorists
would argue that purpose of anti-essentialism is beyond that of inclusion. In
articulating the point of anti-essentialism in relation to women’s experience
Sherene Razack writes,

the complex tracing of the social narratives that script how
women experience their gender and how other respond to it — is to determine how to identify and interrupt those
assumptions and practices that deny women their human
rights. Put another way, the point of anti-essentialism is
anti-subordination. (1998, 374)

In understanding gay and lesbian experience the purpose of anti-
essentialism is to examine how multiple systems of domination, like racism and
patriarchy for example, come together and shape gay and lesbian identities, and
how these systems impact on lived realities. For anti-homophobia education,
the impact of essentialism has been the portrayal of the most acceptable in communities and groups (Seidman 1994; Namaste 1994). Most educators in this research are critical of presenting the most acceptable gays and lesbians. Some educators disagreed that the use of sexual categories to understand sexual identity meant putting forward the best face. However, some spoke about the tension between a critique of the most acceptable and wanting to put forward the ideal, particularly in the context of anti-homophobia education, to ensure that participants remain focused on the impact of homophobia and heterosexism.

Other educators use a more 'in your face' strategy when facilitating anti-homophobia education, as evidenced in the next passage. This educator resists the impetus to put forward the ideal gay and lesbian image (white, middle-class, just like heterosexuals) in order to achieve small gains for some, while further entrenching the impact of racism, classism.

I have no intention of being nice enough for straight people. I think that we betray many many people in the gay and lesbian community by doing that, by putting our best face forward, the shining, happy, white face of middle class gays and lesbians. I think that it is shameful. It maintains a dominant ideology that is not ever going to accept who we are, or admire who we are, it gives them the opportunity to say, 'oh ya, I like those nice clean gay people'. And it's like you need to like alot more of us, because there are alot more of us. (Interview, Shayla)

Other educators struggle with how information will be received by straight audiences and the potential to further entrench stereotypes and misconceptions about gay and lesbian identities. Educators are conflicted with the need to put
forward a unified front when discussing with straight audiences the realities of hatred and discrimination for gays and lesbians.

It feels like giving ammunition to say but we struggle with battering and all those things too, and yet all of that is true. My concern is always how is this going to be received and how will that information be used by the people you’re providing it with because I’ve heard people say why would anyone want to be gay or lesbian when it’s so horrible out there and you’re beaten down all the time. (Interview, Mary)

There’s the concept of not talking about our dirty laundry with straight people. Like conflicts between gay and lesbian people, conflict between Aboriginal gay men and the dominant white male gay culture. Not bringing that stuff into it because you want to paint a rosy picture in a way, somehow, you don’t want to say ‘look, our political reality is just as complex as your political reality’. I don’t know but just that there’s certain things that we want to maintain solidarity or we want to portray solidarity. (Focus group, Victor)

I think that we are so trying to change stereotypes, you know, explode stereotypes, that we don’t embrace parts of us. Rather than try to explode stereotypes, try to incorporate them. (Focus group, Victor)

The dialogue with educators concerning issues of representation and the use of sexual categories in anti-homophobia education, suggests that there is not a cut and dry solution in terms of abolishing the use of sexual categories. Educators struggle with the need for representation and visibility for those who identify as gay, lesbian and bisexual, as a response to homophobia and heterosexism. They also recognize that the strategy of putting the best face forward and presenting the ideal to heterosexual audiences creates exclusions
within communities and ignores the complications and realities of other sites of domination. This strategy also entrenches the concept that homos are just the same as heteros. Educators recognize that this strategy simply promotes tolerance without shifting the power of heterosexuality. Yet, as some educators point out, there is a need to constantly negotiate the necessity of these strategies for personal survival and political gain with the problematic of creating fixed identities that do not address how multiple systems of domination come together and differently impact gay and lesbian reality.

The Use of Personal Experience

I am particularly interested in how educators incorporate the use of personal experience in the context of the training. Personal experience is generally integrated into anti-homophobia education through educational strategies such as panel discussions or bringing in an individual speaker who discusses with participants details of their lives as gays and lesbians. I am also interested in how educators negotiate their own sexual identities as gays and lesbians in the training.

The challenge in negotiating experience is the pull between knowing that experiences are constructed and may have multiple meanings, while at the same paying attention to the social markers of race, class, gender. Anti-homophobia education, as discussed in the literature, assumes that there is an essence to experience. Gay and lesbian experience is presented as fixed and stable, with
meaning that is constant even across different contexts.

Critics of essentialism explain that experience is taken up as the origin of knowledge without the possibility of exploring how the subject comes to understand their experience. Experience becomes the evidence for the fact of difference, rather than the possibility of exploring how difference is established, how it operates, and in what ways it makes up subjects who see and act in the world. (Scott 1993) Joan Scott explains that, "when the evidence offered is the evidence of 'experience', the claim for referentiality is further buttressed - what could be truer, after all, than a subject's own account of what he or she has lived through? It is precisely this kind of appeal to experience as uncontestable evidence and as an originary point of explanation - as a foundation on which analysis is based - that weakens the critical thrust of histories of difference." (Scott 1993, 399)

When gays and lesbians share their experiences, in anti-homophobia education, it creates visibility and can assist audiences in understanding the lived effects of homophobia and heterosexism. Yet as Joan Scott points out, the "project of making experience visible precludes critical examination of the workings of the ideological system itself, its categories of representation (homosexual/heterosexual, man/woman, black/white as fixed immutable identities), its premises about what these categories mean and how they operate, and of its notions of subjects, origin and cause." (Scott 1993, 400)

Some educators were interested in discussing how we use experience in
the context of anti-homophobia education, and offered their own concerns about it. For the most part, educators reflected on what gets produced in their workshops when they come out and talk about their lives as gays and lesbians. Most educators who identify as gay and lesbian, generally share this information with participants for a number of reasons. Educators hope to break down stereotypes and believe that by introducing 'real' gays and lesbians, participants would engage with the material on a deeper level. Some educators feel that by coming out to participants there was the possibility of breaking down the categories of us and them. For some, the decision to come out in training was to make visible gay and lesbian identity, as well as a way to get participants to reflect on the impact of heterosexism. In writing about her decision to come out in the context of social services, Cheryl Clarke states: "I argue for a critique of, a decentering of heterosexuality and heterosexual privilege in the context of human service delivery. Lesbianism is not solely an identity; it is also a strategy - a way for me to get my political work done. I come out as a lesbian to educate people and make heterosexuals less secure about their hegemony just as much as to express my 'right' to love women." (1995, 97-98) While recognizing the importance of self disclosure in anti-homophobia education, one educator maintains that coming out as a lesbian is only peripherally important; the main goal is to provide participants with a political framework to understand homophobia and heterosexism.

[...] I'm doing an anti-homophobia session; I'm not doing
what it's like to live as a gay and lesbian individual in Winnipeg. I'm talking about political constructs in our world which translates into these personal constructs. Your presence as a gay or lesbian is just kinda a point of reference really for the session, it's not necessarily...I don't want them to see me as an example. If that happens so be it, but that's not my intention. My intention is to give them a political framework to look at my life, not to look at my life and develop a political framework. (Focus group, Shayla)

This challenges anti-homophobia literature that positions gay and lesbian identity as central in the education by promoting role modeling, panel discussions and the use of 'out' facilitation teams.

Another educator questions her ability to speak about the impact of homophobia in training because she self-identifies as heterosexual. Her concern is that she is speaking for gays, lesbians, bisexuals about the impact of homophobia on their lives, rather than having these individuals speak about their own lived experiences.

[...]As a straight person, like how much can I speak to those issues legitimately, so it's a real challenge to be able to do that in a way that's not sorta like colonization. It's harder for someone who doesn't experience the homophobia firsthand and doesn't live that life to speak to it completely. But on the other hand, I experience heterosexism. (Interview, Karen)

Yet, this same educator acknowledges that it is also the role of those who are in dominant groups to be educating themselves and others about oppression.

[...]I don't think it's up to people who are of color to be constantly educating their oppressors. I think it's like, we're going to be doing our thing over here, you worry about
yourselves, because we’re tired of having to do that for you all the time. So that’s why I see the role of people who are in the dominant culture, who happen to know a little bit, or are sympathetic, but it’s very dicey. (Focus group, Karen)

(Homophobia) impacts all of us. It’s not just a problem for the fags and dykes, it’s a problem for all of us. (Focus group, Lise)

Educators make the point that understanding, educating and acting on the impact of homophobia is not just the responsibility of those who live the experience. On this basis they challenge some of the constraints imposed by the theoretical construct of experience. However, it is important that we differentiate that while homophobia affects us all, there are crucial differences between when it can kill you and when it simply limits your life.

The use of experience in anti-homophobia education is based, in part, on the belief that knowing gays and lesbians will increase tolerance and may break down stereotypes (Eliason 1995; Croteau and Kusek 1992). However, there are differences in the goals of educators; wanting participants to view gays and lesbians as acceptable and the same as them versus struggling against that kind of acceptance. The next few passages reveal this kind of tension.

I think it’s impossible to take on one’s shoulders to try to change people and to try to convey everything about my life so that they understand me. I don’t particularly care if they understand me, or accept me at the end of it. Acceptance isn’t something that I am striving for in anti-homophobia education. (Focus group, Victor)

[...]I don’t know about being the person, being the gay or lesbian that people know, I mean I think we all experience that within our own families of origin, and it’s not very
comfortable. [...]It’s not just my sister knowing that I’m a lesbian, my sister also has to understand her role in my oppression and what she can do to change that and start doing that change and then we may see systemic change. (Interview, Shayla)

Contrary to anti-homophobia literature, this educator has clearly articulated that knowing gays and lesbians can become tokenized and that it is essential for participants to get beyond just knowing, to a place of action. The following educator believes that there is value for participants to meet gays and lesbians. While she is aware of the problematic of representation, she acknowledges that an outcome of tolerance and acceptance is positive.

[...]The theory that drives this is that the more contact people have with people or another group that is stigmatized, the more comfortable they become. So it’s always kinda on the one hand you’re put in the position where you’re speaking for the whole community and representing the whole community, which is false. But on the other hand, you’re giving an experience in which they hopefully walk away from the workshop, kinda thinking this was an okay person. (Interview, Lise)

An important conclusion from this discussion about the integration of lived experiences in anti-homophobia education is that most educators maintain that the use of lived experience is an effective and powerful tool in helping participants to understand the impact of homophobia and heterosexism, both for anti-homophobia and AIDS education. Previously, many educators had not reflected on their reasons for blending lived experiences with theoretical information. Educators acknowledge that it is a practice that receives favourable
evaluation from participants. It is common for participants to request an opportunity to speak with individuals who identify as gay or lesbian, or someone living with HIV/AIDS, in the case of AIDS education. The issue of what it achieves had not been interrogated by educators. The following passages discuss what can be gained by integrating experience in anti-homophobia education.

In order to make the disease real or the issues real they want it from the perspective of the person, and if that’s an Aboriginal person who is from an Aboriginal community or someone they can identify and relate to, to make it more real and say that if it can happen to her because she’s related to so and so and she’s from this community, then it can happen to anybody. [...] Speakers are honest about the relationship to HIV and the whole impact on self esteem, addictions, or being marginalized from your family, rejection. They were talking about being out in the family, being sexually abused or being abusers themselves, leaving home, being in foster care and becoming addicted, being involved with sex trade and then testing positive for HIV and then having AIDS. (Interview, Darcy)

I think for me there’s nothing that prepares our volunteers like people who offer their experience. It’s one of the most valuable parts. [...]There’s a very different impact when somebody actually is talking from their own emotional center, from their own experiential base and say this is my life, this is not theory, I’m not removed, I’m here. [...]Part of the problem with this is that it’s really impossible to have a cross section. Each person who talks has very different perspectives, so I think that the problem with it is that it tends to be very specific, based on that person. (Interview, Donald)

I think that an important piece of homophobia training for me is that people need to understand, people have to be personally affected, it has to make you cry, it has to give you some kind of emotion that it isn’t just in your head.
The humanization of the situation. In cultural communities, it is not different. It’s a useful tool. Two lesbians, two real people and two homosexuals who were proud to be gays and lesbians. They were speaking about their own experiences, it was powerful. [...] We’ve had a Filipino lesbian from the University of Winnipeg talk with her community rather than bringing in someone external because if they see a white, oh that’s not our problem, and then there is the relationship of race in there. (Interview, Myra)

Educators are holding tenaciously to an essentialist approach that assumes that experience is stable and fixed in its meaning. In fact, some educators conclude that experience, while inherently problematic, has the potential to disrupt oppressive structures, in the context of anti-homophobia education. While some educators recognize that experiences are constructed, with multiple meanings, they are clear that there is a need to put forward gay and lesbian experience as fixed and stable so that heterosexual participants understand the very real implications of homophobia and heterosexism, and how they are implicated in the subordination of these individuals.

Postmodern and queer theorist have not really engaged with the tension that is evident in critical pedagogy; negotiating between multiple subjects and the concrete fact of domination. While educators recognize the limits of the modernist approach, they seem to conclude that little else is possible. Most educators conclude that incorporating personal experiences within a political framework has the potential to disrupt homophobia and heterosexism, in anti-
homophobia education.

I would agree with educators that critical education challenges us to recognize that the experience of being a member of a subordinated group is neither stable nor fixed in its meaning and needs to reflect shifting social and political contexts. Having said this, it is also necessary to be clear about the constant, day to day impact of domination. The difficulty is in negotiating these competing agendas and being clear when modernist constructs are used strategically.

The discussion and analysis thus far has focused on how anti-homophobia education is framed and positioned in the context of social services and within a discourse of tolerance. There are differences in content and desired outcome, according to an analysis of power and the way in which theoretical challenges are understood and negotiated. What follows is a discussion and critique of some of the educational tools that mirror some of these challenges.

Educational Tools

Panel discussions, visualizations that reverse the impact of discrimination, and activities that examine stereotypes of gays and lesbians are common educational tools used in anti-homophobia education that depend on modernist constructs. These pedagogical tools are based on a liberal approach that promotes tolerance and acceptance and maintains the unitary, stable subject.
Yet the intended goal is to make visible the lives of lesbians and gays and to challenge discrimination and the imposition of stereotypes. Many educators in this research question the usefulness of some of these educational tools, but despite their critique, use them because of some successful outcomes.

**Panel Presentations**

Commonly discussed in anti-homophobia material is the use of gay and lesbian speaker panels. Speaker panels are believed to better represent the diversity of communities by presenting differences among gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals in terms of race, class, ability etc. As discussed in the literature review, within this format the differences themselves are commodified. The commodification of difference has been so successful because it is offered as more exciting than accustomed ways of doing and feeling. Within this culture, ethnicity, as one example, becomes spice that can bring to life mainstream white culture (hooks 1992, 21). Queer identity has also been commodified within popular culture in setting trends for fashion, media etc. Yet the question remains whether messages that these differences are exciting and trend setting, has the potential to challenge systems of domination.

Speaker panels present the most palatable gay and lesbian subjects for heterosexual audiences. The purpose is to form commonalities between panel members and the audience by presenting gays and lesbians to be just like heterosexuals (Croteau and Kosek 1992). Panel discussions position
discrimination and oppression of gays and lesbians within a discourse of
tolerance. The promotion of individual tolerance and acceptance of gay and
lesbian identities is the goal, rather than an analysis of systemic oppression.
Within a tolerance paradigm, panel narratives that challenge heterosexuality
because they are not seen as being the same, become further marginalized.

Most educators in this research are critical of using a panel format to bring in the
experiences of gays and lesbians. Educators compared speaker panels to talk
shows where gay and lesbian identities are either negotiated by the audience as
freaks or seen as telling the truth about gays and lesbians.

> It’s a talk show culture and it has an exploited feel. I have been in the audience when there have been panels and I got kinda queasy because it felt exploitive and it felt like we’re making a celebrity out of somebody. (Interview, Donald)

Some educators acknowledge that panels only speak to gay and lesbian
identities, and neglect a systemic analysis about homophobia and heterosexism.

> [...]They get six individuals, so that they have six individual perspectives but they’re not talking about homophobia, they’re talking about sexual identity. Here I am, I am gay, I am lesbian; this is my life story. (Interview, Shayla)

Despite these concerns, educators come back to the importance of
integrating lived experience with a theoretical framework that positions
homophobia and heterosexism within an analysis of oppression and domination.
They believe that participants are only fully engaged with the material and the
discussion when they can speak to and hear ‘real’ experiences. Educators
struggle with alternate ways of representing the diverse lives and identities of individuals who identify as gay, lesbian and bisexual, as evident in the following passages.

We used to bring in a panel from the gay and lesbian resource centre, and given that we have multicultural training, we would try to bring in people from different cultures who were gay and lesbian. It was helpful to a certain degree. [...] Yes there are, they’re real people, they’re not just a concept, they’re real people, but the problem with it was there wasn’t enough homophobia information. [...] It’s important to understand by not bringing someone in that’s gay or lesbian, what are the implications of that and addressing that in the training. (Focus group, Karen)

[...] It’s always that stereotyping and being tokenized. And then we become the only reference point and I don’t know if we’re doing people a service. I mean the catch is always with service providers, they respond to this stuff, they love the panel, they thought it was just the greatest thing. It’s very engaging and in some ways it’s very simple. (Interview, Lise)

Educators are challenged to question how speaker panels position personal stories and how they are taken up by the audience. Since the stories are situated within a tolerance framework, they are intended to provoke empathy on the part of the audience. Yet, to feel empathy, is not necessarily taking the audience to a place where they can examine their own complicity in perpetuating domination. Without alternatives to panels, educators are left with the dilemma of constantly negotiating the limits of speaker panels with their potential to integrate multiple experiences. Educators are left to weigh out the differences between desired and actual outcome.
Visualization

A visualization, developed by an American anti-homophobia educator, Brian McNaught, was used by some educators. Educators are more familiar with his work because he facilitated a half day workshop in Winnipeg on anti-homophobia education. Visualizations are an exercise in role playing and depend on modernist constructs. Specifically, it assumes that subjects are fixed and unitary, and that the experience of being a member of this subordinate group is a stable one, with a shared meaning across all social locations.

This particular visualization gets participants to live as heterosexuals in a society where they represent only ten percent of the population and never have their lives reflected in the media, in ceremonies etc. The goal of the visualization is for participants to understand the impact of homophobia and heterosexism, and as a result be tolerant and accepting. The visualization is framed within a discourse of tolerance; the problem of homophobia is the result of misinformation, lack of visibility and intolerance. The solution is for participants to feel empathy, and facilitate a process where they can put themselves in someone else’s shoes so that they will become more tolerant and accepting.

Educators who integrate this visualization into anti-homophobia education, conclude that it is an effective tool. Educators believe that the visualization gives participants a personal way to view homosexuality, and an opening to
understand the impact of homophobia. While they recognize the limits of an exercise that simply promotes tolerance and acceptance, they maintain that it is useful in conjunction with other material.

[...] One of the things that I really remember that worked well for me was that the visualization because it sorta put yourself in the shoes of a person, like in a way that you would never. Because if you're straight, it's like you never thing about these things, it never occurs to you. I found at that time, it was in my early 20's, I found that to be really useful personally, it was one of those light bulbs going off. (Focus group, Karen)

[...]There is that one piece where he does that visualization, we've used that from time to time and found that for people who are not in touch with these issues at all, have said that they've found that it really opened their eyes. To take your own experience and twist it slightly and then they get to draw on what their own feelings would be. It's simple enough and people draw on what they already know, so we're asking them to extrapolate very little in a way, which is why I think it works. There's abit of an opening. It's sorta like a fish that lives in water that doesn't know it lives in water because it's totally surrounded by it and suddenly it can see the water, it can feel it. Most straight people, they don't know that they are a fish that lives in water, they don't see the water, they just live their life. (Interview, Mary)

These responses contradict the way that most educators in this research position their work; within an analysis of power that takes up systemic oppression and domination and goes beyond a goal of tolerance and acceptance. The contradiction indicates that while educators possessed elements of postmodern critique, they seem to be caught between postmodern theory and modernist practice. Despite their awareness, educators seem to be trapped within a language and practice of tolerance. The challenge for
educators is to further examine whether modernist practices that are based on
tolerance and empathy, eventually get audiences/participants to a place where
they can examine their own complicity.

**Addressing Stereotypes**

Already discussed in the literature review, Suzanne Pharr (1986) uses a
brainstorm exercise about stereotypes of gays and lesbians, to provide
participants with possibilities of saying the unspeakable, in an educative context.
Participants are asked to list all of the names they have heard, in reference to
homosexuals. Pharr neglects any analysis about the impact of recording and
hearing these epithets, for participants and educators who identify as gay,
lesbian and bisexual.

Some educators fashion a similar exercise in their work. Others are
critical of integrating an exercise about stereotypes, particularly for introductory
anti-homophobia education. The impact of dispelling stereotypes is to
marginalize individuals who live the stereotype: effeminate gay men, butch-
femme lesbian relationships, drag or cross-dressers, and those who identify as
transgender. It also serves to situate gays and lesbians under the umbrella of
heterosexual normalcy. The challenge for educators is to find ways to weaken
homophobic ideas and practices, within a framework that does more than
promote gays and lesbians as just the same as heterosexuals. As one educator
suggests, anti-homophobia educators need to embrace and incorporate
stereotypes, rather than exploding them.

I inherited a workshop format that included a piece on stereotypes, and the gay man that I was working with at the time was very newly out and had no political analysis what so ever, and loved the stereotype piece. And each time we did the stereotypes I felt like why are we doing this, other than giving these people an opportunity to say really offensive things about me. [...] It felt like it gave straight people in the crowd a real opportunity to bash me. I'm standing up there you know, this butch, writing this down, 'lesbians are ugly', it's like 'thanks'. I don't need to hear this and I don't think this is getting us anywhere. I don't care if you think lesbians are ugly. I just want you to recognize that it's wrong. So it's giving them a framework to do that.

(Focus group and Interview, Shayla)

Pedagogical tools used in anti-homophobia education depend on modernist constructs that do little to disturb heterosexuality. Yet, educators recognize the potential of these tools to put forward multiple experiences and to help participants to understand the realities of homophobia and heterosexism. While some educators are critical of these educational tools, they are challenged to develop other practices that get beyond tolerance and negotiate between multiple, decentred subjects and the realities of domination.

Summary

Educators are struggling to shape anti-homophobia education beyond a discourse of tolerance and inclusivity which depends on modernist notions of a unitary subject and experience as a source of truth. For the most part, this research reveals that educators are aware of the limits of the modern subject,
and that education that promotes tolerance does not disrupt heterosexuality. Yet, they are also concerned that postmodernist critique about experience and the limits of sexual categories deny the everyday realities of domination that gays and lesbians experience.

While some educators are critical themselves of some of the theoretical constructs that have been discussed in this thesis as shaping anti-homophobia education, some conclude that little else may be possible. Importantly, educators in this research are also speaking to the constraints and limitations of a social service context, which impacts on their ability to discuss and examine new practices. It is important to note that social services themselves are framed within the same discourse of tolerance and inclusiveness. Developing a theoretical framework for anti-homophobia education that goes beyond tolerance may be in contradiction to the boundaries inherent in social services.

While recognizing the boundaries of social services, some educators in this research were already working from an analysis that surpassed the philosophy of their agency. The challenge for educators is to begin to negotiate some the implications of anti-essentialist concepts in critical education with the day to day realities of domination. That is, to move outside of modernist constructs of subjects and experience as being stable and fixed to understanding that there are multiple subjects and experiences. The dilemma is to ensure that participants continue to recognize the consequences of homophobia and heterosexism in the everyday for gays and lesbians.
Concluding Remarks

I entered this study as a community educator and service provider struggling with some of the dilemmas of facilitating critical education. I was aware that the debate between essentialism and anti-essentialism had relevance for anti-homophobia education, but seemed to be primarily situated in academia.

A central point discussed in this debate is the limitation of an essentialist understanding of experience that assumes that the experience of being a member of a particular group is fixed and stable across all contexts. Within this debate there has been much challenge to an essential notion of women's experience based on gender, without examining how multiple systems of domination come to shape women's experience. Sherene Razack writes: (1998, 375)

In identifying the multiple narratives that script women's lives, we come to see that women are socially constituted in different and unequal relation to each other. It is not that some women are considered to be worth more than other women, but that the status of one woman depends on the subordinate status on another woman in many complex ways.

The other side of this debate, often leveled against postmodernism, is that
it has diluted feminist politics because it challenges the organizing concept of gender as the primary site of oppression for women. Specifically, this criticism has been directed at anti-racist work by suggesting that political gains have been sacrificed since the core of political organizing, an essential female subject, has been challenged. Anti-essentialist theorists have expressed a "yearning for the good old days when the description of women's oppression possessed 'the oomph that gender packs' or the 'cultural authority' that was gained from speaking of an essential female subject" (Razack 1998, 382). As well, postmodernism has been critiqued for the lack of practical application of the theories and ideas.

To my knowledge, the implications of anti-essentialism, are not being taken up by educators who practice critical education in community based social services because services still rely on an essential and uncomplicated version of identity. This study was an attempt to explore with educators the implications of these theories for their work.

I undertook this study with the desire to engage with other educators, who structure critical education within the parameters of community based social services, about some of the theoretical constructs that shape anti-homophobia education. The impetus for the study came from my own dissatisfaction about the achievement of tolerance and about entrenching essential notions of gay and lesbian subjects in the education. I was cognizant that, within the confines of social services, there is often little room to discuss and explore with others the
implications of what we do and whether anti-homophobia education disrupts the status quo.

The study concludes that tolerance and equality for gays and lesbians are core goals in anti-homophobia education. Under the umbrella of tolerance, anti-homophobia education has been premised on the belief that the problem of homophobia stems from the lack of information or misinformation about gays and lesbians. I have argued that discrimination and injustice that gays and lesbian experience, as well as others who identify outside of heterosexuality, cannot be overcome with an informational approach. Raising awareness about systems of oppression, like heterosexism, and individuals' complicity within these systems, while still based on this informational approach, has greater potential to effect change. Having said this, this thesis acknowledges that the informational approach ignores the denial and resistance on the part of dominant groups, to acknowledge the realities of domination and their own role in maintaining these systems. In challenging the informational approach, Sherene Razack writes that "education for social change is not so much about new information as it is about disrupting hegemonic ways of seeing through which subjects make themselves as dominant" (1998, 16).

At the heart of the tolerance approach is the presentation of a stable, unified subject. In the focus group discussion educators were challenged to examine the implications of anti-essentialism for critical education. They acknowledged the limitations of the modern subject, in not addressing the
multiple sites of struggle and domination. They recognized that there is no one stable core that we can call gay and lesbian experience. So while this thesis concludes that a modernist construct does not help to disturb heterosexuality, the complexity of critical education is not nearly so neat in practice. That is, educators were concerned that notions of multiple subjects and experiences would dilute the very real implications of homophobia and heterosexism on the lives of gays and lesbians. Therefore, a central dilemma that this thesis highlights is that while most educators acknowledged the limits of the modern subject and had an awareness that anti-homophobia education is conducted within this liberal construct, they struggled to find a pedagogy that could push beyond the limits of tolerance, and take up some postmodern or anti-essentialist implications.

While educators may recognize the limits of tolerance, some reflection on what we have to gain and lose from using the constructs of tolerance is needed to understand some of the resistance. For example, living up to the idea of a good teacher or facilitator, may ensure that educators stay within the confines of tolerance. A good teacher or facilitator is thought to negotiate the politics of difference, without conflict, hard feelings on the part of participants and within an environment that maintains social order. bell hooks examines how middle class values shape our ideas of what constitutes a good teacher. hooks writes:

Bourgeois values in the classroom create a barrier, blocking the possibility of confrontation and conflict, warding off dissent. Students are often silenced by means of their
acceptance of class values that teach them to maintain order at all costs. When the obsession with maintaining order is coupled with the fear of ‘losing face’, of not being thought well of by one’s professor and peers, all possibility of constructive dialogue is undermined. (1994, 178-179)

The extent to which educators work within the confines of tolerance and essentialism is in part influenced by their desire to be seen as respectable. After all, respectable educators impact positively on their agencies and are more likely to be called back for further work. However, maintaining respectability is probably less favored by those educators who lose points when they enter the classroom because they challenge gender or sexuality norms, and/or because of race. It is worth noting that educators of colour in this study did not talk about how their colour shaped participants’ responses to them, when providing anti-homophobia education. The absence of this discussion may in part be due to the fact that these educators have facilitated anti-homophobia and AIDS education to members of their own racial and cultural groups. In these circumstances their struggle has been to convince members of their communities that AIDS is more than a white gay disease.

As educators, in negotiating our identity in anti-homophobia education, we need to question the extent to which we use our own “respectability assets”. For most educators in this study, we are challenged to examine how the dominant aspects of our identity, such as our whiteness assures us some degree of respectability. As a result, we may have more to lose in pushing pass the
pursuit of tolerance and the practice of essentialism; ultimately shaking the status quo in anti-homophobia education. Perhaps some of the resistance and the fear in pushing past tolerance, may be in acknowledging this.

In addition, by pushing past tolerance, educators may be working contrary to the direction and comfort of their agency. In this study, most of the agencies work within a feminist philosophy, with an overall mandate of effecting social change. At the same time, they struggle to gain acceptance and status among more mainstream services. Acceptance is gained through the provision of training and/or workshops that promote tolerance and inclusiveness, and workshops that are supposed to gently require participants to examine their own dominance and complicity. The constraints of acceptance and professionalism, which influences access to funding, limit the amount of revolution that takes place in the education.

In articulating some of the dilemmas of postmodernist constructs, educators described being caught between negotiating multiple subjects and experiences, and making clear to straight audiences the impact of domination. Educators may be reluctant to integrate the challenges of queer theory, because they understand that gay and lesbian identity comes up against questions of authority and evidence. Eve Sedgwick suggests that gays and lesbians are bombarded with questions about the validity of their sexuality when they come out. Commonly asked questions and comments include the following: “How do you know you’re really gay? Why be in such a hurry to jump to conclusions?
After all, what you're saying is only based on a few feelings, not real actions [or alternatively: on a few actions, not necessarily your real feelings]; hadn't you better talk to a therapist and find out?” (Sedgwick 1990, 79). What is at stake in reference to gay and lesbian identity is being believed. The strategy to resist the challenges of authority and evidence is to put forward identities that are stable, fixed and immutable.

Strategically, educators provide evidence for gay and lesbian identity. They also recognize that participants and/or audiences are hearing the concepts of homophobia and heterosexism for the first time. So while educators were dissatisfied with an informational approach, most followed this approach, as a starting point. Some concluded that the provision of information made gay and lesbian identity more believable, and facilitated an examination of the impact of heterosexism.

This study has provided some initial opportunities for discussion. There is a need for continued research to further the development and design of critical education, in the context of community social services, that addresses the dilemma’s of essentialism, while still attending to the imposed limits of social services.

Recommendation for Future Work

- It has already been noted that this education occurs within very tight structural constraints. Therefore, before any further pedagogical
challenges to anti-homophobia can be taken up, these constraints need to be loosened. So long as this education is so tokenized, in that it is squeezed in during a two or three hour session and is not attached to some systemic changes, such as strong hiring policies that include sexual orientation, both educators and social services need to question the effectiveness of anti-homophobia education.

- A weakness of this study is that it did not allow sufficient time for educators to integrate theoretical knowledge with the practice of critical education. Educators acknowledged that there was little opportunity to engage with theoretical work and discuss with other educators the implication of these ideas in their work. Most were interested in a process that would help them to move forward and envision other ways of doing this work. Beginning where this study has left off, a recommendation for this work, is that educators should be encouraged to meet with each other on an on-going basis to reflect on what they’re doing and to have discussions that may help them to broaden their critical focus.

- Future research could be broadened with a national focus to widen the pool of people who are doing this work. As well, bringing together community educators with postmodern theorists would help to facilitate further discussion and examine practical ways of grounding some of the theory in
Future research needs to be more attentive to how dominant aspects of educators' identities, such as whiteness, influence our pedagogy. In this study, I focused more on how educators came to understand sexual identity, and the integration of their sexual identity in anti-homophobia education. The fact that most of the educators in this study are white, influences their responses to the challenges of anti-essentialism for anti-homophobia education. The degree to which educators are prepared to disrupt the status quo is in part determined by how much they have to lose. Further critical reflection is needed to examine how dominant aspects of educators' identities shape and impact on critical pedagogy.

In addition, discussion about systemic oppression and the impact on people's lives can be further explored, with an emphasis on how educators both understand and teach about interlocking systems of domination and how they theorize about the resistance to these concepts.

In closing, this study has provided a snapshot of some of the dilemmas for educators in community social services. The implications of anti-essentialism in
shaping participants’ understanding of multiple subjects and experiences, while attending to the day to day realities of domination is a challenge that requires further examination. This thesis is a small beginning to that challenge.
Appendix A

I am currently working on my Master's thesis in Adult Education through the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. I have worked in community based social services for many years predominately in the areas of violence against women and most recently in AIDS services. The title of my thesis is "Shifting the Focus in Anti-Homophobia Education". My interest in the topic comes from both attending and providing anti-homophobia education and from questions that have arisen for me. By anti-homophobia education or training I am including a number of possibilities; a section of a training program for volunteers that addresses the issues of sexual identity and discrimination or an integration of these topics throughout the training program, public speaking and training for institutions on such issues, AIDS awareness, and staff and board development on related topics.

Specifically I am interested in how sexual identity is discussed in anti-homophobia training/education by educators/facilitators and understood by participants, how issues of diversity are integrated, and in examining the use of personal experience. I am writing to you to invite you to participate in a focus group to discuss some of these issues.

The objectives of my study are as follows:

1. To explore the range of ideas and methods used by educators that structure anti-homophobia education, and some of the political rational that inform these ideas.

2. To explore how sexual identity is discussed and to examine the role of 'experience' in structuring the education.

3. To understand whether these ideas and methods are successful in shifting participants' thinking about sexual identities, and to entertain some possibilities for change in anti-homophobia education.

Should you be interested in participating you would be involved in a structured focus group with six or seven other social service providers and/or educators. Prior to the focus group meeting participants would be given a short paper that will outline some of the dilemmas that have surfaced for me in anti-homophobia training. Participants would be asked to discuss some of their agendas and reading materials used for such training. It would be useful for me to have a copy of outlines and exercises that focus group participants use in their facilitation of anti-homophobia training. The group would explore some of the
objectives that I have outlined. Again, the purpose of the group is to spark discussion about these issues in a non-judgmental environment with peers. The focus group meeting will be audiotaped. The meeting will be followed in two weeks by a one hour in person interview with each participant in which I will ask participants to reflect on the focus group discussion and any ideas that have been sparked as a result. You will be sent transcripts of the interview and you will be invited to clarify any information you wish.

At every point, your anonymity and that of the organization in which you work will be maintained. Copies of the tapes and transcripts in my possession will be kept locked and may only be accessed by myself, my thesis advisor Dr. Sherene Razack and my committee member Dr. Janice Ristock. These documents will be labeled with code names which will also be used to refer to you and/or your agency in the written report. At your request, your tapes and transcripts can be destroyed following the submission of my thesis.

I hope that you will be interested in participating in my thesis research. I believe you would have a lot to offer this discussion. Your participation will help us as social service providers and educators to understand how anti-homophobia education can help its participants to think differently about sexual identities and perhaps go beyond the development of tolerance and acceptance.

I will call you to discuss your possible participation and time availability. I hope to schedule the focus group the week of February 13 - 16th, providing this is convenient for participants. If you have any questions please call me at 453-3141. Thank you and I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,
Appendix B

Dear

Thank you for your interest in participating in the focus group concerning anti-homophobia/heterosexism education and training. There will be twelve focus group participants who work in a number of community based services. The focus group is scheduled for Wednesday, February 14, 1996 from 10:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. We will meet in the lounge on the second floor at Crossways in Common, 222 Furby Street. Snacks will be provided. Please bring with you to the focus group a training agenda or outline including articles or other material that you use in the training. I have enclosed a consent form that requires your signature. Please bring it along to the focus group. In addition, I have enclosed a list of questions that I am hoping we can discuss in the group. The agenda will be flexible enough to make additions to this proposed list. I have also provided you with some of my own thoughts, questions, dilemmas that have come from both attending and facilitating anti-homophobia trainings.

Thanks again. I look forward to the discussion. I appreciate you giving of your time and energy and am pleased that you are participating. If you have any questions please call me at 453-3141.

Sincerely,
Appendix C

Statement of Informed Consent

This research is being conducted as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts Program in the Department of Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. The purpose of the research is to explore the range of ideas and methods used by educators that structure anti-homophobia education, and some of the political rational that inform these ideas. I understand that my participation will involve being a member of a structured focus group and an individual follow up interview with the researcher lasting approximately one hour. Both the focus group and the interview will be tape-recorded. I understand that the text of the tape-recording will be transcribed to print for analysis, after which the tape will be destroyed. I understand that I will receive a transcript of the interview in which I can clarify any information I wish. I understand that my participation in the research is voluntary. I may decline to answer any questions. I may withdraw from the study at any time. If I chose to withdraw from the study, I also have the option to withdraw the information that I have provided.

I understand that the data from this research may be used to publish an article or may lead to further research on the subject. I agree to have the discussion from the focus group and my interview used in these activities. I understand that one of the goals of the research is to examine methods that may have practical application for anti-homophobia education. I understand that only the researcher, thesis advisor and the committee member will have access to the content of the focus group and my interview. I understand that any information I provide in the course of the focus group and interview will be kept in strict confidence, and that in no way will my identity or that of my organization be revealed during any stage of the data analysis or in the publication of the research findings.

Having read and understood the nature of this research and my participation in it, my signature below signifies my willingness to participate.

______________________________  ______________________________
Participant's signature               Date
Appendix D

Discussion Guide

These questions are intended to guide the discussion of the focus group. Please feel free to make additions and/or deletions to these questions. The structure of the focus group is intended to be flexible enough to accommodate all of your questions.

1. Participants will be asked to talk about the context in which they provide anti-homophobia education. What are the topics that you cover? Can you discuss your agenda. How long is a training session or public speak? Who is the audience?

2. What do you hope to achieve by providing anti-homophobia education? What effects do you hope your teaching/facilitation will have on participants? Do you ever leave training wondering if the workshop had worked? Can you discuss what kinds of exercises have worked and what has not.

3. How do you incorporate both your own and the participants' experience into the training? Do you use speaker panel discussion, personal stories, coming out stories etc.? What are some of your reasons for using this format? Or not using? Have there been troubling moments for you when you use personal experience in training?

4. Can you describe the ways in which you instruct about sexuality, particularly sexual identities. Are you satisfied with this approach? Are there ways that you would like to shift your instruction?

5. Can you discuss how you talk about the intersection of race, class and gender with sexuality. What kinds of materials do you use to engage in these discussions?

6. Do you ever censor yourself when you teach/facilitate? Why? What do you exclude? Are you ever left with questions about the way that you approach issues around sexual identities, the use of personal experience, intersecting issues of race, class and gender?
Appendix E

Troubling Moments... Questions... Dilemmas

The following points are only my own reflections and dilemmas and are meant to spark discussion. I am filled with more questions than answers to these dilemmas. I also recognize that focus group participants provide anti-homophobia education in a number of contexts so that some of these issues may not be relevant.

- In anti-homophobia trainings that I have facilitated as well as attended, sexual identity is generally talked about using set categories that separate ‘lesbian’, ‘gay’, ‘bisexual’ and ‘heterosexual’. It seems to me that what doesn’t get talked about is what identities get left out in these categories. How do we talk about identities that don’t fit neatly into these defined borders; people who identify as transgender and transsexual, lesbians who have sex with men but don’t consider themselves bisexual etc. In the context of anti-homophobia education can we ask for whom, when and how are stable identities necessary?

- Although I have talked about the concept of heterosexism in training, how it operates through institutions, I have found it very difficult to disrupt the notion of heterosexuality as the norm in which other sexual identities are measured against. So there is often questions and discussion from participants about the causes of homosexuality. Participants generally accept widely held explanations that offer a variety of causes to explain the existence of sexual identities that are outside of heterosexuality. Often, the response to questions about causality about homosexuality in a workshop setting is to turn those questions around and apply them to causes of heterosexuality. Sometimes this exercise is helpful to dislodge heterosexuality as the natural, at least for the moment. I have been left to ponder why there is such an investment in causality.

- Most of the anti-homophobia workshops that I have facilitated have been in the context of training programs for counsellors in feminist based community social services. The general training program for counsellors is organized over a three month period with either weekly or twice weekly workshops. The training is intended to provide counsellors with a range of knowledge that is both issue oriented and skill based.
The training attempts to integrate issues of race, class and sexuality and so on within each of the sessions. For example, there is an attempt to flesh out how specific issues might play out differently when gender interacts with other categories. Gender is often prioritized as the primary site of struggle and other sites of struggle and oppression are theorized as layers on top of the primary category of gender.

The way in which training is organized reflects theories that understand oppression as layers. This means that issues like homophobia/heterosexism become special topics within the training as a whole and are covered in a three hour workshop. The structure of the training reinforces the minority status of individuals who identify as other than heterosexual and maintains the notion of heterosexuality as the original and the natural. I would pose whether there is another way of organizing or talking about the intersections of race, class, sexuality, gender in a more complicated way while still recognizing the limitations inherent in a time defined training model.

One of the goals of anti-homophobia education is to assist participants in understanding the consequences of homophobia and heterosexism, particularly as it effects individuals whose identities are defined outside of heterosexuality. One of the ways that we do this is by using panel discussions and/or bringing in individuals who can share personal stories about their experiences. It is also common in anti-homophobia education for facilitators to come out to participants as a way of making identities visible. When using panel discussion there is an attempt to represent a sense of diversity. Despite all of the cautionary notes that are made about the impossibility of representing the breadth of diversity, it seems to me that these individuals still get seen by participants as speaking for a whole stable group. What I have noticed at the completion of training is that participants focus exclusively on the minority status and discrimination that lesbians, gay men, bisexuals experience. Or they romanticize the lives of these individuals.

This kind of structure also seems to set up a heterosexual/homosexual binary between the speakers or the out facilitator(s). What can happen to this dynamic is that what the speakers actually say becomes a lived absolute truth. It becomes difficult for participants to question speakers because the equation of experience equals truth is very present in the training. Yet the dilemma for me is that without bringing in lived experiences, will participants understand the implications of homophobia and heterosexism.
Appendix F

Please take a few minutes to complete the following questions. Thanks.

__________________________________________________________

Gender: Female ----- Male ----- Transgender ----- 

Your age: Under 20 ----- 20-29 ----- 30-39 ----- 40-49 ----- 50-59 ----- 60 and over ----- 

Check the racial groups that apply to you: 
First Nation ----- Metis ----- Non-status Aboriginal ----- 
Black ----- Asian ----- Latin ----- White ----- 
Other(specify) ----- 

Do you consider your sexual orientation to be: 
Lesbian ----- Gay ----- Bisexual ----- Heterosexual ----- 
Other(specify) ----- 

Please provide both your level of education and if appropriate your field of study: 

__________________________________________________________

Approximately what is your annual income? Under 10,000 ----- 
$10,000-$20,000 ----- $20,000-$30,000 ----- $30,000-$40,000 --- 
$40,000-$50,000 ----- over $50,000 ----- 

Please describe the type of anti-homophobia education or training that you provide (ie in-house volunteer training, speaking engagements, staff/board development etc.)

__________________________________________________________

How long have you been providing some form of anti-homophobia education or training?
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