

Description

Direct quotations from a transgender Graduate Teacher Education Program (GTEP) teacher candidate were used in an initial meeting with faculty from the Curriculum and Instruction Department at Portland State University to situate teacher candidates' needs at our own front door. The CI LGBTQ Task Force thought it would be powerful and relevant for faculty to give voice to the testimony of a current student's experience. After reading the statements aloud in a round robin fashion, faculty sat in silence for five minutes writing to the prompt, "What issues does this raise for you?" Faculty members' written responses were coded and four categories emerged: Goals, concerns, observations, and personal reflections. Below you will find raw faculty responses and coding procedures Audrey Lingley and I followed to establish categories and sort through the data.

What issues does this raise for you?

- Working with our field placements and colleges in preK-12 schools
- Teacher education professional development to include GLT issues
- Need for much more research that listens to the authentic voices of teacher candidates on this and other diversity issues
- Incredible vulnerability of persons like "Jack"
- Living a "divided" life, especially by Jack, but also for those around him
- Power, safety, and necessity of "I got your back" statements made explicitly
- Preparation of CT's and University Supervisors for such situations and responsiveness; "Our" preparation for such situations and responsiveness
- Some confusion; a desire to learn more, be more educated; I feel comfortable with gay, lesbian issues and less comfortable or knowledgeable about trans issues
- Jack's narrative really showed how traumatic these types of experiences are. It would be so difficult to go through this on a daily basis and any support we can offer would be great
- An intense sense of loneliness and vulnerability for Jack
- Huge "knowledge gap" in many of us. We don't know what to do. And silence often creates uncomfortableness
- Awareness is good—crucial—as important as noticing language diversity is a classroom or social/political/economic diversity
- Teach awareness, sensitive communication and actual awareness in addition to sexual identity awareness
- Do we create a safe "space" or "learning environment" that allows students and faculty to engage this sensitive issue here at GSE/PSU
- This is so complex! One thing it raises is issues about relationships across institutions: GSE, school districts, schools, families. I feel like it is riskier for us to advocate for students because we really aren't in full partnerships with these other groups. We end up begging for placements which leaves us a bit voiceless on this stuff. This is yet another reason we need to be true equal partners with schools so we can advocate for our students
- How I've learned to navigate my own supports at PSU and to know (culturally) where the unsupportive power paradigm to sit (to maneuver away from it when I can). I wonder how "we" feel as the "skin color" diversity topics/issues are so prevalent and we are ignored (until now)

- Are we fair, equitable, and safe? Reflective of my first year as an “inclusive” co-cohort leadership! Do we talk the talk, but also can we walk the walk?
- Is it safe to come out with all the crazy/angry homophobs with homophobic parents out in our classrooms?
- Is society in general ready to face reality about these issues?
- How can we support students that face this unjustified reality?
- As a cohort leader and instructor what do I need to understand and do to support LGBT students PSU and K-8 I work with or that my students work with
- I’m glad the department sees this as important and that we can send a clear message of support to LGBT individuals
- What supports are there here for LBGT students? Should they, are they, encouraged to “come out” and if so, is there support for them?
- I worry about how “traditional” some school settings/stances are and want to know there would be support for them
- Ways to enrich the curricula (GTEP, MA/MS) to create a more inclusive space for LGBTQ individuals
- Identifying and bridging university and community resources that support LGBTQ adults and youth
- How to reduce the isolation that LGBTQ individuals experience in school, university, and community contexts
- How do we support Jack as a program? When we have no control over the school context [We sustain partnerships with schools and actively work with K-12 professionals to establish supportive environments for LGBTQ youth and educators]
- I have a selfish motive—I don’t have a solid knowledge about how to respond to and use real-life school examples as teachable moments in a cohort setting
- If we expect our students to handle these issues and respond from a social justice perspective, I don’t think we as a faculty have talked about it in our own teaching and classrooms
- Before we devise ways to help our students, we should look at our own practice
- There are many issues here from bullying, identity and homophobia. I appreciate having the authentic student voice
- When “one” is hurt, we all hurt; when “one” is unseen, we are all invisible!
- We protect, care, and guide our teacher candidates but like Jack said we aren’t in the classroom with her. And so I feel bad. What can we do to equip students like Jack – or for that matter all students to respond/be teacher leaders that promote social justice in schools and among the educational community?
- This reflection makes me wonder about what additional conversations if any should have been had with cohort leaders, supervisor, mentor, and principal in this setting. I ask, if any, because I wonder if this negotiation and communication should be had among the intern and CT and possibly the administration – mirroring the reality of schools. Partnerships are interesting and challenging it’s hard to know as a cohort leader how to support without taking away control/power from the individuals we seek to support

Should we commit to looking at this issue? If yes, what education, support, experiences would you want, appreciate, need, and/or hope for?

- It should be part of our professional development
- I'd love to have to think more about specific experiences but we could start with improving our intentions (goals) and develop experiences from that
- Yes—I would like a clear policy position of support. I would like potential articles or information prompts to share with teachers, and teacher candidates, and more examples of curriculum materials that would support this as well
- As a department? Yes—we need to learn the paradox of holding our own personal perspectives in relation to professional, programmatic stance and action
- We need to understand background concepts, what other programs have done and are doing, other stories
- I think we should pursue case discussions further, extending what we did. I have some further thoughts if desired
- Yes!! More conversations, exercise, etc. facilitated by the Task Force. We do need to figure out the language issues, even though it's hard
- Yes! Opportunities for students to talk with previous student teachers to hear their experiences
- Yes! I appreciate hearing from Jack
- Most definitely we should face this and our program should support students because they will either deal with a classroom situation or may be dealing with it themselves
- I guess the type of support should come partially from students that deal with this on a daily basis—ask them what we can do? Also, then discuss it and not hide it
- Yes this is an important issue to look at. For me, the first step is to continue to address the issues/language to begin to desensitize the issue. So, more conversation and hearing of LGBTQ students' experiences, to inform and desensitize
- For use in discussions and actions as we build a critical, yet intentional, inclusive program and environment
- Yes, the diversity divide is huge—cultural and ethnic/racial diversity is explored and feels supported in the language of PSU—maybe not in the realities of everyday living but where are with (GLBTQ) in their daily living and ongoing support? Where is my live's experiences valued in my workplace?
- To be honest, I feel very ignorant about trans issues in particular. I have quite a few lesbian and gay people in my life and though I can't pretend that's everyone's experience, I feel familiar with gay issues and just gay people. I really liked working with Jack and worked hard to be sensitive, but I did feel a bit like an ignorant square. I had never encountered someone who “presented” as female, was biologically female, and identified as male. I had questions but didn't ask out of respect and shyness
- Yes, bringing in primary resources that living in our community but in a silence culture community
- The “uncover issue” needs to come up to a comfortable discussion in class or staff meeting (i.e. “uncover issue” is people's personal struggle or living experience)
- Yes—1. professional development via readings, workshops, panels. 2. One-on-one counseling private questions/answers with a person who could help some grow without being in public eye (as they wrestle with issues)

- Yes! For one thing how to create a safe space here at PSU and also out in school. A safe space will give us a chance to explore our own vulnerabilities. Knowing more will help us to prepare students for the world outside, which, as we know, is not rosy
- I think that we all work with these questions in our daily work, but additional conversation and attention to these experiences is a good reminder

Coding Procedures

Reading Jack's Quotations Exercise

Coding the faculty responses

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Steps:

1. Olivia typed up responses
2. I inserted numbers for each line. Adjusted left margin to leave room for codes
3. Read through first question responses; coded each response using respondent language sometimes, more often I used codes that I created (from the lit as well). I tried to be consistent in terms of using the same code phrase when I could. For example, at line 3 I coded the response "PD" for professional development. I used "PD" again whenever I read an item that referred to professional development.
4. I began to underline words that appeared frequently: "safe" and "support/ive"
5. At line 49, I began to add a second layer of coding: to the right of each number, I coded each response in one of three ways: Goal, Concern, and Observation.
6. After reading through all of the responses to the first question once through, I went back and added the secondary codes for Goal, Concern, and Observation for lines 1-48.
7. During the second round of secondary coding, I added a fourth code: Personal Reflection. I then went back and re-read all responses to see if there were any other "Personal Reflection" items that I may have mis-coded.
8. After completing that step (and re-coding line 12), I decided that what I'd been calling "secondary" codes were really "core" codes. My next step is to define what I mean by the core codes, and create a table with examples from the data to illustrate the descriptions of the core codes.
9. Defining the Core Codes:
 - Goal:** the faculty member articulated a specific or general goal related to addressing LGBTQ issues.
 - Concern:** the faculty member articulated a specific or general concern related to addressing LGBTQ issues
 - Observation:** the faculty member wrote a neutral statement expressing a particular stance or a speculation about LGBTQ people
 - Personal Reflection:** the faculty member directly reflected on his or her own practice or experience
10. After creating the first column of the table with the core codes, I realized I could insert a column in between the core codes and the illustrative examples. This 2nd column would have all of the initial codes categorized by the core codes. From now on, I refer to the

initial codes as specific codes. There were 12 codes, with three of the codes having multiple sub-codes. The specific codes were: teacher preparation, professional development (support, knowledge, skills, reflective practice), research need, vulnerability (of LGBTQ students), trans discomfort, support (of LGBTQ students, all teacher education candidates), diversity issue, department practice, inter-institutional relationships (working with schools, negotiating partnerships), negotiating power paradigms, cultural context, and social justice.

11. What I did not see in the data: References to religion, Refusal/opposition to addressing LGBTQ issues, Criticism of “Jack”.