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Queer Composition: A Guide to Knowing and Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students

Cara Fordenbacher
cf964398@wcupa.edu

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Queer Composition:
A Guide to Knowing and Supporting LGBTQIA+
Students

Cara Fordenbacher (she/her)
May 2022

Queer Composition:

A Guide to Knowing and Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students

A Thesis

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By

Cara Fordenbacher

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Dedication

To all those whose family is chosen… I see you. I am with you. Know you are not alone.

Acknowledgements

I first and foremost want to acknowledge every educator that I have been taught by or crossed paths with in my lifetime. To my preschool teachers, to those at Radnor Elementary School, Ocean Palms Elementary School, San Pablo Elementary School, Fletcher Middle School, Fletcher High School, and Eastern University. I would not be the person I am today without the support and guidance of every single educator that I have had the honor of learning from. I am here today writing this thesis and pursuing a career in higher education because of you.

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Abstract

Influenced by its founding in religious, white, and male-dominated power structures, higher education today still often pushes marginalized communities out of academic spaces. Across the nation the LGBTQIA+ community is being threatened with anti-gay and anti-trans bills that are being signed into effect in schools. One of the most popular being the 'Don't Say Gay' bill passed in Florida earlier this year. The work laid out in this thesis proposal aim to combat these efforts and create spaces on university campuses where LGBTQIA+ students can go and be their authentic selves; where their voices are highlighted and celebrated. All higher education professionals should be provided the resources to adequately support their students who identify within the LGBTQIA+ community. By doing so, they are uplifting the voices of a community of people that the university system, from its inception, has aimed to silence. *Queer Composition: A Guide to Knowing and Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students*, is a collection of guides aimed at helping university stakeholders learn about the LGBTQIA+ community. By attending a training at the start of the academic year, university stakeholders can gain general knowledge on the LGBTQIA+ community and learn how to use *Queer Composition* when meeting with students of this community. The journey to becoming a *Queer Composition* partner is one that is long overdue in academic spaces today.

Key Words: LGBTQIA+, stakeholders

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Chapter One: Introduction

To be yourself is a truly revolutionary act, and I think more and more people should try it, because it's gotten me a pretty good life

-Lena Waithe

Let me paint a picture for you. You are sitting in your room at your parent's house with your laptop open and your iced vanilla latte sitting on your desk to your right. You have several tabs open on your laptop screen: your school-issued email, a spreadsheet of the students you are mentoring, the data collection software your office uses, and your zoom room open as you await your first mentee to show up. You have a legal notepad sitting to the left of you on your desk, next to your laptop and a brand-new Pilot G2 pen in your hands. This is your first job working as a higher education professional. You just began your journey in your graduate program studying Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs (HEPSA) at your current institution. To help you gain experience in the field you have accepted a graduate assistant position as a student mentor in the student success office. You have never held a position like this before and have no experience in guiding other students. In your lap is the notebook you used to take notes in your training meeting. You are anxiously scanning the notes for any guidance on how to begin your conversation with this student. You realize that your training notes have no magic formula for how you should conduct these meetings.

This was me, sitting at my desk at my parent's house working my first graduate assistantship in a higher education space, navigating work through the ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and attempting to follow the voice in my head that said, "this is what you were meant to do." Call it imposter syndrome, or call it lack of experience, but I sat there

truly wondering if I was missing something. How was I supposed to know what to say or how to guide the students I was meeting with? My training did not cover how to navigate the conversations that would ensue throughout the year that I worked this assistantship. Thinking back now I wonder, what can I do to change things for those individuals that enter the field after me?

My Positionality

I was born into the church. Growing up I never thought my upbringing was too intensely religious, but my dad was a youth minister, and my mother would work in positions in the church alongside my dad. I am the oldest of four children, with a younger sister and two younger brothers. As you can imagine, we were not always the most well off financially, as working in the field my dad did and raising four children was not the greatest combination for the bank. As I grew up, I stayed immersed in the church, remaining a religious individual. I decided to attend a religious institution as a legacy student for my undergraduate studies, and it was here that the real spark for this thesis began.

During my time in undergrad, I began my journey to exploring my identity in a way that I never had before. I was exposed to individuals who expressed their gender and sexual identity in ways I had never experienced, and as a result I gained the confidence and understanding to be able to start doing it for myself. I grew in my queer identity and as a result of going through the coming out process at a religious institution, I was faced with some not-so-kind scenarios. At a less serious level this looked like my peers not knowing how to react or treating me differently. I also experienced sitting in classes and receiving an education about things that did not align with this newly developed aspect of my identity.

The worst instances, however, would be when faculty and staff would get involved in the ignorance perpetuated towards queer-identifying students at these institutions.

An article written by Elizabeth Redden for Inside Higher Ed called *Being LGBQ+ on a College Campus* reports that, "LGBTQ+ students attending Christian colleges and universities with anti-LGBTQ+ policies are 15 times more likely to report that their sexuality or gender identity kept them from being accepted by others on campus compared to their peers" *(*Redden, 2021).

It was after a particular instance like this during my final year in undergrad that sparked my desire to work in higher education spaces. I told myself that I had to in order to ensure that the things I experienced did not happen to other queer students at any institution. Driven by my disappointment, I told myself that there needed to be training and programming for faculty and staff in universities in order to educate them on how to interact with students of these identity groups. Thus, my passion and drive to serve with and for students was born.

Fast forward you will find me in the scenario I began this paper with. I was accepted into a Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs program and began educating myself and working in the field I so wanted to make a change in. I started in a mentoring position as a graduate assistant. I was meeting weekly with ten to fifteen student athletes, helping them stay on track with their academic endeavors, as well as giving them a space to discuss their struggles with the virtual environment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, their struggles as an athlete, and their struggles in their personal lives. I was ecstatic for the opportunity, but as I started the work, I was struck by how different my experience was than what I had expected.

Everything in higher education moves at a lightning speed. There seems to be less and less time for planning and preparation, a sentiment exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, where change was a daily occurrence. The small things slip through the cracks and as I was starting my graduate assistantship, I felt lost in the speed of it all. I did not feel prepared for the conversations I was going to have with students, and how to navigate these as a graduate student and new professional. While I had my life to take some references from in terms of my religious background, coming from a low socio-economic family, being a student athlete, and being a queer woman, I did not have all the experiences necessary to have all the conversations and all the right answers for all the students I was meeting with. Honestly, if you are a person that has mastered this, then you deserve an award because as humans, we are bound to never have all the answers as it relates to other people's experiences.

As I reflect on this opportunity I had to work directly with students, I want to first validate that it is by far one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever encountered. Being able to connect consistently with the students I mentored allowed for a strong rapport to be created. This was not only beneficial for the students I was meeting with but was beneficial for myself as well. During a time of limited social interaction, these meetings and conversations filled me up with so much joy. I was in a space where I was mentoring queer students as a queer professional, able to give support to these students who I know, from experience, lacked that representation in their own university spaces. I was able to share my experiences and have deep conversations, relating to the things my students disclosed to me, and I was even able to gain insight from my students on the things in my life related to my queer identity that I maybe was struggling with at the time. The connection and experiences

were unlike any mentoring relationship I had ever known before, and I was at the forefront, able to create that space for students. It is what I had been hoping and wishing for as I moved into the higher education realm, being able to make a difference and provide the space for queer students to feel like they had a place to share their experiences and be understood and heard.

While validating the amazing part of my experience, I also had moments where I struggled. I wanted to provide information and have educational conversations with the students I was meeting with, but I had no idea how. I attempted to, but the conversations started with a question and ended with a yes or no answer. It was difficult to know where to begin when it came to having these intentional, educational, and meaningful conversations. This is where the idea for an intervention was sparked. I want to ensure that new professionals, especially new professionals at the graduate level, have the tools to be able to navigate conversations surrounding any topic that they may encounter. Due to the large scope of this task, for the purposes of this thesis I will be solely focusing on creating content that is centered on providing support to students who identify within the LGBTQIA+ community. This content will be used by mentors to help navigate topics and conversations that arise in student-facing meetings. In order to provide this, I will be constructing a handbook compiling guided activities, structured conversation starters, and informational flyers on a range of topics that I believe would be helpful for professionals to have handy when they are meeting with students. Given the nature of this paper, I will be focusing on the subject that I most identify with and can provide the most educated information on, LGBTQIA+ topics, and thus the materials I propose and produce will be centered around this population.

Importance of LGBTQ Mentor Training

All students deserve to sit in a space and feel as though they are respected, heard, and supported. Each interaction they have with a student affairs professional should be meaningful and impactful. Likewise, all student affairs professionals deserve to have the resources available to be able to make those types of interactions happen for their students. As previously stated, the goal of this thesis is to provide mentors support when it comes to meeting with their students. As I frame this concern, I want to draw on some literature, as well as my own personal experiences, to highlight the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ students and why providing support to their mentors is imperative to their success.

The need for LGBTQIA+ identifying students to have support in school is crucial to their success. According to The Trevor Project (2022), a non-profit organization committed to providing suicide prevention resources for LGBTQIA+ youth, report that,

Many LGBTQ youth lack access to affirming spaces, with only half of LGBTQ youth reporting that their school is LGBTQ-affirming and only 1 in 3 saying that their home to be LGBTQ-affirming. The Trevor Project's research finds that LGBTQ young people report lower rates of attempting suicide when they have access to LGBTQ-affirming spaces (The Trevor Project, 2022, p.1).

The harm that occurs when there is a lack of support for this population of students can at times be irreparable. Mentoring in any capacity for students is beneficial, but for this population it is critical. Queer students are faced with the task of navigating the relationships they have with those adults around them. This population of students face uncertainty in knowing who on campus they can turn to when they need a safe person to rely on and find support in. Mulcahy et al. (2016) note, "LGBT students are faced with the challenge of

determining what school personnel members would be safe and supportive informal mentor" (p. 406). From my own personal experiences, this can directly harm a student's university experience. For example, I had a coach during my time in undergrad who directly influenced my friends around me to ignore me due to my sexuality, rather than have the educational conversations necessary to understand my lived experiences. The adults around you at school can either create a welcoming and supportive environment, or they can create an environment of judgment, discrimination, and unsafety. Of overarching importance to this research is the goal of bringing forward the queer voice in academia, as it is one that is lacking in scholarship today. Lange (2019) argues that while some shifts have produced higher levels of empirical research on these issues, "there is still a significant need to theorize liberation in higher education through queer and trans epistemologies, with attention to such systems as White supremacy, ableism, and classism" (p. 512). The norm set for academic voices in higher education is that of white males. The queer voice has yet to be validated in these spaces.

I next want to identify the role of the mentor, and why the proposed intervention I have is so important. At the forefront of the research, I am proposing is the idea that the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students differ drastically from their heterosexual peers and as a result their mentoring experiences and needs will differ. Russell et al. (2009) identifies some considerations mentors need to take when working with LGBTQIA+ students, "the level of disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity on the part of the LGBT member of the dyad, and the level of safety around LGBT issues within the training environment" (p. 197). Some topics that mentors may need to be prepared for when meeting with LGBTQIA+ students are pronouns and terms associated with gender-expression and sexual orientation,

transitioning and the process that transgender students face, the coming out process, mental health, students with unaccepting parents, religious experiences, and the history and current legislation surrounding LGBTQIA+ issues. Mentors in the context of this paper will have some exposure and lived experience navigating these topics themselves. With this in mind, I want to reiterate and highlight that each individual human and their lived experiences are different, and thus, no person in a mentoring capacity can have all the answers or informed support necessary to cover all the different experiential needs their students may have. This goes for queer mentors as well. While being queer is a uniting factor, every queer experience is different. The compilation of guided exercises and activities as well as informational flyers is helpful to mentors as they try to navigate conversations with their students that they have limited to no personal exposure or experience to.

Preview of Thesis

Given what was discussed in the paragraphs above, the following chapters will focus on the relationship between university stakeholders and the students they meet with. This type of dynamic oftentimes develops into a student referring to a university stakeholder as a mentor. Mentoring provides a unique experience, where a professional has the opportunity to meet and build strong relationships with students over an extended period of time. During the course of this working relationship, conversations can range across an infinite number of topics. When you add in the element of queer identity into the mix, you get a complex intersection of topics, that even for queer identifying mentors can be hard to navigate. Contrary to popular belief, educators do not know everything, no matter how much they would like to. Thus, having some sort of guide or reference when meeting with students

would benefit their ability to assist students and provide students the appropriate resource as they navigate the range of topic areas that they may encounter.

The aim of the chapters to come is to highlight the unique relationship university stakeholders have with queer identifying or questioning students, and to provide a guide for the conversations that these pairings may experience. This guide will be presented in the form of a published collection of informational materials to help provide mentors with structured support as they meet with their LGBTQIA+ identifying students. In order to highlight the importance of this initiative, I will structure my thoughts in the following chapters as such: Chapter Two will cover the theoretical frameworks guiding my philosophy of education and the guiding principles behind the purpose and use Critical Action Research; Chapter Three will look at the history and relevant literature as it relates to the topics most relevant to this research; Chapter Four will introduce and walk through my proposed intervention, consisting of training and implementing the use of my guided materials for university stakeholders; and Chapter Five will wrap up my thoughts on the intervention and provide some closing remarks.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Frameworks

From the second we are born, we are conditioned to value the importance of learning and the acquisition of knowledge. We are measured by the rate at which we are growing and maturing as infants. Once we reach kindergarten, we are thrust into a schooling system that rates success based on testing and how quickly you are able to master topics of information predetermined by years and years of societal influence. This continues through middle and high school, until you reach the epitome of every student's journey, university. The university system has been placed on a golden pedestal in American society, identified as the ultimate goal for every student. It is seen as a place to further your education, to put you on a path for career advancement, and to gain a pleasurable experience socially and co/extracurricularly. This is the face the university system wants to paint in society, in order to maintain the societal standard of academic excellence we uphold. In this chapter, I want to look deeper at what a university truly is and should be. What makes a university? Is there a world where a university can exist without the societal conditions that have been placed upon it since its beginning? These questions will be looked at in more detail in the following pages as I explore my philosophy of education. To conclude this chapter, I will then detail the theory of Critical Action Research, which provides the framework for this thesis.

My Philosophy of Education: The University

Before getting too deep into the more philosophical aspects of the intentions and aspects of a university, I want to first start with what appears to be a simpler question: What is a university? If you were to ask a current college student, they would probably mention something called 'zoom university' and make note of zoom fatigue, isolation from peers, and struggles of completing classes/coursework from the comfort of their childhood room.

If you were to ask a college student before the current pandemic, you would get answers such as: a place to go to class, to gain knowledge that will help them further their career, a way to get a degree in order to get a well-paying job, an institution you pay exorbitant amount of money to and go into debt, a place to socialize and meet new people, to engage in extracurricular activities, athletic events and to party. These are all reflective of what a university is on the outside, but what truly is a university? In order to define a traditional university as I will be referencing in this paper, I want to use the definition as prescribed by Oakeshott (1989). According to Oakeshott (1989), in its most traditional sense, a university is a place where individuals come together to engage in a communal acquisition and sharing of knowledge over a long period of time. Also, to keep in mind when thinking of a university is that of the three categories of people you may find in a university, "the scholar, the scholar who is also a teacher, and those who come to be taught, the undergraduates" (Oakeshott, 1989, p. 25). As we move forward throughout this paper, it is important to be reminded of the hierarchy and structure of individuals in the university. The relationships these different groups of people have on a campus are imperative to understanding the complex needs student affairs professionals have to help aid in the success of the students.

Now that I have set the definition for what I mean when referencing the university moving forward, I want to turn to what happens *in* the university, the educational experience. To do that, I want to look at Dewey (1938). Dewey (1938) is a philosopher who argues that education cannot happen separate from experience. Moreover, education occurs through our experiences. For example, a professor assigning a group project (an event) guides the students involved into a collaborative experience that adds to their overall education. Even a simple conversation (event) between two students as they walk from one

building to another is an experience that lends to their overall education. All the experiences that a student has on a university campus lends to their education. What matters most when looking at the university and the educational experience of students in the university is whether that experience is miseducative or not.

The Educational Experience in the University

When we refer to a miseducative experience, we are not talking of what students today would call a 'bad professor' or a 'hard class.' We are referencing something more abstract, something harder to pinpoint in the moment and only able to be identified when taking a step back and reflecting on one's experience later down the road. A miseducative experience is one that hinders further growth of the student. It is pushing students into a predetermined method of learning, with predetermined topics and subjects set into a curriculum. Moreover, this curriculum is taught from a singular perspective, through a lens that tells one particular narrative the same way to all students. Students are conditioned to take this information and never question it, but to believe it as correct and nothing otherwise. Overtime, these conditions allow the student to then go out into the world and share this one-sided information with others they come into contact with, creating a cycle of miseducative information throughout society. As this miseducative experience unfolds, it leads to the formation of poor habits, poor attitudes, and an overall lack of purpose. It narrows the formation of further experiences and more or less traps the student into a monotonous way of thinking and being. Dewey (1938) describes this miseducative experience, one that many students today may relate to, asking a series of rhetorical questions,

How many students, for example, were rendered callous to ideas, and how many lost

the impetus to learn because of the way in which learning was experienced by them?

How many acquired special skills by means of automatic drill so that their power of

judgment and capacity to act intelligently in new situations was limited? How many

came to associate the learning process with ennui and boredom? How many found

what they did learn so foreign to the situations of life outside the school as to give

them no power of control over the latter? How many came to associate books with

dull drudgery, so that they were "conditioned" to all but flashy reading matter? (p. 26-

27)

By looking at these questions we can begin to understand what a miseducative experience is,

and maybe even question if we have ever felt this way of our own education.

When looking at the university and the educational experiences that take place, there

is a potential for a truly transformational experience. We must, however, be willing to

recognize and change some discrepancies that occur in that particular space. As Oakeshott

(1989) has described, a traditional university is a place for individuals to gather and

participate in learning together. If you were to ask any college student today what a

university is, they would probably not list learning in community with others, even just

learning in general, as a main priority. The modern university is riddled with competition,

exclusion, and pressure to perform. Nowhere in Oakeshott's (1989) traditional university

described above do these harsh conditions appear. These are conditions that have developed

over time as a result of years and years of societal powers instilling the ideals of

independence, competition, selectivity, greed, and power into society. The acquisition of

wealth and power, ideals developed from early colonial America, have seeped into our

education system and caused students to value their own independent success in comparison to their peers, to focus solely on the outcome of their education and the furtherment of their career, over the true essence of what education can be. Education has turned into a commodity rather than an experience that naturally occurs and helps individuals to grow and better themselves in communion with others. Oakeshott (1989) writes, "instead of studying history it is studying and teaching history for some ulterior purpose, that instead of educating men and women it is training them exactly to fill some niche in society" (p. 30). Societal influences have infiltrated the university space and created an environment where students are adding to societal systems instead of fighting against them, and students have been conditioned and taught that this is nothing to question.

Deconstruction and Transformation

In order to create an environment where collaborative education, such that Oakeshott (1989) described, can exist, there must be an ability to recognize what is happening in the classroom and on campus, to recognize a miseducative experience and work against it. A term that we can begin with in this process is deconstruction, a term referenced and elaborated on by Derrida (2002). Deconstruction indicates one's attempt to disrupt binary, or 'either/or,' thinking that society has conditioned us to believe is the norm. Black and white thinking has created an educational space that favors the self over collaboration. It fosters an environment where collaboration and respectful debate is impossible. The space for gray discourse is thrown away as individuals combat any new perspective with comments like, 'no, that's wrong' or 'you can't say that.' It invalidates the experiences of so many people who the current education system intentionally attempts to erase. By deconstructing the current way of thinking, we allow for small cracks to appear in academia, upon which the

voices, thoughts, feelings, and experiences of those we deem invalid can seep through. We make room for the 'other.' The 'other' as I will reference in this paper, are individuals whose presence in academia are consistently and intentionally silenced. They are the queer voices, the indigenous voices, the native voices, the disabled voices, the minoritized voices.

In the moments where we deconstruct the current way of education in the university system, we are breaking free of the conditions imposed upon us as we navigate our educational experience. Conditions that lead to miseducative experiences. We allow for predisposed narratives and ideas of what education is to place us in a rut of boredom and monotony. What we need is to lean into an unconditional educative experience; experiences that are not predetermined by what others more powerful believe are important to our success. Success for the 'other' is breaking through the barriers that continually work to undermine the legitimacy of their knowledge and presence in the university. They are the small moments of connection that are found in the conversations between mentor and mentee. They are the imposition of their own experiences into self-written scholarship to be published and shared in academic circles. Derrida (2002) highlights this when he states, "[H]ere then, is what we would call, in order to call upon it, the unconditional university or the university without condition: the principle right to say everything, even if it be under the heading of fiction and the experimentation of knowledge, and the right to say it publicly, to publish it" (p. 205). Even participating in academic experiences in order to infuse the experience with voices that are not the typical cis-hetero-wealthy-white-male help to successfully place the 'other' in academic spaces they are told they do not belong.

What is a university? What happens in a university? These are the questions posed at the start of this paper. I believe a university, at its core, is as Oakeshott (1989) described: a

place where individuals gather to live and share in learning experiences together. The university is a place for all individuals to share in the learning process together, to provide a plethora of perspectives that enhance the worldview of all those involved in the process. Students, professors, and scholars alike come together and acknowledge that everyone's perspectives are valued no matter how far along on their academic journey they are. Professors are there to teach, but also learn from the student and vice versa. Additionally, students are capable of writing and adding to the academic body of literature. Educative events as Dewey (1938) mentions are possible in the university because of this type of discourse and valued participation by all parties in the university.

While society and academic institutions continue to place conditions on the learning experiences of students and professors alike, it does not come at such a price as one might think and contributes to the important work that happens on the university campus. Without the restrictive conditions placed on the education experience we find in today's universities, there would be no barriers to break down for the 'other.' Conditions are what create the possibility for change, for breakthrough. Conditions are the spaces in the university that create the struggle necessary for the 'other' to learn, to grow, and create change. If there were no conditions, there would be nothing to learn and no need for any change or growth. There would be no need for the education system or the university. My charge to anyone reading this would be to push for the 'other.' For an educative experience that includes voices that remain on the outside of academia. Maybe this is your voice. Advocate for it. Learn through it. Share it with others and be open to receiving it from others as well. Education does not have to black and white, but a bright shining rainbow of color.

Critical Action Research

The research designs most familiar to us are those that utilize qualitative and quantitative designs, such as surveys and interviews, to gather data on a particular topic or question we are curious about. Action research is a research methodology that amplifies the kind of research described above into something more collaborative and transformative, bringing together stakeholders in order to openly discuss solutions to a problem, as well as how bringing quantitative and qualitative data together can strengthen the research process and the solutions that come about while using the two methods. In this section, I will describe and explain action research, especially in the context of higher education and its importance in these spaces.

Action Research

Action research is a research methodology by which researchers work in collaboration with the stakeholders directly involved in the topical area, with the intention of coming to practical solutions that benefit all stakeholders, from the researcher down to the community within which the research is centered. The goal of action research is to come to a solution to a proposed problem that results in the flourishing of the individuals impacted and the community at large. Stringer (2014) provides a more direct definition, writing, "Action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives" (p. 1). While many research methods aim to gather data and provide results as a whole, action research aims to give tangible results to the groups they work with to create active solutions to the problems they face. Researchers who use an action research methodology believe that knowledge is socially constructed and aim to honor these social constructs in their work. Data is gathered

in the form of the individual experiences of the participants to better understand the lived realities of the people involved in the research process. Action research is socially oriented research, with the aim of improving social practice (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, Maguire, 2003). When conducting research, action researchers conclude that we cannot strip data of its meaning. It cannot be value-free and objective, but more subjective in nature (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, Maguire, 2003). Action research holds several fundamental principles at its core. These characteristics are what distinguish it from other forms of research.

A Systematic Approach

Most times, when research is conducted, researchers gather data and analyze it in order to come to a solution. They want to answer a question in order to provide the general public with a solution to a phenomenon. For example, in experimental and survey research, researchers gather data in order to provide generalizable explanations "that provide the basis for predicting and controlling events and phenomena" (Stringer, 2014, p. 5). Research done with this lens aims to come to a conclusion, with further research being sparked after a conclusion has been reached. Researchers assume that there is an objective solution to a proposed problem.

Action research, on the other hand, takes a different approach. Researchers who use this approach understand that "generalized solutions, plans, or programs may not fit all contexts or groups to whom they are applied" (Stringer, 2014, p. 6). As research is conducted, the methods and procedures may be adapted and changed in order to fit the research question at hand, or to adapt to better reflect the people involved in the research. If the individuals for whom the research is geared towards feel that the research is not

benefiting them, there is flexibility to adapt and change the course of the research. One way this process can be described is through a cyclical manner following an interacting spiral: look, think, act (Stringer, 2014). As one step is completed, it moves into the next step, creating a continual flow as the research process is continually modified, tweaked, transitioned, and developed. This spiral also emphasizes the never-ending nature of action research. There is always more work to be done and more questions that develop than answers when conducting research.

Individual Roles

In action research, it is the belief that all individuals involved in the research process have valuable insights to share and are an integral part of the research process. Action researchers believe that in order to provide adequate results to research questions, the individuals that are directly affected must have a substantial role in the shaping and influencing of the research. Stringer (2014) writes, "Action research works on the assumption, therefore, that all stakeholders - those whose lives are affected by the problem under study - should be engaged in the processes of investigation" (p. 15). Instead of seeing the participants as subjects, they are now key stakeholders in the research process. This has a liberatory effect on the individuals involved. Much research is centered around marginalized or oppressed groups who are in need of some assistance in making their life better. "In other words, liberatory potential lies in the doing of collaborative research rather than if it arrives at a singular point of emancipation" (Jourian & Nicolazzo, 2016, p. 605). When taking an action research approach, these individuals can actively help make the changes that they feel are important in their communities. It gives a voice to the voiceless.

What then is the role of the researcher? If the participants have a more involved role in the research process, what does the researcher do? Because of the qualitative nature of action research, the researcher has a heightened participatory role as well. The researcher is no longer considered in such an authoritarian way (Stringer, 2014). In order to gain insight as to the needs, opinions, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and hierarchical relationships present in a community of study, the researcher must immerse themselves into the community. Building relationships with the individuals of the community is vitally important. Stringer (2014) suggests the word researcher be replaced with new terms such as "facilitator," "associate," and "consultant," to decrease the harsh, hierarchical connotation researcher may have on the participants (p. 20). By doing so, it allows the researcher to take a step back and allows the participants to provide their knowledge to the research problem at hand. It shows "a respect for people and for the knowledge and experience they bring to the research process" (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, Maguire, 2003, p. 15). Ultimately, it legitimizes the knowledge of the participants, as they are the true expert on their experiences.

Critical Action Research

After identifying the background of action research and the backbone that constitutes the main tenets of this particular research technique, I want to take it one step further and describe the aspects of action research that take the method to a critical space. As we have identified, action research is a method of research that takes the objectivity out of the research process. Researchers and participants work on an equal plane, allowing the research process to occur without the limitations that the power hierarchy in research typically calls for. Most significantly, as mentioned at the start of this paper, action research

aims to provide a "systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives" (Stringer, 2014, p. 1). When we use a critical lens while conducting action research, we are focusing on the solutions we create, and how the solutions can introduce social justice and liberation for those who experience oppression in their everyday lives. When utilizing a critical action research methodology, one can look to critical theory to ground their research. Kemmis (2008) defines critical theory as, "motivated by a deep concern to overcome social injustice and the establishment of more just social conditions for all people" (p. 125). He further explains that introducing critical theory into the research space indicates the exploration of existing conditions that examine "how particular perspectives, social structures or practices may be irrational, unjust, alienating or inhumane" (Kemmis, 2008, p. 125). All of the aspects of action research apply and are amplified in this type of research and are implemented in order to create significant social changes that benefit the lives of those involved in the research process.

Kemmis (2008) presents several ideas and concepts that envelop critical action research that are important to understanding the critical aspect of action research. The first is an understanding of the self. Kemmis (2008) explains that we must not understand self as isolated, but as plural, as connected with others. We must also understand the self as constructed through "developmental-historical, cultural-discursive, social and material-economic interactions" (Kemmis, 2008, p. 126). These are the interactions that inform all people and who they are. Kemmis (2008) continues by noting that critical action research is conducted through communicative action, "action oriented towards intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding and unforced consensus about what to do" (p. 127). This

type of discourse between the research parties creates a subjectivity that is not present in any

other type of research method. It allows stakeholders to understand themselves better, while

also taking on the perspective of others involved in the research process. It blurs the

boundaries between different social systems and allows for deeper social change to occur.

Finally, Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) state that, "action research also transforms

reality in order to investigate it. Critical participatory action research is a form of

exploratory action that *takes communicative action into social practice*, using social

practice as a source of new understandings" (as cited in Kemmis, 2008, p. 132). With a

deeper understanding of the lived experiences of people, critical action researchers can work

alongside their stakeholders to create social changes that directly benefit them.

Higher Education Connections

I want to conclude this chapter by connecting this to the broader topic of my thesis,

supporting LGBTQIA+ mentors so they are able to provide adequate support to LGBTQIA+

students on college campuses. As was referenced earlier in this chapter, the LGBTQIA+

community in higher education is the 'other,' moving through a space that works to silence

their voices and belittle their experiences. By creating cracks in the walls that the years of

higher education have built and creating space for themselves, the LGBTQIA+ community

have begun to make a place for their voice to be heard. When looking ahead at what

implications this type of research has, it is critical we look to the university to implement

this research technique and be a champion in using this research methodology. There is

immense social change that can happen when a critical understanding of self and others can

enter into the research space, and critical action research is the vehicle that can produce that

change. By providing queer mentors with additional resources, they can more readily

support and educate LGBTQIA+ students, liberating them to feel as though their voice and

presence on campus matters. I will leave you with one final quote from Kemmis (2008),

"such initiatives aim to make the lived realities of people *less irritational* (in the dimension

of culture, discourse and rationality), *less unjust* (in the dimension of society, justice, and

solidarity), and *less inhumane* (in the dimension of identity and personal capacity)" (p. 133).

When we open ourselves to critically examine our own influences in the research process

and allow other stakeholders to engage critically in the process, we can build a space for

tremendous social change to happen.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

The history of higher education is a rich one. There is a breadth of historical information on the history of the university, and how the university system was formed and built in the United States. However, an alternative narrative lives in the history of the university that is not widely acknowledged in academia today. This narrative centers on the oppressive and selective aspect of education that formed even before the first university was built. What typical historical writing fails to highlight is the destruction, oppression, and displacement that occurred in America on Indigenous and enslaved individuals in order for the university system we know today to thrive. To highlight this particular historical perspective, I will be focusing my research on the time period Rentz (2011) describes as the colonial historical period in higher education, with a concentration on the religious aspects of the university. By looking at the formation of these first institutions, we can identify the underlying oppressive patterns of thinking and behavior that in turn shaped the way the institution functioned for hundreds of years after, and how religion played a pivotal part in shaping these ideologies and events that occurred. In this section of this paper, I want to draw attention to the LGBTQIA+ community, who have been in conflict with these religious ideals that the university has been built upon. From the universities' inception to the present day, we are still experiencing effects such as the exploitation, abuse, oppression, exclusion, and 'othering' in the university today, and it has created a space that still negatively affects the marginalized groups that it was built upon.

Historical Context

The first university established in the colonial United States was Harvard in 1636 (Rentz, 2011). When looking at Harvard and the universities that followed closely afterwards, there are several major foundational ideologies that are important to the development of the university in the United States. Early universities were formed on the grounds of *en loco parentis*, properly defined as *in place of parent*, with a central concern for the whole student (Rentz, 2011). This ideology is reflective of the universities found in England, and wholeness in a student was based upon the student's particular religious understanding. According to Rentz (2011), "The English models were 'organized residential associations….' Founded '…for the purpose of inculcating specific patterns of religious belief and social conduct" (p. 28). From this particular statement, we can see that the first universities were developed within a religious framework. The universities in England, such as the University of Cambridge, held these same ideologies and thus they were adopted here in the United States. The first degree awarded in the university was a B.A. in ministerial preparation, further enhancing this notion of a religious education (Rentz, 2011). The first universities were introduced as a space for wealthy, white, Christian men to receive a Christian education and then go out and spread their religious ideologies to the surrounding society. They were tightly supervised by faculty and staff, who kept the students tied to a rigid schedule. Weekly chapel services were attended by the students, and intense care was taken to keep the students away from any temptation of sin. "The hope was that these 'gentleman/scholars' might learn to serve as examples of Puritan piety and civility" (Rentz, 2013, p. 28).

We see this pattern in nearly all of the early colleges of the Americas. William and Mary (1693) with the aim "to prepare piously educated youth and spread Christianity among the Indians," (Rentz, 2011, p. 29). Yale (1701) with the aim "to prepare youth for employment in the public state and the church," (Rentz, 2011, p. 29). Princeton (1748) with the aim "to provide education of Baptist ministers who previously lacked formal preparation," (Rentz, 2011, p. 29). It is important to acknowledge this religious picture of the university in order to analyze the destruction that occurred on the basis of religion to the Native and enslaved peoples that was foundational in the success of the university.

The University's Impacts on Native and Enslaved Peoples

When settlers from Europe came to America, they brought with them the template of European universities, which they implemented into the formation of the American university. The challenge, however, was how they would build the university system here in this new land. The history textbooks we read from in school tell of the pilgrims who sat and had a peaceful meal with the Native peoples here, an amicable relationship between two parties that helped each other survive and thrive. What history books fail to explain, is what happened after this great Thanksgiving feast. As settlers continued to flock over from Europe, they began to claim the Native lands as their own, displacing the original owners of the land. This allowed for the Europeans to colonize and build society within a framework they deemed fit. The university then, was built on stolen Native land and used to spread the "correct" way of living, thinking, and being based upon the ideals of the colonizers.

When looking at the construction of the university, we also see the dependence of the university on slave labor. As European men came to America, they brought with them the

knowledge of how to make large amounts of money in order to build institutions that could in turn give them even more monetary profit. This knowledge included the buying and selling of persons: the slave trade industry that was booming at the time. To illustrate this concept, we look at General Christopher Codrington (Wilder, 2013). In 1710, Codrington traveled to the West Indies in the hopes that he could build a university to educate young men and "supply the British colonies with orthodox ministers," (Wilder, 2013, p. 83). In order to accomplish this endeavor, "Queen Anne's governor general in the Leeward Islands, Codrington had arranged for the SPG to receive perpetual funding from the labor of hundreds of enslaved people," (Wilder, 2013, p. 83). Codrington relied on slave labor to provide manual labor and profit in order to construct his university. The university's ties to slavery are littered all over the history of the university. Harvard received most of its money from individuals participating in the slave trade. "Dorothy Saltonstall and her husband, John Frizell, gave Harvard hundreds of pounds from a fortune built in the Barbados trade," (Wilder, 2013, p. 86). Each university in the United States that developed during these early years depended entirely on the slave economy. All through the university history in America, we see ties to slavery and Indigenous displacement.

Religion, The University, and Native and Enslaved Peoples

We have already identified the role religion played in the formation of the university, but as we move forward, religion becomes the basis for the destructive behavior of the university on enslaved and Indigenous populations. As the wealthy, white, Christian men went to universities like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, they were educated on the basis of religious knowledge that they then took into society. These men became ministers, pastors, and held other prestigious positions in society. As society grew, the intense desire to control

the land and the Native peoples of the Americas also grew. Not only was the university a place to educate white men on how to be functioning Christian men in society, but also a location of the education and colonization of the Indigenous peoples that inhabited the lands where the university was built. Rev. Berkeley received Parliament support to build an Anglican college in Bermuda "to advance the Christian faith in the plantations and increase religious orthodoxy" (Wilder, 2013, p. 94). Young Indigenous male children were kidnapped and taken to these university institutions in order to be educated in the Christian faith. Once they were educated and deemed ready, they were sent back to their home in order to spread their Christian education and way of living to their families and society, instructed to punish those who refused to abide by these Christian ideologies. The Christian colonial agenda was forced upon the Indigenous peoples, wiping out their culture and way of life to fit the mold of perfection decided upon by the colonizers. As stated by Wilder (2013),

> In these Schools, some of the most Indigenous and Docile of the young Indians might be instructed in our Faith and Morals, and Language, and in our Methods of Life and Industry, and in some of those Arts which are most useful… To civilize our Friends and Neighbours; - to strengthen our Allies and our Alliances; - to adorn and dignify Human Nature; - to save Souls from Death; to promote the Christian Faith, and the Divine Glory, are the Motives. (p. 94-95)

The Christian faith was the means by which education and manipulation of the Native peoples was justified.

Also striking of the early universities was the deep ties university men had in the slave trade business. From its inception, the university relied on the acquisition of slaveholding men to attend their university. Once these men graduated and went out into the world, they could then make money in the slave business and support the university they graduated from. Wilder (2013) notes it again and again. "College officers sought slave traders and slaveholders as governors, competed for the fees of young men from slave-owning families, and sent emissaries to the plantations in search of gifts and students," (p. 98). In order to make money, colleges had to find the money, and all the money was located in the slave trade during these times in America. In New Jersey, "Products of a northern academy funded by Atlantic slave traders, New Jersey alumni were ready for the task of planting colleges among slaveholders" (Wilder, 2013, p. 108). During its first seventy-five years, The College of New Jersey had eight consecutive slaveholders preside over the institution (Wilder, 2013). These leaders and faculty of American universities depended on the transaction of slaves to thrive and function. Wilder (2013) writes, "Such transactions fill the historical records of American colleges" (p. 127).

When looking at the ties university men had in the slave trade, we can't ignore the ways in which religious men, who were also closely tied to the university system, were also involved in the slave trade business. These men were not always educated in the university system but held prestigious positions in society and had a great effect on the university system and the greater society structure, regardless of whether or not they attended a university previously. Wilder (2013) identifies a plethora of these men. The Reverend Eliphalet Adams was a man who helped young men to prepare for university, and he owned several slaves. The Reverend Thomas Clapp was a graduate of Harvard and eventually was

offered a position as president of Yale in 1740. He was a lifelong slaveholder (Wilder, 2013). The Scottish minister John Witherspoon used his family connections and the diaspora of the Scottish peoples to build higher education in America. "By the era of the Civil War, his Presbyterian communion had brought the American college to the banks of the Mississippi River by carrying it on the backs of enslaved people," (Wilder, 2013, p. 103). One of the most striking examples of how permeating slavery had become in America and the American university at the time is reflected in the way individuals prayed. Reverend Smith presents a prayer that solidified the human transactions taking place at the time. Wilder (2013) presents this prayer, "'Bless all Orders of Men among us, from the highest to the lowest,' he told his boys. 'Lord give them all Grace in their several Stations to be instrumental to the Spreading abroad of thy holy Christian Religion, and promoting the publick Good,'" (p. 99). The less-than attitude of slaves at the time was so present in the ideals of the American people that prayers were prayed that the hierarchy that was built would remain in order for the public good to remain intact.

Religion, the University, and the LGBTQIA+ Community

Themes of marginalization and oppression also appear in the history of LGBTQIA+ individuals at the university. As previously mentioned, the first universities were built upon the foundation of religion. Men were brought to the university to be educated in such a way as to produce men rooted in faith, and then to take that faith-teaching and spread it to the communities they would then live. What impact did this have on the LGBTQIA+ population then, and what impact does it have on the university today?

When identifying the religious impact on the LGBTQIA+ community, we need to first look at what religion actually states regarding LGBTQIA+ individuals. As with many topics of controversy, the discussion of sexual orientation and sexual behavior is one with many diverse stances. Balkin et al. (2014) notes that, "Although most Christians would acknowledge that the Bible does not address sexual orientation, but rather sexual behavior, the aforementioned diversity of perspectives can also be seen in the Christian understanding concerning same-sex sexual behavior" (p. 189). The diversity of these perspectives at their extreme believe that same-sex sexual behavior is a sin, while others affirm this behavior and the individuals who identify in this way as valued members of God's kingdom. Given the history of acknowledgement of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the university, of which there was very little at the start if the university, we can surmise that the stance of the early university was much closer to the conservative end. Due to the conservative nature of the university from its impetus, LGBTQIA+ students, along with enslaved people, Native Americans, women, and other minoritized populations were not valued or recognized in the early universities.

Given the harsh religious upbringings of the university, it took many years to begin to see the blueprint of the LGBTQIA+ community on the university. Stewart (2007) notes that in the late 1900s is when we can see notable efforts to include space for LGBTQIA+ communities. This is inclusive of openly identifying faculty and staff, inclusion of LGBTQIA+ courses in academia, the encouragement of students to voice their truth, and overall, the greater inclusion of these identities by society. "The most noticeable growth has been the addition of courses on topics related to sexual identities and orientations, LGBT history, and queer theory," (Stewart, 2007, p. 89). These additions began to be seen in the

university in the 1990s and have grown in number to the present day. This has had a positive impact on the inclusion of other minoritized groups in the university as well. These additions have not only been in the academic realm, but in the student life realm as well. There has been an increase in LGBTQIA+ offices and organizations on university campuses, increasing the support and visibility that these groups have.

One such organization is called the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Club. These types of clubs were introduced as a way to support LGBTQIA+ students and provide a space for them and their allies to connect and improve their experiences in the university. These clubs were introduced in accordance with the Equal Access Act (EAA) in 1984. The EAA was initially introduced to protect the right for religious-based gathering on campus but was later interpreted more broadly to include any diversity-based gathering. This club is an example of the newfound inclusion we are seeing today of LGBTQIA+ spaces and resources being made available to students, faculty, and staff. "The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) reported that there was a decrease in homophobic remarks and incidents of verbal and physical harassment toward LGBTQ students in 2015, while the percentage of students who reported that they had access to a GSA club in their school was the highest ever reported during that same year" (Hannah, 2017, p. 98). In addition to the GSA, universities are adopting LGBTQIA+ centers and identity offices on campuses, as well as student-led clubs and organizations with the aim of creating spaces for this population on campus. This is creating not only safe-spaces for students to go an connect with resources, but opportunity for employment for faculty and staff who identify within the LGBTQIA+ community. University residence halls are beginning to create gender-inclusive and gender-neutral spaces for students to opt to live in, with the inclusion of gender-neutral bathroom

options. Each of these changes are introducing ways in which the LGBTQIA+ presence in the university is valid and important. While there are still great strides to be made, we are still a long way from where we were not even 30 years ago.

What do we make of all this information? We have seen how the university system took the lands of Indigenous peoples in America, how it used the labor and profit of enslaved peoples, how is continues to keep marginalized communities such as the LGBTQIA+ population on the outskirts of academia, and most importantly, how the university used religion in order to justify all these actions. The persistence of racial capital runs through the American university system and has persevered until the present day. The labor and profit made from displacing Indigenous peoples and from buying and selling enslaved people created the backbone for the wealth generation of universities and for the men who created them. They did so in the name of religion, using the premise of Christian ideologies and thinking in order to justify treatment of people of color by European-American men in the formative history of the university. Additionally, we still see the oppression of the LGBTQIA+ population in the university today, as this community of people are continually pushed to the side and whose presence is invalidated within the university. As we move forward, we must recognize and remain aware of the destructive behaviors and attitudes we as American people held in the early university in order to move forward and repair the past damages we as a nation have inflicted on the original peoples of this land and on all people who early America deem as contradicting the male-dominated, cis-gender, white, religious, vision of society.

Relevant Literature

Student Identity Theories

Of relevance to the research being presented is an understanding of student identity development based on the sexual identity development model proposed by Dillon et al. (2011, as cited by Patton, 2016), formally named the "Processes of Sexual Identity Development" (p. 163). I will also explore the more holistic student identity development model developed by Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) called the Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (as cited by Patton et al., 2016). As we delve into the research centered on the LGBTQIA+ student experience in higher education, I believe it important to start here, centering a conversation around the theories of development, so as to better understand the development that is taking place for students in higher education. This will help to frame, in more detail, the experiences of these students, and why focused and structured interactions with student affairs professionals is so imperative to this population.

Sexual Identity Development

The first student identity development theory I want to highlight is the Processes of Sexual Identity Development model, developed by Dillon et al. (2011). The researchers divide development into five stages: *compulsory heterosexuality*, *active exploration*, *diffusion*, *deepening and commitment,* and *synthesis*. The first stage in the process is that of *"compulsory heterosexuality,"* where one is prescribed the norms of sexuality by society and the dominant ideologies prescribed to them as a child (p. 163). The best way to describe this stage is "for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, and other identities,

biopsychosocial determinants may lead to awareness that compulsory heterosexuality does not match emotions, behaviors, and values" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 163).

The next part of development can move a student interchangeably between three different stages. The first direction is the *"active exploration status"* where an individual enters exploration of their sexuality but does not commit to it (p. 164). Exploration may look like experimentation with emotions, thoughts, attractions, and behaviors. This may also be intertwined with a student's social development, as they begin to explore new social arenas associated with their identity. The third way is the *"deepening and commitment stage"* where commitment to identity happens (p. 164). Students are in a period of "movement toward greater commitment to… identified sexual needs, values, sexual orientation and/or preferences to activities, partner characteristics, and modes of sexual expression" (Dillon et al., 2011, p.633, as cited by Patton et al., 2016). In contrast, the "*diffusion stage"* is characterized by a lack of progression in one's exploration of their sexual development. The student does not seem to care about their sexual development or is in a state of movement away from or stagnation about their participation in their development. The final stage is the *"synthesis"* stage (p. 166). In this final stage, students are able to identify their sexual self-concept, "which is conscious, congruent and volitional (Dillon et al., 2011, p.664). As student affairs professionals are working with LGBTQIA+ students, it is important to understand this identity model. As noted by the researchers, students can move in and out and between each of the stages often. The stages are not linear, and student affairs practitioners must keep that in mind when they are meeting with students. This type of ever-changing identity exploration can lead to uneasiness in one's identity and greater care must be provided to these students as they navigate these changes.

Another theory relevant to LGBTQIA+ student identity development is the Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (RMMDI) by Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007, as cited in Patton et al., 2016). When I think of any kind of development of identity, I believe it is imperative to look at it through a lens like this one, where all the intersections of identity are taken into account. The aspect of the Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) model that I like is that it takes into account the contextual influences that help to shape one's development. My family will always have such a strong influence on my identity development. It took me so long to come out and fully accept my sexual identity because of my family and the opinions that I knew they had on my coming out as gay. Additionally, going to a Christian institution for undergrad had a significant impact on my sexual and spiritual identity and to a lesser extent my class identity development. All of these external, environmental factors impacted my meaning making filter and the way I was able to process my development to this day. This is the same process that occurs for all students. When students enter your office, they bring these unique intersections and worldviews with them. It is important to recognize this, and then be open to receive and listen to understand each student's experiences that impact their development.

When looking at development, I will always take an intersectional approach. Every single human has different experiences and circumstances that influence who they are and how they develop, and no two persons have the same identities that constitute who they are. Thus, it is important to look at identity development through lenses like the RMMDI to get a broad, intersecting picture. Looking at ones that focus more directly on specific areas like the model by Dillon et al. (as cited by Patton et al., 2016) help to direct reflection of identity development in a specific way. As with all development, it is ongoing and always changing.

The materials that I have constructed for this proposal have been created with these models in mind. Intersectionality and the understanding that all development is intertwined together helps to inform the creation of the work you will see come together in the next chapter. It is important to understand that the development of LGBTQIA+ students differ from that of their peers, and that all development is always influenced by other factors in one's life. The materials that I have constructed aim to address these two developmental models in mind.

Power and Privilege

Power is a sneaky thing. When we think of power we probably typically think of a king, a president, or someone with high status presiding over a group of people. For some individuals however, power has a much more direct connection to their everyday life. Power controls one's ability, or lack thereof, to provide for themselves and their family, their ability to hold a job, their ability to attend university, the list could go on forever. Power is the guiding force that shapes one's life in every way. I would like to focus on the power dynamics at play in the university. I am particularly interested in the concept of *in loco parentis* as well as the transition we have seen in the university as a result of neoliberal ideologies becoming a more prominent force at work in social systems of power. The power dynamics that permeate the university microcosm are reflective of the power dynamics present in society at large, and by dissecting the university we can expose the damaging power dynamics at play in society.

To begin, I want to define power as it makes sense to me, and how I feel it relates best to the power dynamics at play in the university. Foucault is known for coining the term 'governmentality,' a term that "refers to conduct, or an activity meant to shape, guide, or

affect the conduct of people" (Huff, 2020, para. 3). I believe this phrase is perfect for dissecting what power, at its base, means. Power provides an individual with the ability to guide others. This guidance is based upon what the individual in power deems is correct. And this guidance influences the very core of human existence. It influences the way we think, feel, behave, and socialize… how we walk through the world.

One way that human beings are guided by power is through "interpellation" (Backer, 2018). As explained by Backer (2018):

> In Althusserian philosophy, an interpellation is a concrete moment of ideological reproduction. When you are interpellated, you get with the program of a dominant imagined relation to real conditions. When you are interpellated, you become a subject of that ideology, recruited to the ideology, so that you "go" all by yourself and follow the ideology without any force compelling you. (p. 2)

When we look at power, we are talking of this interpellation. Of the ways in which we have been conditioned to react to society and the world around us without question. We just 'go,' as Backer (2018) states above.

While these interpellations occur in society at large, these power dynamics are also at play in tiny microcosms in all social spaces. Althusser (2020) explained how powerful ideology in interpellated through the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). These ISAs are the spaces like churches, schools, and families, with each forming a part of the dominant power structure and reproducing the ideologies promoted by these dominant power structures. Althusser (2020) writes,

I mean by that, very precisely, that ideologies such as religious ideology, moral ideology, legal ideology, and even political ideology… ensure the reproduction of the relations of production (in their capacity as Ideological State Apparatuses forming part of the superstructure) at the heart of the functioning of the relations of production, which they help to make go all by themselves.' (p. 201)

Of these ISAs, I argue that the university, or schooling in general, is one of the most influential spaces in the reproduction of dominant ideologies. The university, from its beginning, was a space where wealthy white men would go to receive further training in how to be a valued member of society. They learned skills and ways of being that granted them status and privilege in society, where others could not. To this day, the university remains a space where the dominant ideologies of society are taught to students from the time they step foot on a college campus throughout the rest of the individual's life. Many of these ideologies are so ingrained in the system that we do not even recognize that these structures are at play. We just know them as the way they are and think nothing of it. In the following sections I will explore some of these powerful ideological structures at play in the university.

In Loco Parentis

First, I want to focus on the interplay between students and the faculty and staff that they directly interact with on a daily basis. These individuals include professors, coaches, and mentors, all of whom have the power to direct and influence the behavior of students as they navigate their everyday life at the university. In order to frame this idea, I will look at

the concept of *in loco parentis* as well as the Neoliberal ideological framework as they relate to education.

     In loco parentis is a concept that has followed the university from its inception. In early universities it was a term used to describe the ways in which university faculty and staff related to students on campus. These individuals would serve as pseudo parental figures, keeping the students in line in a way similar to parents. Cooper (2019) writes, "for much of the twentieth century, in loco parentis rules accorded comprehensive powers of custodianship to universities, comparable to those of parents" (p. 254). As the university evolved, this custodianship remained a staple of the way in which faculty and staff interacted with students and remains so today. This particular type of relationship, of parental proportions, has been established as a way in which ideology has permeated the university system and created a way for faculty and staff to remain in power over students. It is subtle, and not recognized as such, but the ways in which professors, faculty, and coaches are conditioned to interact and treat students is a prime example of the power dynamics that are at play in the university. The urgency in which professors uphold their classroom policies and procedures, the ways in which coaches demand harsh boundaries and punishments, the ways in which residential directors maintain their rigid building policies, all are reflective of the permeated *in loco parentis* ideals instilled in the university from its beginning.

Neoliberalism

     The idea of *in loco parentis* is one way in which the power dynamics of the university are expressed. Another concept that I want to address is that of neoliberal

ideologies infiltrating the fabric of the university and creating the atmosphere of unwavering

work and competition over education and the acquisition of knowledge. Harvey (2019)

defines neoliberalism as, "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human

well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills

within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free

markets, and free trade" (p. 2). To simplify, neoliberalism identifies the shift towards the

privatization of goods, to emphasize individual success and how these individual successes

benefit those who hold more power in society. Every interaction now fits into a larger

system and life is measured in the form of contractual relationships, with the actions of an

individual having an impact on the system as a whole. Thus, education has turned into

something that students feel obligated to achieve, in order to get a job and be a productive

member of society. Instead of education happening as a way to gain skills and knowledge, it

has now turned into a way to funnel individuals into the workforce, further promoting the

idea that education serves the sole purpose of adding to the generation of wealth.

I like the imagery of a 'assembly line' when thinking of how students are viewed

today. Cooper (2019), author of *Family values: Between neoliberalism and the new social

conservatism*, writes that students have been turned into "'raw material' of a new

'knowledge factory,' an assembly line 'where all the rough edges are taken off and smooth

slick products come out'" (p. 228). Students go through university and receive an education

in such a way that over time, they are all molded in the same way, limited in creativity and

diversity. All students are now the same and are conditioned to believe that this is ok.

How do the topics of *in loco parentis* and neoliberalism connect to the overarching

topic of this paper, the support that LGBTQIA+ students receive from university

professionals? As LGBTQIA+ students are able to find support and resources on campus, they are more likely to succeed. The support that they receive put them in a position to make space for themselves, pushing back against the exclusion that is attempted by the university. It creates a new perspective from that of traditional *in loco parentis* values. Student affairs professionals are still ensuring that students are learning and keeping themselves in alignments of university missions and values, but they are also validating the existence of identities that may be counter to the traditional standards of the university. Student affairs professionals have the power to advocate for students that traditionally the university has neglected. This empowers students to fight back and advocate or themselves to counter the neoliberal ideologies that the university today has established. By raising their voices and using them to advocate for their rightful space in the university, this disrupts the current trajectory of producing a particular standard of educated person as it aligns with the values of the university today.

While this all may seem bleak and helpless, there are ways in which the power dynamics between students and their superiors can be molded into something more positive. Awareness of the power dynamic at play is the best way to aid in giving students a safer space as they walk through their educational journey. Especially right now when education seems so burdensome and isolating, creating a space where students can approach you and ask for genuine help and assistance is imperative. You as an educator, coach, or student affairs professional hold the power over the students you interact with, and it is your job to recognize this and do what you can to combat the tight grip this kind of relationship holds. Finding the small spaces of empathy and grace when interacting with students will create a space that seems less isolating and more collaborative. Power creates division and isolation

in the university, especially for students. It is disheartening to see that during a time when grace is needed most, the university still cares only about its obligation to produce and generate the assembly line of future members of society that are the students of today. There is a great flaw in the university system, and moving forward, I would hope that we can begin to place the well-being of the student and all those who flow in and out of the university system first.

Current LGBTQIA+ Legislation

Education

As we transition to the current literature relevant to my particular intervention topic, I want to take a moment to draw your attention to legislation that is currently being passed in the United States. An article written by Manager et. al. (2022) for Center for American Progress report that as of January 28, 2022, there were approximately 120 anti-LGBTQIA+ bills active in almost 30 states. Since then, several more have been passed in more states. The most recent one being the infamous 'Don't Say Gay' bill signed into law by Governor Ron Desantis of Florida on Monday March 28, 2022. This particular bill bans the teaching and discussion of LGBTQIA+ topics in classrooms of kindergarten through third grade aged students. In relation to the state of LGBTQIA+ issues in schools, the bill reads, "Classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur in kindergarten through grade 3 or in a manner that is not age appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards," (Florida HB 1557, 2022, p.4). Other anti-LGBTQIA+ bills aim to restrict or ban gender-affirming healthcare, restrict the ability to access updated ID and other official documents, limit or ban

curriculum, restrict single-serve facilities, and restrict or ban transgender participation in sports.

The Equality Act

To examine the extent of these legislative forces across the United States, I want to share an initiative put forth by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) this year. The Human Rights Campaign is a non-profit organization and the largest LGBTQIA+ national civil rights organization in the country. This year, the HRC launched what they coin as The Reality Flag (figure 1), an updated representation of the American Flag with 29 of the 50 white stars missing to represent the 29 states where basic rights are missing for the LGBTQIA+ population. This initiative was set forth to help promote the passing of The Equality Act, legislation that would afford basic freedoms to LGBTQIA+ community across the United States. These basic freedoms as highlighted by the HRC cover three basic areas: education, housing, and employment. After taking a moment to process the image, I want to emphasize the weight this has on the LGBTQIA+ community. Ove half of the states in the United States have legislation directly attacking the basic rights and livelihood of this community of people. This legislation not only attacks the housing and employment of the community, but their mental health and well-being. University-aged students are being barraged with these realities in their everyday lives, and this impacts their university experiences. There are times that these legislative attacks directly impact their university experiences, which is expressed most strikingly today with the controversy surrounding trans-athlete participation in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

Figure 1. The Reality Flag presented by the HRC as the face of this initiative

Trans and Non-Binary Representation in Sports

The final topic surrounding LGBTQIA+ legislation I want to discuss is that of the trans and non-binary participation in the NCAA. The NCAA is member-led organization with the goal of helping to develop and support successful collegiate athletes. According to the NCAA website (2022), "Nearly half a million college athletes make up the 19,886 teams that send more than 57,661 participants to compete each year in the NCAA's 90 championships in 24 sports across 3 divisions," (NCAA, p.1). I was a member of two Division III NCAA team's during my undergraduate years, participating on both a cross country and track and field team. During the course of my graduate program, I have also worked as a graduate assistant to support the academic efforts of Division II college athletes. Thus, I have been immersed in and truly respect the work of the NCAA and have cherished the memories I have because of the organization.

Over the last few months, the NCAA has been the brunt of criticism and controversy surrounding that of trans and non-binary participation in college sports. This controversy was sparked when swimmer Lia Thomas began competing for the University of Pennsylvania this year. Many people began to criticize and express disdain over the fact that the NCAA allowed a trans swimmer to compete on the women's team, stating that it was unfair to allow what they argue is a biological man to compete against biological women. Much of the arguments are based not on facts and truths, but opinions and harsh reactions deeply rooted in transphobia. While this topic is a deep one, and could constitute a while other paper, I want to provide a brief overview of the information available, so as to provide a better understanding to the readers as to the severity of this issue for the LGBTQIA+ community in colleges today.

To begin, I want to share the current NCAA guidelines for trans participation in collegiate sports today. On January 19, 2022, the NCAA Media Center released an article recounting updates from the Board of Governors in regards to the transgender participation policy. This policy was updated to reflect the updated to transgender participation policy as set forth by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee and International Olympic Committee (IOC), called "IOC Framework on Fairness, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations" (International Olympic Committee, 2021, p.1). "The resulting sport-by-sport approach preserves opportunity for transgender student-athletes while balancing fairness, inclusion and safety for all who compete," (NCAA, 2022, p.1). The NCAA has adopted a three-phase approach to implementing this policy. The first phase starts with the 2022 winter and spring championships. During this phase, in order to complete in the championship games,

transgender athletes must submit documentation four weeks prior to the selection date of the championship selection. All participation is contingent upon their adherence to policy laid out in the 2010 transgender participation policy which states that all athletes must be one year on testosterone suppression treatment before competing. Phase two covers the 2022-2023 regular season and requires transgender students to report testosterone levels at the start of the regular season and again six months later, in addition to documentation four weeks prior to championship competitions. The third phase begins in the 2023-2024 academic year and requires transgender students to provide documentation twice annually, in addition to documentation four weeks prior to championship competitions. This process will continue annually moving forward from that academic year.

Based on the above guidelines set forth by the NCAA, it is completely valid for transgender athletes to be competing in collegiate sports. The backlash that is being spewed towards Lia Thomas is not based upon any factual data or information, but hateful and miseducated opinion and transphobia. There is one final and important commentary I will present on this topic to further enhance notion of how LGBTQIA+ inclusion in higher education is being attacked today. While Lia Thomas is making headlines today, she is not the first transgender athlete to have previous competed in the NCAA. The first known trans athlete to compete in an NCAA Division I competition was Schuyler Bailar, a former swimmer for Harvard University. While Schuyler's transition from competing on the women's team to the men's team was not a smooth one, his experience was not nearly as scrutinized as Lia's experience has been. Individuals have used arguments such as: "Lia is DOMINATING in the women's category," "shattering records", and "Lia changed from 462nd on the men's team to 1st on the women's team and is therefore "unfair"" (Bailar,

2022, p.1) Additional arguments used to discredit the validity of Thomas's participation in sport come from the false claim that Lia is a biological man and thus cannot be allowed to compete against biological women and perceived higher testosterone levels. Both of these claims, in addition to the ones above, are all false.

When looking at the categories of education, national legislation, and collegiate athletics, we can see the repetitive patterns of exclusion and harm that the LGBTQIA+ community faces in higher education today. It is imperative that the professionals working in the institution are provided the information and support necessary to help support this population in campus. Students today are bombarded with rhetoric and reality indicating to them that they do not belong in these spaces. It is up to us as professionals to help remind them that their presence is important and valued in higher institutions of learning.

LGBTQIA+ Students in Higher Education

Research in higher education regarding LGBTQIA+ students and positionalities is a newer development. Even in the last 10 years, there have been immense developments in the recognition of LGBTQIA+ identifying individuals in society, and as a result in higher education spaces. While research has increased on this population of people, the research remains more empirical in nature (Lange, 2019). This empirical data is important as it provides us with baseline data regarding the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students. As detailed by DeVita and Anders (2018):

> For L,G,B,T, &/or Q individuals negative social climates have been associated with psychological challenges that include physical and mental health risks (e.g.,

depression, anxiety, suicide), fear of rejection, an increased likelihood of substance

abuse, and unsafe sexual behavior (p. 65).

Pryor, Garvey, and Johnson (2017) also make note of the main concerns typically addressed

in scholarship about the LGBTQIA+ community, particularly around campus climate,

changing construction of identities, and visibility of LGBTQIA+ people.

While we need this information to help us understand the experiences of this group

of students, we require more of the personalized voices of these students in order to fully

understand their experiences. Much of the research and aim today is to bring queer voices

and queer theory to academia. Lange (2019) writes, "while these shifts produce higher

levels of empirical research, we contend there is still a significant need to theorize liberation

in higher education through queer and trans epistemologies, with attention to such systems

as White supremacy, ableism, and classism. As Renn noted: "White, able-bodied, and

middle class are assumed norms" of the research that has served as the foundation for

practitioners (p. 135)" (p. 512). The norm set for academic voices in higher education is that

of white males. The queer voice has yet to be validated in these spaces.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a significant aspect of a student's time in university, whether that be an

undergraduate student or a graduate student, having the support in that way lends itself to

much success. Friberg et al. (2021) note that mentoring can be categorized in several ways,

"formal and informal mentoring, peer or near-peer mentoring networks, or multi-mentor

models," (p. 397). Important to note here is informal mentoring, and the ways in which an

informal mentoring position can lend itself to mentors selecting to mentor those that they are positioned similarly to or feel comfortable mentoring.

LGBTQIA+ Mentoring Relationships

In terms of this thesis, this is where the synthesis between the two topics takes precedence. LGBTQIA+ students face uncertainty of knowing who on campus they can turn to when they need a safe person on campus to rely on and find support in. Mulcahy et al. (2016) note, "Given that many school districts are unsure how to implement formal mentoring programs, LGBTQIA+ students are faced with the challenge of determining what school personnel members would be safe and supportive informal mentor" (p. 406). The experiences of LGBTQIA+ students differ drastically from their heterosexual peers and as a result their mentoring experiences and needs will differ. Russell et al. (2009) identify some considerations mentors need to take when working with LGBTQIA+ students, "the level of disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity on the part of the LGBTQIA+ member of the dyad, and the level of safety around LGBTQIA+ issues within the training environment" (p. 197). Devita and Anders (2018) make note of the characteristics LGBTQIA+ students and staff look for in an ally. These characteristics include symbols (Safe Space/Zone signs and LGBTQIA+ community notes), feelings of community on campus, and the need for a call to action from faculty in order to achieve a sense of true allyship from others. Additionally, when looking at an informal mentoring role, LGBTQIA+ students looked at qualities such as good listening skills, open-mindedness, and a sense of non-judgement, as well as an interest to learn about LGBTQIA+ issues and struggles (Mulcahy et al., 2016).

When looking at the impact mentors have on LGBTQIA+ students, we can see that in nearly all situations and cases, mentoring relationships have a positive impact on the students and their university experience. Mulcahy et al. (2016) identify some of these impacts as: improved self-awareness, feeling more comfortable as a queer individual, a decrease in loneliness, and an increased sense of whole self. "Mentors helped them to realize that their sexual orientation was only one part of their identity and also helped them to develop a sense of being a complete person" (Mulcahy, 2016, p. 409). This impact has an even stronger meaning when the mentor and mentee are both LGBTQIA+ identifying. When the two individuals are queer identifying, the conversation between the two can cover topics such as stigma and generational differences (Russell et al., 2009).

In this chapter I discussed topics such as the historical foundations of higher education and how the roots of the university still impact how the university functions today. I discussed how student identity theories impact LGBTQIA+ student populations. I discussed power and how power dynamics play a role in how students experience their journey in university settings, and finally, I discussed current developments in LGBTQIA+ legislation around the nation, and how these developments impact LGBTQIA+ students. The final two chapters take the information provided so far and use it to create an intervention aimed at combating the struggles the LGBTQIA+ community have faced since the inception of the university, using religion to invalidate their participation in university, legislation that bans their existence in schools across the nation, and using power narratives to diminish the value of their input, and validating their existence and adding their voice to academic spaces. LGBTQIA+ students need the support of student affairs professionals now

more than ever, and the following chapters provide a tangible way for that support to be

brought to life.

Chapter Four: Program Design and Implementation

In the previous chapters, I have provided background on my own personal connection and framework surrounding overarching theme of how student affairs professionals can better provide support to LGBTQIA+ students. I also provided information regarding the status of LGBTQIA+ students in university spaces and in the nation. The following two chapters will outline a proposed way to combat the original problem I proposed at the start of the paper, which is that student affairs professionals need to be better equipped to understand and support LGBTQIA+ students. In the pages below, I will lay out in as much detail as possible how I believe this can best be accomplished, with a collection of guides aimed at providing education on a particular topic relevant to the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ students.

Purpose and Goals

From the start of this paper, I have been proposing that university stakeholders and those who hold mentoring and advising relationships with LGBTQIA+ students need to be educated on how to adequately support these students in their work. To accomplish that task, I am proposing a collection of materials, called Queer Composition: A Guide to Knowing and Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students, to serve as a guide for university stakeholders when they meet with students. The guides will be presented in the form of guided activities, infographics, and flyers, all centered on a range of topics relevant to educating mentors on issues confronting the LGBTQIA+ community. The purpose of this collection of materials is to provide support to the stakeholders to help assist them in supporting students on topics or areas of the LGBTQIA+ community with which they are not familiar. It is imperative to remember that just because someone is part of a

marginalized community like the LGBTQIA+ community, it does not mean they have all the knowledge about the experiences of others. For example, while I am a cisgender lesbian woman, I do not have the lived experiences of someone who identifies as a transgender male, or as asexual, so my knowledge to speak on those matters is significantly limited.

My intervention will consist of two different components. The first is a training for mentors. The second component is a curated collection of content I made to be of use to the individuals in mentoring roles. The goal of the training will be to provide stakeholders information to properly use the created materials and debrief with them the particular learning outcomes associated with each flier/infographic. The goal of the content component is to provide mentors with the resources necessary to adequately support students. My hope is that by creating this content and sharing it with university stakeholders it provides them the guidance when they are meeting with LGBTQIA+ students. It is important to provide support to this population of students, but it is more important to be able to provide support in ways that they find most beneficial to them and their experiences. This intervention works to support the needs of LGBTQIA+ students by identifying and creating a solid support network, helping get connected to on-and-off campus resources that may benefit them and increasing their sense of self.

Theory to Practice

My thesis is centered around the idea that university stakeholders, especially those who work directly with students, need to be better educated on how to support their students who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community. As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community myself, I understand the unique experiences this community of students have at the university level and have been witness to the need for this type of intervention to be implemented at the university.

According to The Trevor Project (2022), a non-profit organization with a mission geared towards providing support and resources to LGBT youth, "...more than 1.8 million LGBTQ youth (13-24) seriously consider suicide each year in the U.S. — and at least one attempts suicide every 45 seconds" (Facts about LGBTQ youth suicide, 2022, p.1). Additionally, Hedegaard et al. (2018) as cited by the Trevor Project (2022) notes that LGBTQ youth are the most at risk for suicide than non-LGBT young people. When looking more narrowly at higher education spaces, research by Devita and Anders (2018) states that, "For L,G,B,T, &/or Q individuals negative social climates have been associated with psychological challenges that include physical and mental health risks (e.g., depression, anxiety, suicide), fear of rejection, an increased likelihood of substance abuse, and unsafe sexual behavior" (p.65). With this information we can see that the LGBTQIA+ young people are vulnerable

To combat the negative experiences of LGBTQIA+ youth, one goal I have for my intervention is to focus on the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment in mentoring spaces across campus. As reported by The Trevor Project (2022), " Having at least one accepting adult can reduce the risk of a suicide attempt among LGBTQ young people by 40 percent," (Facts about LGBTQ youth suicide, 2022). When looking at the impact mentors have on LGBTQIA+ students, we can see that in nearly all situations and cases, mentoring relationships have a positive impact on the students and their university experience. Mulcahy et al. (2016) identify some of these impacts as: improved self-awareness, feeling more comfortable as a queer individual, a decrease in loneliness, and an increased sense of whole self. According to Mulcahy et al. (2016), "mentors helped them to realize that their sexual orientation was only one part of their identity and also helped them

to develop a sense of being a complete person" (p. 409). Given this research and information, we can see that having a solid support network, even if it is one individual person, can have a positive impact on the higher education experiences of LGBTQIA+ students.

Professional Competencies

Additionally, to the relevant literature cited above, it is important to discuss the guiding frameworks of the professional competencies in order to further support the need for this proposed service. The professional competencies have been put forth by the two comprehensive student affairs associations known today, the College Student Educators, International (ACPA) and Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA). According to the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies Rubrics (2016), "The competency rubrics and their source document, Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015), reflect decades of scholarship devoted to identifying the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for effective practice" (p.4). Together, these organizations have put together a rubric spanning across ten core competency areas: "Advising and Supporting," "Assessment, Evaluation, and Research," "Law, Policy, and Governance," "Leadership," "Organizational and Human Research," "Personal and Ethical Foundations," "Social Justice and Inclusion," "Student Learning and Development," "Technology," and "Values, Philosophy, and History," (ACPA/NASPA, 2016, pp.10-36). With each competency rubric, there is a three-tier system to rate an individual's competence in each area. These levels are "foundational," "intermediate," and "advanced" (ACPA/NASPA, 2016, p.4). Based on the content and purpose of Queer Composition, there

are several competencies that, when implemented, student affairs practitioners who use Queer Composition, will be able to relate to these competencies.

The first is that of advising and supporting. Given that my thesis is centered around mentoring relationships, it is important that the individuals who are utilizing Queer Composition are able to evaluate and develop their skills in the advising and supporting category. It is the hope that this intervention will be able to assist in the development of these skills. Given the content that I developed, the personal and ethical foundations as well as the values, philosophy, and history categories will be beneficial to understand. When dealing with matters of the LGBTQIA+ community, it is important to be able to identify one's own opinions and values regarding the topics that are important to the development of LGBTQIA+ students. Along with the development of morals, ethics, and values, the understanding of one's competence and development in the area of social justice and inclusion is imperative to working with the minoritized community that this intervention addresses. The final category that poses relevance to this intervention is that of student learning and development. The materials I produced were created with student learning and development in mind. It is important to understand how students learn so the activities can have purpose and be influential.

The purpose of the professional competencies is to promote the ongoing growth and development of one's professional journey. Queer Composition will help assist in the development of the professionals that utilize it in their everyday work.

Related Experience

Of relevance to this proposal is that of my previous work experience. At the very beginning of this paper, I laid out a short narrative scenario, describing a student beginning

their first professional job as a graduate assistant and feeling unprepared as they began to meet with students for the first time. This scenario is reflective of my experiences as I began meeting with students in a semi-professional manner. As a first-time graduate student, I was meeting with college athletes, providing academic support to them as they navigated their first-and-second years of college. While the purpose of advising and mentoring meetings is to provide academic support to students, I found that my meetings covered topics far removed from academic success. I learned of my students' personal lives, their mental and emotional wellbeing, their athletic struggles, and due to the climate of the world at the time, their experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic.

This was my first-time meeting with students in a professional manner, and additionally it was my first time mentoring students who identified in the LGBTQIA+ community. These meetings were significant to my own experiences at the time as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, who was living at home at the time while not being "out." I was meeting with students and attempting to navigate my own identity growth while also supporting the identity growth of my students. It is at this moment where the impetus for this intervention began. After reflecting on my time mentoring students for the first time, I realized I needed additional support to help navigate these meeting with students. While I could pull from my life and experiences so far, I did not have the experience advising students as a professional. I was still in the early growth stage of my identity development, figuring out how to come out to my family and being stuck in a household 13 hours away from my support system at graduate school. The collection of materials I am proposing is a step to providing mentors and new professionals the support and resources necessary to adequately support their LGBTQIA+ students.

Program Proposal

Goals and Outcomes

The overarching aim of my proposed intervention is to provide university

stakeholders who are meeting with LGBTQIA+ students with the resources necessary to

navigate the different topics of conversation that they may encounter. In order to make this

intervention a reality, I have identified two components to this intervention that are

necessary to its success. The training component has a goal of educating the main

stakeholders who will be using my materials on how to effectively do so. The content

component has a goal of first, providing information and guidance to the stakeholders on

topics that they may encounter when meeting with students, in order to effectively support

their students. The second goal is to provide materials and information to students coming to

meet with mentors on topics that they are in need of.

Each flier/infographic in Queer Composition will come with its own set of learning

outcomes. These learning outcomes are utilized to assess the learning that the students are

doing after they use one of the fliers in Queer Composition. There is a chart in appendix A

that outlines the learning outcomes for each of the guides in the first edition of Queer

Composition. The assessment associated with these learning outcomes will be described in

detail in the following chapter.

Content

The development of Queer Composition will take about eight months to complete and

will remain on an eight-to-12-month cycle of development for each academic year. I have

taken the time to research what topics are most important and relevant to LGBTQIA+ young

adults during the last few months and then curated my content to align with those needs.

Each item I created is in the format of an infographic or flier, utilizing the online platform of

Canva™ to do so. Each item is centered on LGBTQIA+ topics, as well as topics like

sustainability, intersectionality, and mentoring tips and tricks. Each item has anywhere from

one to three learning outcomes associated with it, allowing stakeholders and myself to

assess the effectiveness of the learning done by the students who use the fliers in Queer

Composition. In addition to the educational content on the fliers, I have added additional

information about resources that students can access on campus (assuming we are on the

West Chester University campus), in the local area, and regionally. The five flyers that are

included in Queer Composition are located in Appendix B for reference. The goal and the

hope is that as time goes on, assessment reveals that more topics can be added to Queer

Composition as new topics are found to be needed or wanted by students and stakeholders

that are utilizing this intervention.

Training

The training component will be developed about two to three months before the start

of the academic year. This training can only be developed in its entirety once the curated

content has been created, reviewed, and finalized. The overarching goal of the training is to

provide the main university stakeholders who will be utilizing Queer Composition (mentors,

undergraduate student leaders, GA students, identity offices) the tools to be able to

effectively utilize the content I am creating in their advising and mentoring meetings. The

training will take place during the first two weeks before the Fall semester begins, at a time

that correlates with most university office's training takes place. The training will be an

hour and a half in length and completed in an in-person format. All university stakeholders will meet in a room on campus and go through Queer Composition Competency training facilitated by me. This training will also be available to departments on campus who have student leader positions, such as Resident Assistants, Orientation Leaders, Peer Assistants, etc. Departments can request this training to be included in their summer training, so their student-staff can gain this competence for themselves and be utilized as they support students through the year. The student trainings will follow the same outline as the university stakeholder training as will be outlined below.

Training will begin with an interactive conversation to provide participants with basic LGBTQIA+ knowledge, lasting about fifteen minutes in length. This knowledge includes competency on pronouns, terms, and definitions of common LGBTQIA+ terms. The next twenty minutes will encompass a preview of the materials that are included in Queer Composition for that academic year, followed by twenty minutes to introduce and familiarize the attendees with the learning outcomes for the guides in Queer Composition. For the purposes of this proposal, the materials that would be described in this section can be found in appendices A and B. The intention with this part of the training is to help the university stakeholders understand how this initiative aligns with co-curricular university initiatives. This time will also be taken to describe how assessment will occur throughout the academic year for both the students and them. The final twenty-five minutes will encompass a conversation on how to have difficult conversations, so as to prepare the university stakeholders for the more difficult conversations that they may encounter when meeting with students. At the completion of the training there will be time or questions, and then each individual that attended will receive a physical copy of Queer Composition, as

well as copies of the learning outcomes and the email template for student assessment, which is outlined in appendix C. Everyone will also receive a sticker to place somewhere visible in or around their office for example their office door, to visually denote their competency in Queer Composition. A copy of this sticker is located in appendix D. When the scope of this intervention widens and expands, I could begin to gather data on whether the topics in Fall semester and Spring semester could be tailored to students' needs during both of these times. If so, an additional training would be added during the few days leading up to Spring semester, with a new rollout of content that pertains to the Spring semester specifically. For a training outline, please see appendix E.

Materials

The overarching result of this proposal is to develop and eventually publish a collection of materials called Queer Composition: A Guide to Knowing and Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students. University stakeholders will receive a physical copy of Queer Composition at the conclusion of the summer or winter trainings that they attend. In order to make this resource more accessible, I will also make this available to the respective university in digital form, so that selective offices on campus can have the materials available to share and utilize digitally. Within the first year of Queer Composition, I have created five guides to be included into the final publication to meet the needs of the students and the stakeholders using them. Over time, the number of guides will fluctuate depending on the needs of users at that time.

In addition to the publication of Queer Composition I have created a training that will be administered to the university stakeholders that wish to utilize Queer Composition in

their work with students. As a result, I have created a training agenda (appendix E). Inclusive of completing this training, everyone who successfully completes the training will receive a sticker to place in or around their office to be visible to students (appendix D) and will complete a training evaluation survey (appendix F). Finally, I have constructed an email template (appendix C), an outline of the focus group questions (appendix H), and an example of the evaluation survey that the university stakeholders will take at the end of the year to provide feedback on their experiences of using Queer Composition (appendix G).

Anticipated Challenges

While I find this program to be one of benefit and necessity in higher education spaces today, others may feel differently. Thus, I want to recognize one great challenge that I suspect to come upon when implementing Queer Composition. This challenge is the implementation and roll-out of Queer Composition in religious institutions. Religious institutions are not the most well-known for being the most supportive and accepting of the LGBTQIA+ community, a topic that has been explored earlier in this paper, and thus having a program like this in a religious institution may be difficult. I would argue that it is needed more at an institution-type such as this one but know it would be harder to do.

Another challenge I anticipate facing when implementing Queer Composition is creating an authentic way of evaluating student experiences with the material. I have created an email template for university stakeholders to use when following up with students so that we can assess how useful the information was to them, and how they feel the information helped them. I want this evaluation to feel authentic to the student and not like they are being assessed or surveyed as a result of them having what may have been a hard

conversation with a professional they trust. I have created room in the email template for it to be very customizable for the stakeholders, but his will be an aspect of Queer Composition that I monitor closely so that I can ensure that this evaluation s as authentic as possible.

As described throughout this chapter, Queer Composition: A Guide to Knowing and Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students is a collection of guides aimed at providing university stakeholders with the information necessary to support their LGBTQIA+ students. This is an intervention that benefits not only the students, but the university professionals as well, educating and supporting both groups of people. I have gone into detail on the intervention, explaining why it is necessary, laying out the content and training components of the intervention, and the learning outcomes associated with each. In the following chapter I will go into more details of Queer Composition and the logistics surrounding how I intend to get it up off the ground running.

Chapter Five: Implementation and Evaluation

In this final chapter, I will address in detail how I intend on implementing Queer Composition into a university setting, laying out the anticipated timeline and the budget. I will also describe the ways in which I am going to center assessment and evaluation efforts within the structure of Queer Composition, both for students and university stakeholders. I will speak briefly on my leadership style and how I intend to lead this effort, and finally I will wrap up my thoughts on this thesis project.

Implementation

Anticipated Timeline

As described in the last chapter, Queer Composition is a published compilation of guides and resources for use by stakeholders in student-facing university spaces. This intervention has a training component included in the rollout of the publications. The development of Queer Composition would occur over the course of several months. In order to have Queer Composition be implemented at the start of an academic year, development would need to begin in the spring semester prior to the beginning of an academic year. Eight months out, in January, the research process would begin, whereupon data and research would be collected on the LGBTQIA+ experience in higher education and society at large.

Important information to gather at the beginning of the development process includes current federal and state legislation surrounding LGBTQIA+ rights, important LGBTQIA+ statistical data for the year, university policies and procedures, new and developing terminology within the LGBTQIA+ community, and current pop-culture references. For example, for the current academic year, 2021-2022, starting in January,

information that would be of relevance to Queer Social at this stage of development would be:

- Current anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation that has been signed across the country, i.e. the 'Don't Say Gay' bill in Florida;

- The new 'X' gender marker initiated by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA);

- Achievements in the entertainment industry such as Jonathan Van Ness's recent release of their new book Love That Story: Observations from a Gorgeously Queer Life and Ariana Debose's 2022 Oscar win as the first openly queer person of color.

After gathering this information within the first few months of the year planners can move on to the creation of the publications. In the months of April/May, about three months prior to the start of the academic year, the guides and resources that will be published into Queer Composition will be constructed. The infographics, flyers, and resources will be made via Canva™, and then printed as physical copies in Queer Composition.

In addition to the creation of Queer Composition, about two to three months prior to the start of the academic year, the Queer Composition training will be developed. The training will take at least a week to complete. The training will include components on LGBTQIA+ competence as well as how to use Queer Composition when meeting with students. The training will be administered via in-person modes of communication to the stakeholders that will be using Queer Social for the upcoming academic year. The training will be administered about a week or two before the start of the academic year, in a large room where anyone on the university campus can attend and receive Queer Composition

certification. Student-workers and leaders have the opportunity to be trained to use these materials, and these trainings will occur in correlation with their summer training schedules on a requested basis. A mid-year training will occur for those individuals who were unable to attend the summer training, or for those who are new to the university. A student-staff that was previously trained could attend this training as a refresher.

Finally, at the end of the school year, stakeholders will be asked to join a focus group session so that at this time, university stakeholders can meet with the Queer Composition team can gain insight to their experiences. Part of the aim with this overall proposal is to uplift the voices of the LGBTQIA+ community. The focus group addresses this need, by providing space to share experiences in community with one another, taking an informal approach to the action research framework that has been described as the framework for this proposal earlier in this paper. The outline for the questions that will be asked during the focus group can be found in appendix H. The overall timeline for this intervention will be based on a yearly cycle as described above.

Funding and Budget

Within the timeline of the development of Queer Composition stands the narrative of funding. It is important to identify the funding needs for this intervention. It is equally important to identify the source(s) of funding. The labor of creating the publications and purchasing materials will be the largest expense.

In order to obtain the funding for this initiative, the goal is to get campus partners to assist in providing funds. Campus identity offices like an LGBTQIA+ identity office and other minority identity offices could put forth funds to help support the initiative in response to their participation in using Queer Composition. The budget to help print and publish

Queer Composition will come from the university printing office, so as to reduce costs by utilizing outside printers. The budget for training will be associated with an individual's desire to come to the training during their regularly scheduled working hours. This equates to each participating department's allotting their employees to attend an hour and a half long training during their workday. This is also inclusive of student-workers attending the training as well. A department may choose to include Queer Composition as part of their student-staff training cycles, thus taking this labor cost into account when they are paying their student workers.

The final costs would be for marketing and advertising. Utilizing online modes of advertising such as email, digital newsletters, and social media are ways to promote university stakeholders to participate in the training to use Queer Composition. Outreach to university offices would also help to gain participation. In order to promote this initiative to students across campus, stakeholders who successfully complete training to be a Queer Composition partner will receive a sticker to hang in and around their office; a sticker-logo has been created and included in appendix X. The logo is a way LGBTQIA+ students know where Queer Composition partners are on campus. Ideally, the budget for this intervention will be supplemented by the student affairs budget. There may be professional development monies available to fund this initiative. Due to the low cost of publication and printing, this should not be an unattainable goal. As Queer Composition expands and finds success, the budget will need to come from somewhere more substantial, but for the first year or so, I will ask that this funding comes from the university student affairs budget.

For a yearly budget, I would estimate total costs to be between $200 and $300, especially within the first year or so. The budget is outlined below.

Queer Composition Year-One Budget

Publication Costs (Printing and Binding)	$130
Sticker	$100
Total	$230

Leadership Style

As the initiator of Queer Composition, I will be leading the charge in terms of getting this initiative planned and implemented in my home institution. While I have never considered myself a real leader, I know that implementing this initiative will put me at the forefront of imperative work for the LGBTQIA+ community, especially teenagers and young adults. Below I highlight what I believe to be my leadership style, and the importance of this type of leadership in higher education today.

When thinking of leadership as it relates to student development, it is important to consider first how you can best support the student. As mentioned in previous chapters, we as student affairs professionals must be mindful of our students and the communities they come from. In doing so, we can note the specific and tailored ways in which we should interact with them to best lead them. This leadership style creates space for student affairs professionals to advocate for their students.

In my work with students, and as I gain more experience with marginalized communities of students, this style will become more and more important as a leadership skill that I execute. Harrison (2014) notes that advocacy as a practice, functions as a way to

support "powerless, stigmatized, and oppressed populations improve their wellbeing,"
(Jansson, 2010, as cited by Harrison, 2014, p.165).

In my opinion, advocacy should be at the center of any student affairs professional's
leadership style, as it helps those students who need it most succeed. Additionally, serving
students at a level equal to theirs is also important. When power dynamics come into play, it
inhibits a student's ability to feel as though they matter, especially in a system that places
them at a level far below what they deserve. In my experience as a graduate student, I have
learned that the ability to influence existing power dynamics and helping students feel as
though they truly do matter and have a significant voice contributes to their development
throughout their time in college.

I believe that the leadership style I adopt in in my work centers around this idea of
advocacy as noted above. In this thesis, I am centering my work around the LGBTQIA+
community and the unique experiences this group of students face as they navigate the
higher education landscape. I am drawing from my own experiences as a student with the
mentors I had in my undergraduate experience, as well as my experiences as a graduate
student/mentor to students. I focus solely on creating relationships with students first. I then
think about how I can best cater to their needs. I lead quietly, not as someone who is always
out front, but as someone who works more behind the scenes, ensuring each student's
unique experience is being understood. With this intervention, I hope to elevate the voices
of the LGBTQIA+ community in university spaces, as this creates an environment for me to
advocate for students, as well as teaching and giving them the opportunity to do so for
themselves.

As I move forward and think about leadership as it applies to my thematic concern, I am reminded that still today, the higher education landscape is still changing and growing, while also remaining stuck in a system that inhibits the growth of some minoritized communities. As discussed in the pages above, LGBTQIA+ scholarship in higher education is a growing field, with most of the research done to date being empirical in nature (Lange, 2019). My hope in implementing Queer Composition is to begin to change this trend and bring LGBTQIA+ voices and experiences to the front of academic spaces. As I work to propose my thematic concern and think of practical ways to implement programming, there will be institutions and individuals who still resist the inclusion of these voices.

These individuals are those who hold leadership positions and who remain steadfast in a mindset believing university system works as it should, leaving little room for transformation in the university system. I believe that leadership in the university, especially when working with minoritized populations, needs to be collaborative, allowing for hierarchical barriers to be broken. Additionally, leadership can take the form of advocating for overshadowed voices to be heard. I anticipate that as a queer professional, I will be met with discrimination from those I work with and for. I pledge that in my work, I will always strive to be a leader that allows for students to be seen, heard, and accepted. I will, through my leadership remind students that their voice matters. My thesis and the proposition of Queer Composition are just the beginning of the conversation including the voices of all students.

Assessment and Evaluation

To implement an initiative and have it last long term, there needs to be some sort of assessment and evaluation efforts. By assessing and evaluating the efforts and outcomes

within an initiative, one can adjust the program move forward with improvements. There are various methods that one could use to assess or evaluate an initiative. These include surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observation. Each of these methods produce data in different ways and choosing the method that is most relevant to the initiative you are putting forth is imperative. For the purposes of Queer Composition, I will be assessing the effectiveness of the materials from two points of view--from that of the student and from that of the university stakeholders.

Student Assessments

Assessing the student experience is important in the success of Queer Composition. One of the goals of implementing Queer Composition on university campuses is to help provide support and resources to students who identify within the LGBTQIA+ community. The research presented in the previous chapters of this thesis have indicated that students who are part of this community are particularly vulnerable and have lived experiences different than those of their non-LGBTQIA+ peers. As a result, the materials created for use in Queer Composition aim to help support this population of students, so they have the information available to them to better understand their development and lived experiences at this time in their life.

The assessment of the usefulness of the information in Queer Composition will come in the form of an informal survey. As per my leadership philosophy, I believe in the power of one-to-one personal connections. The impact that Queer Composition has comes in the form of the relationships built between the university stakeholders and the students who walk through the door searching for support. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the information provided to the student from Queer Composition, a follow up email will be sent

from the university stakeholder to the student they have served, via a personal template. This email will summarize the conversation that the two individuals had together, ask if the information shared from Queer Composition was helpful, and finally conclude by asking if any further resources are necessary to the student. This template is meant to be personalized, given that the conversations had with the students are unique. An email template will be included in appendix C.

University Stakeholder Assessment

In addition to assessing student learning and relevance of Queer Composition, I also want to assess the experience that university stakeholders have while using the materials in Queer Composition. The first assessment that will be vital to the success of Queer Composition is gathering feedback on the training. At the end of the university stakeholder training and each of the student staff training sessions that occur, there will be a QR code provided that sends participants to a brief one-minute survey to gather quick feedback on the training experience. This feedback will be very brief, simply gathering information on whether the training was helpful in the context of using Queer Composition, if they feel confident in utilizing the materials for the year, and any improvement or praise they have for me from the training as a whole. A copy of this will be added to appendix F for reference.

For Queer Composition in general, the goal is to have infographics and information on a plethora of topics surrounding the LGBTQIA+ community. As a result, there may be information that is not needed by students in Queer Composition. Additionally, there may be topics that come up that have not been included in Queer Composition. Thus, the yearly evaluations will assess the relevance of the content in Queer Composition. The survey that I

will send to university stakeholders at the end of the academic year will be attached in appendix G.

An additional level of evaluation and reflection will come in the form of a focus group. At the end of the academic year, I will provide space for all university stakeholders to come and join in a focus group, conversing about their experiences meeting with students and utilizing materials from Queer Composition. While gathering data via surveys is a great way to understand baseline data, I believe that it is important to also hear the stories associated with the data collected. As stated in previous chapters, the LGBTQIA+ voice in higher education is one that is silenced more than it is valued. By sitting with these stakeholders and listening to their stories, I can begin to uplift the voices and experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community. A copy of the focus group questions have been included in appendix H.

<div align="center">**Limitations and Forward Thinking**</div>

As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community myself, I understand that this proposal of Queer Composition sits within the framework of the LGBTQIA+ experience, a significant limitation of this thesis proposal. The information and content of Queer Composition solely focuses on the experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community. This concept could be expanded to include any population that exists on a university campus, for example: international students, athletes, commuter students, transfer students, differently-abled students, and people of color. In order to reach these populations of students, Queer Composition could be reworked to include information on all of these topics, with a new name to reflect which population it is catering to. Also, important to note here is the intersectionality that is present in each individual's life, and how all of this information

could be included in Queer Composition. While a student may be an athlete, they may also be a person of color, a woman, and a lesbian. There are so many different layers of identity that could be addressed in these materials, however including them was not within the scope of this thesis.

Conclusion

Through reading this paper, I hope that I have been able to instill a sense of my passion as it pertains to highlighting the LGBTQIA+ voice in the university. Today, we are seeing this voice be attacked and silenced all across the nation and the world. While our job as student affairs professionals may feel small and fruitless at times, we are ultimately here to serve students. If you have made it this far through this paper, you have been empowered to think of your role differently, as one where you get the chance to change and maybe even save a student's life by sitting and listening to them, offering support to them as they grapple with changing developmental and social growth in a world that attempts to erase who they are. It is my hope with this paper and with the implementation of Queer Composition that we can begin to validate the experiences of our LGBTQIA+ students and ensure that they know that their academic pursuits as well as their personal goals matter. That their lives are important, valuable, and that they matter to others. May Queer Composition help assist you in making deep, personal connections with others, and may you be willing to help build a rainbow of success for a population of students that rely on your support and partnership now more than ever.

Appendices

Appendix A
Queer Composition Learning Outcomes Chart

How to be a Good Mentee	LO 1: Students will be able to name the five steps to being a good mentee as laid out by the infographic.	LO 2: Students will be able to identify the actions of a good mentee.	LO 3: Students will be able to locate resources available to them on campus, locally, and regionally
Surviving the Holidays	LO 1: Students will be able to create a plan of action for when they go home for the holidays.	LO 2: Students will be able to curate a self-care plan for when they are home for the holidays.	LO 3: Students will be able to locate resources available to them on campus, locally, and regionally.
Sustainability	LO 1: Students will be able to identify ways they can be more sustainable on their college campus	LO 2: Students will be able to make changes to their daily routines that promote sustainability.	LO 3: Students will be able to locate resources available to them on campus, locally, and regionally.
Intersectionality	LO 1: Students will be able to define intersectionality.	LO 2: Students will be able to identify and reflect on their intersecting identities	LO 3: Students will be able to locate resources available to them on campus, locally, and regionally.

Coming Out	LO 1: Students will be able to choose how they would like to come out.	LO 2: Students will be able to decide who they would like to come out to.	LO 3: Students will be able to locate recourse available to them on campus, locally, and regionally.

Appendix B
Queer Composition Guides: Coming Out

So You Think You are Ready to Come Out

Are you struggling with the right way to come out for the first time? Below are some tips and trick to coming out to someone for the first time.

1 TAKE A DEEP BREATH!

This is an important and big step in your journey of coming into your queerness. Take a moment to appreciate that and ground yourself.

2 CHOOSE THE LOCATION

Where do you want to come out? Make sure the location is one you are comfortable and can have this conversation privately. If you envision the conversation not going well, make sure you have an easy exit.

3 CHOOSE THE INDIVIDUAL

Who do you want to come out to? Is it your family, a friend, or a trusted mentor? Whomever you come out to, make sure it is someone you trust to have this information.

4 DO IT YOUR WAY

There is no one right or wrong way to come out. It must be on your own terms, on your own timeline, and in your own way. If posting it on the internet, texting, or speaking it is most comfortable for you, then do it that way. Just ensure it is YOUR way.

READY?

Take a deep breath and go live your truth.

CREATED BY:
Cara Fordenbacher
December 11, 2021

Resource Page

1 CAMPUS RESOURCES

- The Counseling Center
- The Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy
- The Center for Women and Gender Equity
- The Dowdy Multicultural Center
- The Resource Pantry

2 LOCAL RESOURCES

- The Crime Victim's Center
- Planned Parenthood
- SAGA Community Center

3 NATIONAL RESOURCES

- The Trevor Project
- GLSEN
- The Human Rights Campaign
- GLAAD

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Cara Fordenbacher
December 11, 2021

Queer Composition Guides: How to be a Good Mentee

In Need of a Mentor?

Below are tips and tricks to becoming a mentee for the first time, and how you can be a good mentee to your mentor!

Attendance

In order to have any mentoring experience, you need to first be present! Make sure you attend all of your meetings in a timely and punctual manner. Remember your mentor has taken time our of their schedule to meet with you... be respectful of that.

Attitude

Your attitude is everything when it comes to meeting with a mentor. While you can never always be a good mood, make sure you do your best to be present, attentive, and positive when meeting with your mentor.

Come Prepared

When meeting with your mentor, make sure that you have come with any prepared materials necessary. This can be items for review, assignments requested by the mentor, or even just questions that you have. This allows the mentoring space to be a productive use of time.

Communication

Your mentor is a person who cares for you and wants to see you succeed. Please communicate with them to the best of your ability. They cannot help you if you do not tell them what you need and how they can best support you.

They are Human Too

Remember that your mentors are human too. They deal with heartbreak, grief, stress, and frustration just like you. Be respectful of their boundaries and the things they share with you and go through in their personal lives.

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Cara Fordenbacher
December 12, 2021

Resource Page

Campus Resources

- The Counseling Center
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- The Resource Pantry

Local Resources

- The Crime Victim's Center
- Planned Parenthood
- SAGA Community Center

National Resources

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- The Human Rights Campaign
- GLAAD

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Cara Fordenbacher
December 12, 2021

Queer Composition Guides: Intersectionality

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

INTERSECTIONALITY

You are human, which means you contain many different layers of identity that make you, YOU.

WHAT IT IS

Intersectionality is the intersection between the different aspects of identity that make up a person.

AREAS OF IDENTITY

Some areas of identity that are incorporated in intersectionality are: race, gender, sexuality, spirituality, socio-economic status, ability

ACTIVITY

What is the area of identity that is most important to you?

What is the area of identity that you believe is most important to others?

What is an area of your identity that you want to explore more?

What is the area of your identity that you are most comfortable with?

WHAT IS ITS SIGNIFICANCE?

How did this activity make you feel? What new insights did you gain from reflecting in this way?

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November 29, 2021

RESOURCE PAGE

CAMPUS RESOURCES

- The Counseling Center
- The Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy
- The Center for Women and Gender Equity
- The Dowdy Multicultural Center
- The Resource Pantry

LOCAL RESOURCES

- The Crime Victim's Center
- Planned Parenthood
- SAGA Community Center

NATIONAL RESOURCES

- The Trevor Project
- GLSEN
- The Human Rights Campaign
- GLAAD

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November 29, 2021

Queer Composition Guides: Surviving the Holidays at Home

How to Survive the Holidays at Home

As a Queer Person

SET BOUNDARIES

Make sure you set expectations of yourself and the people you are with when you are at home engaging with others.

COMMUNICATE

Communicate with friends and supportive people when you are at home to create community even when you are in a space that may be unsafe. Technology is an amazing tool!

HAVE A BACK UP PLAN

Make sure you have a plan if you end up needing to leave the space you are in. Communicate with friends and trusted individuals of this plan so that they can help if it is needed.

SELF CARE

Utilize free time to indulge in Holiday self care.

Bake cookies
Watch holiday movies
Take a bath
Exercise
Read
Journal
Go and enjoy a holiday outing
Go shopping

RESOURCES

If you are home and in crisis, here are resources available to you:

The Trevor Project: https://www.thetrevorproject.org/

The Crime Victims Center: https://www.cvcofcc.org/

The Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1 800 273 8255
https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

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Resource Page

Campus Resources

- The Counseling Center
- The Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy
- The Center for Women and Gender Equity
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Local Resources

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National Resources

- The Trevor Project
- GLSEN
- The Human Rights Campaign
- GLAAD

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December 11, 2021

Queer Composition Guides: Sustainability

STEPS TO A

Sustainable Campus

Below are steps that can be taken by any one as they move through their time at university to live less unsustainably.

Commuting 1

When you come to campus, are there methods of travel that reduce your carbon footprint? Walking, biking, public transport, and carpooling are great alternatives to driving.

2 Recycling

Be aware of what the recycling protocols are at your institution and make efforts to recycle as much as you can.

Campus Gardens 3

Take note of what gardens are on or near your university and take advantage of the sustainable food resource!

4 Educate

What educational opportunities are available to you? Are there classes you could take? Are there events you could attend or clubs you could join?

Communicate 5

Tell your friends! Sustainability efforts work best when you involve others. The earth needs all the help it can get.

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Resource Page

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Appendix C

Queer Composition Student Assessment Email Follow Up Template

Hello!

I am emailing to follow up from our meeting on (month day, year). During this meeting we discussed (topic) and in order to help us guide our conversation we utilized (name of flyer), a flyer from Queer Composition. (A summary of the conversation should be inserted here).

I would like to learn more about your experience and thoughts about the information I shared with you. If you would be interested and willing, would you please respond to this email and share with me your thoughts.

Finally, let me know if there are any resources, we spoke about today that you have any questions about, or if there are any other resources that would be beneficial to you at this time.

(insert closing and signature here)

Appendix D

Queer Composition Partner Sticker

Appendix E

Queer Composition Training Agenda

This document outlines the tentative training agenda to be followed for the first Queer

Composition training, to be held a week or two before the start of the academic year.

10am- Welcome and Introduction

10:05am- Terms and Definitions: Define the terms in LGBTQIA+ and other terms important to the LGBTQIA+ community.

10:20am: Introduction to Queer Composition and the guides that will be included in the 2022-2023 edition. A review of campus, local, and national resources will also be provided at this time.

10:40am: The learning outcomes associated with each Queer Composition guide and the assessment tools for the year will be described in detail.

11am- Difficult Conversations: how to navigate hard conversations and basic communication skills, especially as it pertains to LGBTQIA+ topics.

11:25am- Conclusion and questions. Upon the conclusion of training all those in attendance will receive their physical copy of Queer Composition and their Queer Composition Partner sticker. They will be emailed afterwards to thank them for their participation and the feedback form for completion.

Appendix F

Queer Composition Training Feedback Survey

Queer Composition Training Survey

Question 1 Thank you for taking the time to attend the Queer Composition Competency Training! Your feedback regarding your experience from the training is helpful to us as we aim to make this experience as valuable as possible to you.
Please indicate whether you attended the faculty/staff session or the student-staff training session.

◯ Faculty/Staff Training (1)

◯ Student-Staff Training (2)

Q2 In the space below, please describe your experience attending the Queer Composition Training. Do you feel as though the training was successful in describing Queer Composition and how it should be used to support students? Do you have any praise or feedback regarding the training you attended today?

_____

Appendix G

Queer Composition University Stakeholder Feedback Survey

Queer Composition Feedback Survey

Q1 Hello!
As an individual who attended the Queer Composition training, you are now being asked to complete a short feedback form to gather some information on your experience being a Queer Composition Partner. You will be asked to provide feedback on Queer Composition. At the end of the survey, there will be demographic questions so the Queer Composition team can understand who is using this publication. This is completely anonymous, and the responses will not be shared publicly. Please indicate below if you are a faculty/staff member or a student-staff member to begin.

○ Faculty/Staff (1)

○ Student Staff (2)

Q2 Please indicate which of the Queer Composition guides you utilized this year when meeting with students.

☐ Coming Out (1)

☐ How to be a Good Mentee (2)

☐ Intersectionality (3)

☐ Surviving the Holidays (4)

☐ Sustainability (5)

☐ None of Them (6)

Q3 Please indicate about how often you utilized each of the Queer Composition guides when meeting with students this year.

	Daily (1)	Weekly (2)	Monthly (3)	Never (4)
Coming Out (1)	○	○	○	○
How to be a Good Mentee (2)	○	○	○	○
Intersectionality (3)	○	○	○	○
Surviving the Holidays (4)	○	○	○	○
Sustainability (5)	○	○	○	○

Q4 Are there any topics that you think would be beneficial to add to the content of Queer Composition? Are there any topics that you feel should be removed from Queer Composition? Please list them below.

_____

Q5 Is there any feedback that you received from students that you think would be beneficial for the Queer Composition team to know? Please indicate that in the space below.

_____

Q6 Do you have any feedback regarding the Queer Composition training or the Queer Composition focus groups? Please indicate that in the space below.

_____

Q7 The questions below are demographic questions aimed at helping the Queer Composition team understand who is using their publication.

Please choose the option that best describes your gender identity.

○ Female (1)

○ Male (2)

○ Non-Binary (3)

○ Choose not to Answer (4)

Q8 Please choose the option that best describes your sexual identity.

☐   Gay (1)

☐   Lesbian (2)

☐   Bisexual (3)

☐   Asexual (4)

☐   Other (5) _____

☐   Choose not to Answer (6)

Q9 Please chooses the option that best describes your nationality

☐   Caucasian (1)

☐   African-American (2)

☐   Latino or Hispanic (3)

☐   Asian (4)

☐   Native American (5)

☐   Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (6)

☐   Other (7) _____

☐   Choose Not to Answer (8)

Q10 The following questions have been included to help us understand who on campus is utilizing Queer Composition.

Please indicate your university status below:

☐   University Faculty/Staff (Please note department in the space below) (1)

☐   Graduate Student (Please indicate program below) (2)

☐   Fifth Year (3)

☐   Fourth Year (4)

☐   Third Year (5)

☐   Second Year (6)

☐   First Year (7)

☐   Other Student Status (8)

_____

Q12 Please indicate the Department/Program/Major you are a part.

_____

Appendix H

Queer Composition Focus Group Questions

The purpose of the end-of-year Queer Composition focus group session is to bring together the voices of those who are utilizing Queer Composition in the hopes of liberating the LGBTQIA+ community and ensuring that their voices are being heard. This is one of the main goals of Queer Composition, to raise the voices of the LGBTQIA+ community, especially in the spaces where they are silences the most.

Question 1: What have been your initial comments/questions/concerns of using Queer Composition since the start of the year?

Question 2: What have been the most significant conversation that you have had with a student while using Queer Composition?

Question 3: Are there any concerns or efforts you have now that you have been using Queer Composition? What needs have you addressed amongst students this semester and how do you propose we address them?

Question 4: What improvements to Queer Composition do you have at this time?

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