WRITINGS FROM THE MARGINS: AN EXAMINATION OF

VOICE, PRESENCE, AND AGENCY

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the Dissertation of HEIDI ADIELIA STANTON SCHNEBLY find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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WRITINGS FROM THE MARGINS:
AN EXAMINATION OF VOICE, PRESENCE, AND AGENCY

Abstract

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Chair: Kelly A. Ward

Empowering individuals to feel that their voices are heard, their presence matters and that they have agency in addressing campus issues is an important part of creating an inclusive campus climate in higher education. This study provides a greater understanding of marginalization and mattering within a university setting. The existing literature and research about campus climate often focuses on the victimization and marginalization of individuals rather than examining how individuals perceive responsibility for creating change. This study provides insight about how a community came together to stand up in the face of adversity and perceived oppression and reclaim their sense of voice, presence, and agency.

This study is based on twenty-eight narratives collected from the participants of the Power of One Portrait Project at Washington State University. As a study initiated from an arts-
based community project, this dissertation employs art and poetry as a way to make sense of many concepts within this study. A sociocultural proprioceptive theoretical framework is a means to organize and explore the following themes: social status and privilege; accountability; campus climate and safety; support systems; law and policy; values and beliefs; mattering and visibility; resiliency; authenticity; and connection. Critical discourse analysis as a theoretical framework and methodology is a tool to examine how voice, presence, and agency are reflected in the participants’ narratives.

The findings derived from analysis of the narratives illustrate the prevalence of concern about safety in the classroom, lack of access to understanding existing laws and policies offering protection from harassment and discrimination, and a need for true dialogue among all constituents in a university community. This research portrays the complexities of different identities, challenges stereotypes and invites individuals to reconsider how a campus community can draw in voices from the margins to offer a message of hope, acceptance, inclusion, and mattering.
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my mother who would not have understood what I am writing about but would have been proud of me nonetheless.

Mary Jo Julie Levy
We are not invisible
We will be seen
We have the right to be named
And to be counted
We are more than just other
More than etcetera
We will not be tokenized
Or marginalized
We have a right to speak up
And to speak out
Our voices will be heard
We will not be silenced.

Chapter One

Providing the Background: Introduction and Overview

Introduction

In October 2008, there were several assaults directed toward members of the LGBTQ community reported on the Washington State University (WSU) campus. These assaults were not typical; these incidents were the most violent assaults ever reported against any member of the LGBTQ community in the history of WSU. At the time of these incidents, WSU President Floyd wrote in his “Perspectives” column, an online communication tool, that WSU “remains a safe place” (president.wsu.edu). This statement erased the very occasions for his column. In so doing, he unintentionally, but profoundly, injured not only the students who had been harmed, but the entire LGBTQ community by denying our presence, our experiences, our understanding of the world, and our very existence on this campus. It became one more item on a timeline of hate and biased acts that have occurred on the WSU campus. This unofficial timeline is frequently used as a rallying point for concerned faculty, staff, and students who demand changes in how the university does or does not advocate for minority and marginalized
communities on campus. Added to this list, the President’s statement serves as a reminder of one more instance when students of this campus did not feel that their voices were heard, that their presence mattered, or that they had any agency in addressing a campus climate that does not feel safe or inclusive to those on the margins.

“Aggressively Recommended Action Items”

After these assaults occurred, a group of students, faculty, and staff organized into a group named the Coalition Against Hate and created a list of “Aggressively Recommended Action Items” that they delivered to the President’s office and to several other senior administrators. Within this document, there were calls for changes to campus policy and practice, education, visibility and inclusion for LGBTQ community members. The Coalition also requested a university appointed administrator to be held accountable for monitoring change and progress. At the time of these demands, I was both the Assistant Dean of Students and the Director of the Gender Identity/Expression and Sexual Orientation Resource Center (GIESORC). The Vice President for Student Affairs, Equity and Diversity announced to the Coalition Against Hate that I was the university administrator responsible for following through with the university response to the aggressively recommended action items. I decided to return to GIESORC fulltime and focus on addressing the specific requests from the coalition through GIESORC’s programming and outreach efforts.

Power of One Portrait Project

One of the parts of the aggressively recommended action items that stood out most clearly for me as the Director of GIESORC was the action item requesting education and awareness through guest speakers, activists, entertainers, and artists. In addition to seeking regular programming ideas for GIESORC events, I was also organizing the Power of One
conference, a LGBTQ student conference I co-founded in 2004 and was hosting in conjunction with University of Idaho in 2010. The Power of One conference was established in order to teach leadership skills to LGBTQ college students and foster the desire to capture and encourage the spirit of individual agency in LGBTQ individuals and the power one individual can have to effect change. This was in response to the understanding, supported both anecdotally and through research, that LGBTQ individuals often grow up knowing they are different, somehow “Other,” a sense of difference that can be alienating and disempowering (Cass, 1979; D’Augelli, 1994).

In seeking potential programs or art exhibits to bring to campus and the Power of One conference, I came across the work of Adam Mastoon, a professional photographer in Rhode Island and the founder and creator of *The Shared Heart* (2001). *The Shared Heart* is a photographic exhibition of portraits of LGBTQ youth utilizing the power of imagery as a vehicle for social awareness and cultural healing to educate about diversity. In order to share the personal coming out stories, participants of *The Shared Heart* exhibit incorporated a hand-written excerpt from their individual narrative onto their finished portrait. Seeing pieces of these young people’s lives written in their own hand on their photograph in a collection of other stories and photographs of LGBTQ adolescents and young adults was very moving. I felt that bringing this exhibit to the WSU campus would not only be a wonderful and welcoming exhibit to display during the Power of One conference, it would also be a program that could address the needs outlined in the aggressively recommended action items brought forward by the Coalition Against Hate. However, when I contacted Adam to inquire about the availability of the *Shared Heart Project*, he told me that he had recently given away the rights of the project to a non-profit LGBTQ youth organization. He and I talked at great length about the Power of One conference
and the current campus climate concerns at WSU in the wake of the 2008 assaults and decided to create a photo exhibit specifically for our campus community – The Power of One Portrait Project.

This research study focuses on an analysis of the narratives gathered as part of the Power of One Portrait Project, a collaborative venture between professional photographer Adam Mastoon and members of the WSU community. From the beginning, it was the portraits of the participants that really captured my attention. They were a literal way to represent some of the many facets of our campus community. The resulting exhibit of portraits is a community created arts-based project that offers a rich and insightful body of data. The individuals were photographed against a white background, leaving white space for the participants to write pieces of their individual stories. It is the portraits that draw attention and bring viewers closer in order to read the words carefully written on their surface, words extracted from each participant’s written narratives. The portraits themselves carry the essence of each individual while the narratives carry their stories; some share their hopes, some speak of anger, others just talk about the everydayness of what it is to live their life. Seeing the portraits in the exhibit makes the messages more accessible in a non-threatening way and offers a sense of commonality, a way of seeing the whole of the pieces and not just the individual parts. The portraits are beautiful in and of themselves. While they are the starting point of this study, it is not the portraits themselves that I analyzed, but the writings of the participants who took part in this project and told their personal stories. As I discuss the individuals who took part in this project, it is important to note that I was a participant in this project as well as the researcher for this study.

This study is not a typical research project in that it stands at the crossroads of several different research approaches in an attempt to look at social change through the lenses of arts-
based research, sociocultural proprioception, and critical discourse analysis. As an artist, I was particularly interested in the aesthetic appeal of an arts-based photographic exhibit of the WSU community, a community endeavor commissioned to bring a message of visibility and inclusion to campus members. Because the focus of this project is more on the content of the narratives rather than the design or content of the portraits themselves, the analysis of this project was not initially approached using arts-based research. It came to play an important role, however, in my analysis of, and the understandings learned from this data. Additionally, the excerpts of original poetry that introduce each chapter were inspired by my journey through the research process and by the words of the participants. Throughout this dissertation I also include my own original artwork as it connects to the various topics or constructs of that particular section (see Figure 1). I am a researcher and an artist and my use of my poetry and art are a way for me to make sense of the information and to draw you, the reader, into this study. As a social justice advocate, university administrator, and project participant, I was hopeful about the potential of this community-based art project as a way to take a critical look at the disempowerment of context and climate and begin addressing the hurts, erasure, and anger that lingered on our campus. I also wanted to examine what the individuals had to say by conducting a discourse analysis of their written narratives. Though the impetus of this project arose from the incidents of hate toward the LGBTQ community, the scope of the results and the potential impact is greater than that. The intent of this study is to provide insight about the lived experiences of those students, administrators, community members, and staff who participated in the Power of One Project in order to better understand perceptions of climate and offer institutions ways in which to address existing erasures and marginalization to create increased visibility and inclusion. While the voices shared in this study are from one campus, the messages they carry are much bigger than
Figure 1

Visibility and Inclusion.

Figure 1: The use of visual images in this study, both the portraits and my own art, are used to invite viewers to connect to the research and text in ways that may not be possible with words alone. This painting, like the scope of this study, represents visibility and inclusion. The two subjects in this painting may be two women, or perhaps a man and a woman about to exchange a secret or a kiss. The viewer of the art sees this piece as it relates to his or her own experiences just as viewers of the Power of One Portrait Project view the portraits and relate to the participants’ stories by drawing connections to their own lives.
just one campus or one incident, the messages speak to voice, presence, and agency; the
importance of being seen, heard, and valued in all facets of society.

Purpose Statement

In order to understand voice, presence, and agency, the purpose of this study is to utilize
critical discourse analysis to examine the writing samples collected by the participants in a
collaborative art exhibit between professional photographer Adam Mastoon and the WSU
students, administrators, staff, and community members who participated in the Power of One
Portrait Project. This approach analyzes participants’ language to examine their understandings
of their social, political, and lived experiences in relation to their current environment and hopes
for the future.

To be clear about how voice, presence and agency apply to my study I now define each
word and associated meanings. The first term, voice, refers to the vocalizations of producing
speech, a grammatical term to clarify the active or passive relationship between the action of a
verb and the subject or object of the action, or the open expression of hopes, dreams, ideas, and
opinions. The narratives collected in this study serve as the vehicle by which the participants’
voices are carried; what they said and how they said it is at the very foundation of this study. The
second term, presence, refers to the simple existence of someone or something in a particular
time or place or it can speak to the purpose associated with that individual or group being there.
Each of the participants in this study are in some way associated with the university or
surrounding community and each individual chose to respond to the call for participation and to
publicly share their story. For some, this act rendered parts of their identity visible that were
otherwise unseen. For some, participation provided an opportunity to be present and assert their
affinity with, and commitment to, a campus that is inclusive and accepting. In its entirety, this
project offered a presence of a group of individuals whose collective representations of identity challenge the invisibilities of marginalization. *Agency*, the third and final term, refers to an organization that provides services or deals with social issues or it can be used to identify the power held by an individual or thing that makes something happen. The Power of One Portrait Project was sponsored by GIESORC in order to address the invisibility and injustices of the LGBTQ community following the string of reported hate crimes in October, 2008 and the “Aggressively Recommended Action Items” stated by the Coalition Against Hate. The truly empowering part of this project, however, comes from the participants’ portraits enmeshed with their narratives and the messages those stories carry. There is power in claiming identity, facing internal and external fears to assert that identity or even to identify and challenge notions of climate issues. In their own words, and with their own unique flair, each participant took a position that placed his or her personal values, beliefs and experiences within the context of this campus and community in order to claim voice, presence and agency.

**Significance of the Study for Theory and Practice**

The Power of One Portrait Project was created in response to an incident of hate targeting LGBTQ individuals; however, most of the participants in the project do not actually identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. Even so, I believe that the telling of the participants’ stories can facilitate an opportunity for a greater understanding of the power dynamics that can lead to the erasure of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students as well as the marginalization of other non-dominant social groups.

Though student affairs has done a great deal of work during the past forty years to become more inclusive and supportive of LGBTQ students through the programs, policies, and various curricular changes implemented within higher education, that has not always been the
case. Expulsion, sanctions and interventions, student surveillance and sting operations, and legal oppositions to student speech and assembly were the four most common approaches used in 20th century postsecondary institutions of higher education as an attempt to control gay students (Dilley, 2002). With this historical context of the erasure of LGBTQ identities in higher education, it is important to consider questions that reveal the essence of being, how individuals are seen or made visible in life, and how LGBTQ identities are included in day-to-day experiences.

The intent of this study is to provide a close examination of the power contained within the use of imagery, text and language and, through critical discourse analysis, provide insight to offer ways to address the current crisis stemming from the socially sanctioned marginalization of LGBTQ individuals. Addressing erasure of LGBTQ identities is not just about promoting the visibility of those individuals residing in the margins due to real or perceived sexual orientation; it is about moving the conscience of society toward inclusion, acceptance, and the embracing of all humanity. As long as one portion of society rendered silent, invisible, and powerless there is no part of society that is truly empowered.

Theoretical Perspectives

The particular qualitative approach to this study is infused with arts-based research and anchored by two overarching theoretical perspectives: sociocultural proprioception and critical discourse analysis. A community oriented arts-based research process can be a way of creating critical awareness or raising consciousness which is important in a social justice oriented research process (Leavy, 2009). Visual arts can make things visible in ways that text alone cannot by challenging people to see things in ways that they might not otherwise. Using an arts-based research approach is often useful in studies involving identity because it offers a way to
communicate information about experiences associated with differences, diversity, and prejudice in a way that challenges stereotypes. Using art to represent identity provides a unique access to subjugated voices and offers those individuals who may be otherwise marginalized to be heard. Although arts-based research is not a theoretical framework in this study, the use of art assists me as a researcher in enabling me to make sense of the data and communicate my findings to the reader.

Situating a study within an appropriate theoretical framework, however, is a necessary part of conducting high-quality research because theory provides an organizational structure for understanding the collected data in relation to the body of knowledge to which it is relevant. The framework of sociocultural proprioception provides the organizational structure for understanding how history, climate, identity, and policy influence the process of individual positionality relative to the social world. The existing body of literature for the field of sociocultural proprioception focuses on higher-level cognitive processes and how internal understandings of external stimuli work to inform the brain about bodily perception and action (Frank, 2007). It is this sense that enables people to navigate the bedroom in the pitch black of the middle of the night or to operate a car without looking at the gas and brake pedals but instead look out the window to watch the road. Currently research in this field focuses on how language and culture shape individual understandings of sociocultural proprioception, specifically how metaphors are used to describe this sense of embodiment. Examples of this include talking about a knee-jerk reaction or a gut feeling to express recoil or intuition. In this study, sociocultural proprioception is used to provide an organizing framework for understanding the varied perspectives that inform this particular theoretical scaffolding and use critical discourse analysis to focus on how language is shaped by, and in turn shapes, history, identity development,
climate, and policy. In this sense, sociocultural proprioception also serves to disrupt the existing stage models for student development theory and identity development by examining identity development as a fluid process embedded in a social and cultural context.

Critical discourse analysis, as a theoretical perspective, provides the conceptual framework for the methodology. The purpose of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is to reveal the ideological assumptions embedded within written text and spoken language to examine their associated meanings within the social, political, and historical contexts in which they are situated (van Dijk, 2001). A critical discourse analysis allows for a closer examination of the intended and unintended implications of social dominance, power, and hegemony in everyday text, speech, and documents. Analyzing how text and language are used in day-to-day life allows for a greater understanding of social problems that occur as a result of the dynamics of power and system of beliefs within mainstream society. This approach to my study allows for the examination of text and language in relation to power and how they influence the erasure or visibility and inclusion of LGBTQ individuals. By recognizing this power, attention can then be drawn to the potential imbalances and injustices of power in hopes of stimulating individuals to take action in order to create social change (Fairclough, 1999).

**Research Methods**

The encompassing focus of this study is to look at how individuals experience voice, presence, and agency in campus culture within the context of a community-based art project. The following three overarching research questions provide a general framework to guide my study.
Research Questions

The following research questions guide this inquiry:

1. How do the narratives of The Power of One Portrait Project reflect the participants’ experiences of voice?

2. How is presence in terms of mattering and visibility perceived by the participants?

3. How do the participants view responsibility and agency around the issue of social climate?

An arts-based infused qualitative research approach utilizing sociocultural proprioception and critical discourse analysis is used to address these questions. These theoretical perspectives enable me to examine the narratives through a holistic process in a way that is non-linear and allows me to discover emerging patterns and concepts.

Data and Analysis

Using critical discourse analysis, I examined twenty-eight written narratives contributed by the participants who took part in the Power of One Portrait Project in February, 2010. To identify participants, I sent an electronic message to subscribers of five university affiliated mail lists (EGO, a list for members of the Educational Graduate Organization; GIESORCNews, the weekly electronic newsletter for GIESORC; an electronic distribution list for the Department of Residence Life: SAED, the weekly electronic newsletter for the Division of Student Affairs, Equity and Diversity; WSU Announcements, a twice daily bulletin for events and news items related to the campus; and WSUGLBTA, a list for individuals associated with the Associated Students of Washington State University committee for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and ally students) describing my project and inviting individuals to take part in the Power of One Portrait Project. All participants, including me, are affiliated with Washington State University
as undergraduate or graduate students, staff, administrators, or as members of the community surrounding the campus. Once identified as part of the Power of One Portrait Project, the participants took part in two different writing exercises before sitting for their portraits. Prompts for the writing samples included questions addressing issues of support, perceptions of inclusion, self-expression, and perspectives about laws and policies relevant to personal safety. I then analyzed the writing samples for common themes then further examined those writings through the lens of critical discourse analysis to explore how the participants perceived voice, presence and agency in the context of campus community. The remainder of this dissertation consists of a review of the relevant literature, a detailed description of the research methodology, findings, recommendations and considerations for future research.
A land of fairytales and truth
Mixed within my dreams,
I sat against the windowpane
With books from every shelf.

Chapter Two

Sociocultural Proprioception and the Literature: History, Identity, Climate, and Policy

Introduction

Scholars from biology, philosophy, neuroscience, and cognitive linguistics have developed an interdisciplinary field to consider the sociocultural situatedness of the bodily and social aspects of mind, perception, and cognition (Frank, et al., 2007). In general terms, proprioception specifically refers to the brain’s spatial awareness of the physical body in relation to self and the environment. Proprioception is a word that is derived from the Latin word proprius which means “one’s own” and perception which refers to the process of using the senses to acquire information about the surrounding environment (merriam-webster.com). The theoretical framework of sociocultural proprioception as used in this dissertation draws its roots from neuroscience and conceptually refers to an awareness of, or a feeling of, one’s own self.

I am expanding the existing body of literature and concept of sociocultural proprioception to establish it as an organizing framework and theoretical perspective to contextualize and examine how history, social identity, social climate, and policy shape an individual’s sense of place within the context of society (see Figure 2). Themes relating to the experiences of visibility, inclusion and erasure by LGBTQ individuals in society include subjectivity, power, and language. When considering higher education, history, identity development, campus climate and policy are also key areas of importance. Existing literature and theory frame these concepts in linear models in which each body of knowledge is separate even if there is reference
Figure 2

Sociocultural Proprioception Model.

The process for individual determination of positionality relative to the social world.
to the connections and influence of the other bodies of knowledge. In my use of sociocultural proprioception as an organizing theoretical framework I disrupt the existing linear student development theories based on stage models and offer a more integrated and fluid model in which development is contextual and influenced by society and culture (Cass, 1979; D’Augelli, 1994; Erikson, 1968). I also use sociocultural proprioception as a way to broaden awareness and think differently about current understanding of history, climate, laws and policy, and identity. This framework is a tool of analysis and a way to synthesize the literature. The existing literature in the area of LGBTQ individuals in society can be divided into the four main topics: (1) history, (2) social climate, (3) policy, and (4) social identity. A brief overview of the history of the visibility of LGBTQ individuals in society begins the review, followed by an overview of social climate, a synopsis of policy, and a summary of identity development theory.

**History**

History influences and shapes individual commitment to society based on how an individual does or does not feel connected. As a whole, higher education is based on a mainstream existence drawing from a history of exclusion. These exclusions have been a part of regulating access to education from the very beginning when the first established colleges and universities used education as an attempt to assimilate Native Americans into White society (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Women and African Americans were also denied access to education until the rapid industrialization of society forced social and political reconstruction as a result of the civil war (Rudolph, 1990). Even now, college campuses in the United States are predominantly White and, in the face of this dominant culture, minority students frequently experience racism, incidents of confrontation, harassment, intimidation, and assault (Schaefer, 1996). This marginalization is not limited to individuals of color; regarded as “others,” people
with disabilities are kept in weaker and powerless positions in society and on campuses across
the United States. With the focus on the limitation of the individual and not the identity of the
individual, the person becomes stigmatized. This separation “isolates, marginalizes, and alienates
the individual, then we can see that people with disabilities share many common experiences
with other minority groups” (Jones, 1996, p. 349). Colleges and universities are microcosms of
the society at large in that they often take on a leadership role in terms of how to address civil
rights issues (Tierney & Dilley, 1998). They also have the potential to mirror and/or advance
actions in the general society by recognizing and including others. Throughout history, higher
education as a system has reflected society in how it does and does not recognize and include
others (Rankin, 1998; Tierney & Dilley, 1998). Walking on campus, students want to know that
they matter, that they belong, that they are safe, and that they are supported as they undergo the
process of realizing their potential as independent young adults. LGBTQ students are no
exception.

The visibility of LGBTQ students on campus has evolved very slowly since the first
institutionally recognized student group, the Student Homophile League, was founded at
Columbia University in 1967 (Beemyn, 2003). It was not until four years later, in 1971, that the
first LGBTQ programs office was established in higher education at the University of Michigan
(www. LGBTQcampus.org). According to the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource
Professionals, just over one hundred and sixty LGBTQ resource centers were opened nationwide
from 1971 to 2010. The growth of designated LGBTQ resource centers across the United States
demonstrates the need for LGBTQ individuals to have a place where they are accepted and
welcomed. Students, faculty, and administrators have both the right and the responsibility to take
a stand against hatred and bigotry within the campus community; failure to do so not only
contributes to the spread of hate-filled rhetoric, but also results in the perpetuation of feelings of anger, defensiveness and isolation within victimized students (Franklin, 2000). This study examines the experiences of the individuals on campus and the ways in which they perceive are isolated, marginalized, or erased from dominant presence in society and on campus.

**Campus Climate**

Recently there has been a great deal of national attention regarding the suicides of young people who were harassed or bullied because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. It is vital that colleges and universities promote awareness and acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals and engage in dialogue with the community about inclusion and valuing the contributions of all members of the campus community. Failure to intervene in acts of intolerance only serves to perpetuate the violence.

The climate of a college campus is made up from the attitudes, behaviors, structural diversity, and institutional history of that particular academy, as well as the combined subjective, objective and lived experiences of the individuals of the campus community (Vaccaro, 2010). Campus climate refers to the level of inclusivity or prevailing conditions that characterize the level of respect and value felt by individuals engaging in interpersonal, academic, and professional interactions within an institution of higher education (Rankin, 1998). The term “chilly climate” was coined by Hall and Sandler (1982) in their Project of the Status of Women and referred to a climate of otherness, hostility, and invisibility that many women experienced in higher education. After using a critical feminist lens to conduct a secondary analysis on a recent campus climate self-assessment at a predominantly White institution, Vaccaro (2010) reports that attitudes toward diversity differ by gender. She reported that women generally indicated a desire for a climate that engages in meaningful dialogue in order to move the community beyond
tolerance, while White men were more content to accept the status quo. Further, participating men in that particular study tended to leave the open-ended diversity related questions on the survey blank. Vaccaro wrote that “Sometimes what goes unsaid is as important as what is said” (p. 207). Johnson (2006) argues that one of the most prevalent forms of opposition to diversity is to repudiate, diminish, or evade diversity related issues and topics. This avoidance may speak to an indifference to diversity by the men in the Vaccaro study, or it may also be related to White, male privilege.

Campus climates that are negative, unwelcoming, and hostile have injurious impacts on the retention and success of marginalized students (Nora & Cabrera, 1996). Concerns about campus climate are a relevant part of this study in that The Power of One Portrait Project was a program initiated as part of a response to an incident of hate on the WSU campus and the associated perceptions of a negative or hostile campus climate as expressed by the Coalition Against Hate. University administrators need to establish and enforce clear and firm expectations for tolerance; if this message is not clear, some individuals will see this passivity as an unspoken approval and even as license to engage in hateful and bias-related behaviors. Acts of bigotry and hate may often begin as apparently minor incidents, but if left unchecked these events can escalate into far more serious situations and create hostile climates for students, faculty, and staff.

“Campus conflicts are founded on practical and political struggles over how to define equality, how to articulate responsibility, and how to prove and remedy discrimination,” (Prentice, 2000, p. 195). Most literature focuses on the positive educational outcomes and benefits associated with diversity initiatives. A university mission to resolve these conflicts in exchange for socially justice minded campus, however, is not something everyone agrees upon.
as an appropriate focus for the academy. Thorne (2010) suggests that somewhere along the way North American institutions of higher learning began to adopt social missions rather than the academic missions on which they were founded. The very theories that define social justice differ vastly depending on whether the term is being explained from a Christian, free-market, Marxist, or welfare-state perspective. This results in a campus environment in which students no longer have to discern which social justice theory to follow because the university provides the direction and expects that students become agents of change. There are other drawbacks, however, to diversity efforts that may be believed to be part of a liberal agenda in that individuals who do not agree with these efforts tend to remain silent due to their perceptions of discrimination against “conservatives” and “Christians” (Vacarro, 2010).

The current campus climate of higher education acts to silence the voices of LGBTQ members through subtle and overt discrimination (Rankin, 1998; 2010). The essence of the work done by Rankin and Reason is to challenge the social climate that maintains and privileges the dominant culture by rendering the marginalized populations as invisible. “The unique cultural identities and traditions through which academic institutions maintain these paradigms must be challenged, uprooted, and transformed to build and sustain communities of difference” (Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 8). Academic institutions mirror societal climate by contributing to the maintenance of institutionalized heterosexism, a form of prejudice that renders LGBTQ people invisible. But there are interesting implications for universities committed to social justice and creating positive campus climates when the very individuals at whom the initiatives are often directed refuse to engage in any type of dialogue or discussion because they feel that their perspectives as conservatives and Christians are excluded (Vacarro, 2010). Intergroup dialogues can impart the greatest impact in reduction of personal biases while also promoting inclusion and
social justice. hooks (1989) suggests that members of marginalized groups can offer a view from below when they share their stories of exclusion. The Power of One Portrait Project came about as a result of the hate incidents that occurred on the campus and the need to engage the community in a project that would address the erasure and silencing of the LGBTQ community and engage the campus in dialogue and more inclusionary practices. Arts-based community projects can be a way to address climate by organizing and engaging individuals in the process of expressing identity, reclaiming history, and articulating vision (Barndt, 2008). The stories of the project’s participants are not only the voices of LGBTQ individuals; they are the voices of this campus’ students, community members, leaders, administrators, faculty, and staff.

Though campus climate affects the wellbeing and productivity of students, the effects of marginalization are also a societal concern that is most often expressed through policies that exclude and isolate LGBTQ individuals as a whole. “Understanding how the members perceive its realities and how they react to their perceptions is important so that decision makers can avoid actions that would be detrimental to their institutions” (Baird, 1990, p. 35). When educators and administrators become aware of bias incidents as they occur, they can better implement and enforce campus policies that create a more supportive campus environment in which acts of bias are not tolerated (Franklin, 2000).

Policy

Within society, marginalization and exclusions of LGBTQ individuals can occur as a result of the discovery of that individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity. While laws and policies are designed to protect and guide members of society, they can also be a way to regulate and exclude some individuals from being fully recognized or valued members of society. There are several example of this type of marginalization in current legislation: Employee
Nondiscrimination Act (S. 1584/H. R 3017); the military policy known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”; and the Defense of Marriage Act (H. R. 3596). The Employee Nondiscrimination Act is a nondiscrimination policy that would provide basic protections for individuals who may currently be denied job opportunities, fired or otherwise discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity (www.hrc.org). The Bill is closely modeled on existing civil rights laws but to date, there is no federal law protecting the employment rights of LGBTQ individuals.

Even though military service is voluntary, LGBTQ individuals are prohibited from serving. In 1993, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) a law banning openly gay and lesbian individuals from serving in the United States Armed Forces was signed into effect, a law that has resulted in the military discharges of over 14,000 gay and lesbian service members. Though President Obama recently signed a bill to repeal DADT, the repeal has yet to be certified and thus, DADT still remains law.

Another law that has had a great deal of national attention is the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which defines marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman for purposes of all federal laws and provides states the power to choose not to recognize a marriage from another state if it is between two same-sex individuals. Even though five states and one federal district (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Washington D. C.) have provided equal marriage rights for same-sex couples, and three other jurisdictions recognize marriages of same-sex couples validated in other states and in other countries (New York, Rhode Island, and Maryland), the federal government defers to state law and consequently withholds over 1100 benefits and protections otherwise afforded to legally married individuals (www.hrc.org; www.domawatch.org). It is when these types of socially sanctioned
discrimination are not addressed or acknowledged that institutionalized heterosexism is most harmful.

Although there has been a federal hate-crime law in existence since 1969 (18 U. S. C. § 245(b)(2), it was limited to acts of violence motivated by real or perceived race or skin color, religion, or national origin. The U. S. Supreme Court first addressed the issue of hate speech with its 1992 consideration of *R. A. V. v. City of St. Paul*, 505 U. S. 377 (1992, U. S. Supreme Court Case Histories, Cornell University School of Law, 2009) and first considered sexual orientation and gender identity rights in *Romer v. Evans* (1996, U. S. Supreme Court Case Histories, American Civil Liberties Union, 2009). While the Supreme Court found that that the city of St. Paul could not cover homosexuality in its anti-hate crime ordinance, it would later rule in *Virginia v. Black* (2003) that statements conveying intentional harm, whether defined as threats or intimidation, are “constitutionally proscribable, and outside the protection afforded by the First Amendment” (538 U. S. at 365, as cited by Kaplin and Lee, 2007). In *Romer v. Evans* the U. S. Supreme Court addressed the sexual identity issue, deciding in a 6-3 vote to strike down a Colorado constitutional provision that prohibited laws giving protected status to homosexuals.

Then, in 1998, a University of Wyoming student named Matthew Shepard was tortured and murdered because of his sexual orientation. It was not until almost ten years later, in 2006, Congress directed the United States Sentencing Commission to begin increasing penalties for federal crimes committed with bias, including sexual orientation under The Matthew Shepard Act (Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007). This Act remains limited by adding enhanced penalties only to those acts of violence already recognized as federal crimes. It is important to note that fourteen states have hate crime laws that do not include sexual orientation or gender identity, twenty states have hate crime laws that include crimes motivated
by sexual orientation, and only eleven states, along with the District of Columbia, have hate crime laws that include sexual orientation and gender identity. To date, five states have no hate crime laws whatsoever. The passage of these laws is an important first step toward acknowledging the injustices and crimes against LGBTQ individuals yet the violence continues because the message that it is somehow acceptable to engage in acts of bias, discrimination, and violence against LGBTQ individuals.

At the campus level, policies are used as a means to communicate, validate and inform the students, faculty and staff about the institutional values and expectations. The legal background in education begins with “the broad, humanitarian impulse” voiced by U. S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter (1954) as the Court grappled with the issue of racial integration in *Brown v. The Board of Education, Kansas*. With *Brown*, the Fourteenth Amendment was re-established as the basis of “equal protection” for the population which had inspired its enactment: African-Americans, through their school-age children. When it abolished school segregation that had been the law of the land since *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, the Court changed law in illustration of policy: “separate but equal” would no longer have a place in American constitutional society. Modern educational policy analysis requires a basic understanding about policy and the policy process. Specifically, educational administrators need to be able to consider the implications of power, resource allocation, agenda setting, and the process by which change occurs in order to appropriately frame issues into policy. Once an issue arises, policy can be formulated and implemented through various instruments and the efficacy of the initiative evaluated.

The recognition of a change in policy and resulting change to federal law, in the case of *Brown v. The Board of Education, Kansas*, led to a national change in behavior. In spite of
delays and slow implementation at state and local levels, integration of schools through the exercise of “equal protection” relegated openly pro-segregation voices to an illegal and anti-constitutional position, thereby altering the national climate. The paradigm shift represented by Brown offered the opportunity to reflect upon the relationship between changing law and changing behavior. Because of the challenges to regulation imposed by the five free speech principles: race, color, creed, religion or gender - it is critical that universities emphasize nonregulatory approaches for dealing with hate speech (Kaplin & Lee, 2007). Such approaches do not involve First Amendment rights, may reach a wider range of students than regulatory approaches can, have more influence upon student attitudes and values, be more successful in creating a university environment that does not tolerate hate behavior, be more proactive in promoting critical examination and dialogue, and have longer-range effectiveness (Kaplin & Lee, 2007).

While hate speech might be better eliminated by nonregulatory approaches, institutions may regulate hate conduct or behavior. Such actions are not within the constitutional protections accorded speech. Kaplin and Lee (2007) present five bases for regulating hate speech: first, when it is combined with nonspeech actions; second, in regulating the time, place and manner of hate speech as long as such regulations covered other school events at the same place and time; third, regulating hate speech that falls within such exceptions to free speech as true threats, intimidation, (as in Virginia v. Black) fighting words, defamation, obscenity that would apply to all campus interactions; fourth, hate speech that is projected into private spaces such as dormitory rooms and library spaces, thus intruding upon substantial privacy interests; and fifth, regulating hate speech that furthers a scheme of discrimination. In addition, Kaplin and Lee found that universities and other public/private institutions may devise enhanced penalties under
their conduct codes for hate behavior or conduct, provided that the institution has “well-developed fact-finding processes and substantial assistance from legal counsel or a law-trained judicial officer” (p. 503). Policies and laws, however, are only as strong as their implementation and enforcement and a failure to act or intercede on behalf of those individuals being victimized only serves to perpetuate the violence.

In this study, policy, or the perception of policy, by the Coalition against Hate was part of the impetus for bringing in Adam Mastoon to facilitate the creation of the Power of One Portrait Exhibit. Students, faculty, staff, and community members associated with the Coalition against Hate felt that the policies of this university did not offer safety or inclusion in a way that was satisfactory. As an arts-based community project, the Power of One Portrait Project engaged the campus community in representing their collective identities, histories, and ideas through their written narratives and exhibited portraits. The visual exhibit of the portraits is continuously subject to reconstruction and reinterpretation of the subject in a way that challenges the relationship between knowledge and power. A keen understanding of power is essential to the success or failure of any policy. Power is defined most simply as one individual or group that has control, authority or influence over another group or individual. Fowler (2004) stated that power is the ability of an actor to affect the behavior of another actor. Fowler’s use of the term “actor” is interesting in that it emphasizes the fluidity of power’s relational dynamics in concrete social contexts. An individual may have more or less associated power depending upon the situation and the other people involved. When everyone involved in any given situation has a relatively equal amount of shared power it is a symmetrical balance of power as opposed to disproportionate levels of power which are asymmetrical. Power is the tool used to advance the goals or objectives of an individual or group but when it is used merely as a means to exert or
demonstrate importance or influence it is an unethical use of authority. It is interesting to note, however, that power always involves the use of available resources which have varying costs associated with them. Consequently, an individual’s ability to tap into power is completely dependent upon a willingness to utilize resources and absorb the associated costs.

In fall of 2010, there were many reports of LGBTQ youth and college students across the nation committing suicide as a result of the bullying and harassment they experienced simply because of their real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity (thenewcivilrightsmovement.com). In a university setting, the action or inaction of campus administration regarding discrimination can serve to convey whether or not members of the LGBTQ community are valued as individuals within the campus community and that the perpetuation of victimization of LGBTQ individuals is acceptable. How a university responds, proactively or reactively, conveys a strong message regarding the degree of power that institution holds in terms of developing, implementing and enforcing policies to create a safe and inclusive campus environment. If this is true, one may argue that as long as university administration fosters an environment that allows for LGBTQ individuals to be treated differently than heterosexuals, violence and acts of bias against the LGBT community will continue to be of growing concern.

State and federal laws as well as university policies build the foundation for a safe and aware community. In terms of where the field is today, challenge and support, involvement, validation, marginalization, and mattering all play a part in explaining how a college environment influences student development (Beemyn, 2003). Putting policies and laws into practice through self-education, intervention, dialogue, and a commitment to end this intolerance, indignity, and persecution are of critical importance. Arts-based community projects
such as the Power of One Portrait Project can serve as a bridge for framing and making sense of concepts and the impact of practice in a way that is more tangible and dynamic than a written policy in terms of creating a safe and inclusive campus climate.

**Identity**

Throughout the social sciences, identity is a term that is used to refer to an individual’s understanding of self as separate and distinct from others (Turner & Oakes, 1986). This concept of self is based on the comparison of self to others as directly related to social interactions (Vygotsky, 1962). History, social climate, and the cultural rules and expectations of society all set the context for individual identity development. Although this study is focused on the LGBTQ community as whole and not just students, in general it is important to recognize the role of student development theory for LGBTQ students as part of the overall campus climate. The attitudes, behaviors, structural diversity, and institutional history of a college campus as well as the university policies determine the climate and overall context for student identity development (Vaccaro, 2010). A campus that does not actively implement policies and educational efforts to create an inclusive climate for LGBTQ individuals can create a heterosexist environment that directly impacts interpersonal, academic, and professional interactions within an institution of higher education (Rankin, 1998). The doubts induced by cultural heterosexism produce feelings of uncertainty, fear, and alienation of self, which creates an oppressive situation that can lead to a sense of victimization, or marginalization, for which there are developmental implications (D’Augelli, 1994). Further, as a lifelong process identity development is not just limited to traditional college students.

While the literature offers many different student development models, no single model addresses every developmental process observed by student affairs practitioners in their day-to-
day work with college students. For this reason, a multifaceted perspective of student
development theory is often used in order to gain insight into student behavior and development
(Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). Four student development theories are
particularly relevant to understanding the impacts of visibility, inclusion and erasure of LGBTQ
students. These are Erikson’s (1968) description of life stages; Cass’ (1979) model of gay and
lesbian identity formation, D’Augelli’s (1994) model of lesbian, gay, and bisexual development;
and Schlossberg’s (1989) transition model. Student development is not just an end unto itself;
student development is part of the larger campus context and climate (Evans & Rankin, 1998;
Evans, et al., 2010). For positive student development to take place students need to matter, they
need to be an important part of campus community.

Erikson’s (1968) description of life stages comes to mind when considering how a
student’s connection to his or her environment influences development. This psychosocial
development model is a stage model in which each life stage is a crisis that is resolved in an
adaptive or maladaptive way. Self-identity is the lifelong search for individuality, personal
character, and a sense of belonging and acceptance within the boundaries of society, a process
that is both internal and external (Erikson, 1968). Interactions with parents, family, peers, social
institutions, and culture are all bound by a particular point in time and history and all influence
individual identity development (Bakhtin, 1981; Erikson, 1968). Since individuals develop in a
social context, it is important to have an understanding of the external environment as well as the
internal dynamics in which an individual develops. During latent adolescence, the crisis at hand
is identity versus role confusion (Erikson, 1968). At this stage, the adolescent is no longer a child
but is not yet an adult and in order to develop a core sense of self, the adolescent must determine
individual goals by reconciling childhood identity with present identity in addition to considering
the potential of all possible selves. It is through this process that the adolescent begins to make sense of his or her personal identity. This process is not limited to adolescence, it is an ongoing developmental process and if, at any given stage, the conflict is not satisfactorily resolved it will result in challenges later on in life. It is this process of identity achievement during adolescence, however, that serves as the basis for adult expectations and goals.

Individuals entering early adulthood use their current understanding of self to develop a lifespan construct by integrating their past, present and culture. The resulting lifespan construct serves as the link between the identity developed in adolescence and the adult self (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000). Identity development is ultimately the result of a lifelong journey and as an individual acquires experiences throughout life, these experiences lead to continual modifications in the life construct. The person that an individual ultimately becomes is unique; the process by which identity develops, however, is similar among individuals. Although identity development is most often associated with adolescence, each developmental stage offers opportunities for reevaluation and modification.

For the LGBTQ individual, the perception of being valued or not valued also impacts that individual’s thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and ability to relate to others. A decade after Erikson’s model of identity development was established, Cass (1979) developed a similar stage model to describe how sexual orientation develops as part of individual identity. This particular model focuses on the resolution of internal conflict related to sexual orientation by considering six different stages of identity development: identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis. The first stage, identity confusion, is a tumultuous process of individual exploration of internal positive and negative judgments of sexuality with heterosexuality viewed as the preferred state of being. The second
stage, identity comparison, involves the struggle with a sense of social isolation or alienation in conjunction with a certain level of internal acceptance of a non-heterosexual identity. Curiosity, confusion, and anxiety are typical feelings within this stage and the main goal is to reduce discomfort. Identity tolerance, the third stage, develops as the individual begins to realize that he or she is not the only person with same sex feelings or experiences, a realization that comes with some relief. During this stage, the individual accepts the probability of a non-heterosexual identity and begins to seek out other LGBTQ individuals in order to reduce isolation. The fourth stage, identity acceptance, occurs as the self-perception within the individual is one of a sexual orientation that is decidedly not heterosexual but still exists with a tenuous sense of self as an LGBTQ individual. The individual increases contact with the LGBTQ community and begins to disclose his or her sexual orientation to be few trusted heterosexual individuals. In the fifth stage, identity pride, it is very important to the individual to be completely open about sexual orientation and no longer hide his or her identity. This stage often includes a certain level of distancing from heterosexual culture and friends and largely focuses on LGBTQ issues and relationships. In the last stage of Cass’s model, identity synthesis, sexual orientation begins to become integrated into all aspects of an individual’s identity so that it is just one facet of that individual’s being but not the whole identity. Though it is a stage model, development does not necessarily occur in a linear or sequential fashion. The process between tolerance and synthesis involves increased social contact with the LGBTQ community and a greater individual commitment to that community.

D’Augelli’s (1994) model of lesbian, gay, and bisexual development includes three factors of identity development: personal subjectivities and actions, interactive intimacies, and socio-historical connections. LGBTQ identities are shaped by varying degrees of social events
and the environment throughout the life span. How LGBTQ individuals think and feel about their sexual identity and behaviors, family, peers, intimate partners, social norms, policies, and laws influences the meanings ascribed to those experiences and interactions. Negative perceptions and feelings can have damaging effects on the developmental process. As LGBTQ individuals develop and begin to see themselves as healthy, accepted, and productive members of society, however, they can challenge and unlearn negative messages about being LGBTQ that they may have previously internalized in their developmental process. Participation in educational and interactive programs such as The Power of One Portrait Project can allow for self-reflection in ways that can contribute to the unlearning of the negative messages.

Finally, Schlossberg’s (1981) transition model has tremendous influence in explaining how transition into college impacts college students. For many students, transitioning into college can be an introduction to a new environment with fresh experiences and expectations that lends itself to the process of identity development and exploration. Individuals facing change, according to this model, tend to wonder about their ability to successfully manage the transition as well as what their new role should be. The success or failure of a personal transition is mitigated by the interacting forces of marginality and mattering. Marginality refers to the feeling of fitting in or not fitting in, feelings that can lead to self-consciousness and doubt, which can lead to an inability to perform at maximum potential. Mattering, on the other hand, is the feeling of belonging and having a sense of value to others. Higher education is an ideal environment in which students can explore the values of individuation, self-determination, social acceptance, social accountability, fairness, and compassion during the process of individual identity development. Colleges and universities need to make LGBTQ students, and other members of the community, feel like they matter, because when present, mattering diminishes marginality.
and promotes a healthy and successful transition to college. Participatory experiences like The Power of Portrait Project allow opportunities for individuals to engage with the campus and community in meaningful ways that demonstrate how each individual matters. Employing these four student development theories to facilitate the understanding of LGBTQ individuals in higher education aids in promoting an awareness of what resources and support are necessary to foster their success.

Individuation, self-determination, social acceptance, social accountability, fairness, and compassion are common values explored during the process of individual identity development (Adams & Marshall, 1996). “We live our lives as conscious thinking subjects and give meaning to the material and social relations that constitute our identities and structure our everyday lives according to the range and social power of existing discourses, our access to them, and the political strengths of the interests they represent” (McLaren, 1991, p. 151). Erikson’s (1968) stage model focused on the psychosocial aspects of identity development whereas, Vygotsky’s (1962) perspective emphasized the sociocultural role that language and culture play in shaping individual identity. Both theories, however, recognize that individual identity is constantly developing within the context and influence of social interactions that provide opportunities for self-reflection and the consideration for other possible selves. Identity development is not just about completing the developmental tasks associated with childhood or the successful navigation of college; it is the ongoing process by which individuals seek their place in the world. For people to develop a positive identity of self they need to do so within a social climate that values and includes each individual. This study provides for exploration of individual identity as well as offers insight into the innermost sense of self for other identities as well. As each participant considers and responds to the writing prompts of the Power of One Portrait Project, that
individual is considering their personal history, identity, the impact of social climate, and the ways in which law and policy have impacted their lives. In reflecting on all of the nuances of how their identity has changed they also engage in active consideration of their current self as well as all possible selves (Erikson, 1968; Vygotsky, 1962).

Using an organizing framework of sociocultural proprioception allows for the understanding of the fluidity of the identity development process by accounting for the influences and impacts of individual history, social interactions, cultural beliefs, and values. Through critical discourse analysis, this study analyzes the writings of each of the project participants and explores the sense of self expressed by the participants as they reflected on their life experiences and the campus climate. To counter the potentially negative developmental implications, addressing the marginalization experienced by LGBTQ students can instill a sense of mattering that serves to direct a student’s development toward establishing a sense of self in which the student has an increasing awareness or clarity toward his or her own values as well as a clearer sense of their dreams, aspirations, and goals (Schlossberg, 1989). Validation of LGBTQ student identities comes through the various ways in which students are challenged and supported, involved in creating change, and the way in which students are aided in examining the spaces of marginality and mattering. The themes and subthemes of the analysis were determined by the use of sociocultural proprioception as a way to organize and identify common threads throughout the narratives. To further explain and clarify my findings, I rely on an arts-based approach as a way to describe, explore and interpret my analysis of the text.

Summary

Today’s LGBTQ individuals face continued challenges regarding voice, presence and agency in society as well as within higher education. Though progress has been made through
continued efforts to change laws, policies, and social climate, there is still much work to be done in order to create an environment that is truly safe and inclusive for LGBTQ individuals. The steady number of LGBTQ individuals who take their lives as a result of the shame, harassment, and bullying they incur just for being who they are is an issue of great urgency. It is vital that colleges and universities take a leadership role to initiate a societal change by promoting awareness and acceptance of LGBTQ by engaging in dialogue with the community. Failure to address the erasure and intervene in acts of intolerance only serves to perpetuate the violence.

Using a sociocultural proprioceptive framework to examine history, identity, climate, and policy in a review of the available literature provides a greater understanding of issues that LGBTQ individuals face in society, as well as in higher education. Sociocultural proprioception is also a lens that offers expanded understanding of the literature. Within this literature review, the most common themes addressing the LGBTQ experience include the history of erasure in language and practice, the developmental implications of heterosexism, campus climate concerns, and issues of inclusion in policy and law. The majority of campus climate studies focus on the way different groups perceive their acceptance on campus and tend to paint a rather dismal view. Though the studies do analyze differences between students, faculty, and staff, they do not look at the role of an individual’s sense of power as a mitigating factor for perceived differences, nor do the studies look at the participant’s expectations for agency in creating change. This dissertation is an important conduit for raising awareness and identifying specific points of erasure of LGBTQ identities. Additional information about subjectivity, power, and language further inform this research by illuminating how LGBTQ individuals can be included as active stakeholders in creating change. When individuals do not feel seen, if they feel invisible, they may feel less responsibility for contributing to making changes in the
environment, yet, when individuals are seen, they can feel empowered. This is the goal of this study as explained in the next chapter.
Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology: A General Overview

Introduction

Research is about generating new knowledge, clarifying observations, and challenging assumptions. “Knowledge is not transcendental but always situated, located within particular epistemology, discursive, linguistic, social, historical, cultural and material fields of power relations” (St. Pierre p. 251). This study is about looking at the narratives collected from a community arts-based project initiated to address the hurts and erasures felt by the LGBTQ community following a series of reported attacks against members of that community.

This dissertation draws upon several different theoretical frameworks to shape the study; arts-based research, sociocultural proprioception, and critical discourse analysis. Although, strictly speaking, this is not an arts-based research project it is not untouched by art because of the medium of the data and how the individual participants represent themselves and how I use art to make sense of my findings. The concept of sociocultural proprioception as theoretical framework provides a macro perspective to make sense of the literature and the data, it also provides context for the complex issues of identity, power, and representation. Critical discourse analysis is used in this study both as a theoretical framework and as a methodology to examine
the narratives and probe deeper into the nuances of language and culture. Using an arts-based project provides a way to better understand the many manifestations of erasure of how different identities can be seen or, conversely, marginalized, this study utilizes sociocultural proprioception as an organizing framework and employs critical discourse analysis to examine empowerment for creating change, and the organizational structures that impede or facilitate inclusion and visibility.

**Theoretical Framework of Analysis**

The Power of One Portrait Project is a community based collaborative art endeavor and the process of conducting this research study was a meaning making activity as a result of my interpretation of the data gathered from the compiled narratives of the project participants. Arts-based research is more of a methodology than a stand-alone theoretical framework. Arts-based research as a method serves to expose and destabilize unequal relations of power, privilege and oppression by creating art as a representation of data (Leavy, 2009).

Conducting research is a meaning making activity that arises from the process of interpreting and generating new understandings from the data. As artists, researchers develop the contours of their craft, creatively designing and implementing inquiry models and framing their own interpretive “story”; as messengers, researchers simultaneously audit their subjectivity and attend to participant stories and experiences (Galman, 2009). There are four key elements of community arts as identified by Barndt (2008): collaboration, creative artistic practices, critical social analysis, and commitment. In terms of the first element, collaboration, the Power of One Portrait Project drew out the issues of the campus climate, brought in the talent of professional photographer Adam Mastoon, and relied upon the energies of the participants who were willing to get involved and share their portraits and their stories. Utilizing this social aspect of making
art perhaps opened up facets of the participants’ identities, stories, experiences, and hopes in ways that another method or research approach might not have been able to access. To address the second element, the creative artistic practices of this project tapped into an intuitive and relational way of knowing and understanding the campus community. A survey could have captured information about how the climate was experienced but that kind of data might have been more difficult to relate to. Inviting the participants to envision themselves in terms of how they wanted their portraits to reflect their identity allowed for creative buy in as a part of the project and part of the process. Engaging the participants in creative writing exercises encouraged them to tell their stories in their own voice without predetermined parameters or constraints that might be otherwise present in a survey approach to the same information. The third element is that of critical social analysis. Community based art is often initiated with marginalized groups and communities because it offers a collaborative process of naming and challenging existing power relations by making social contradictions more visible and visceral. Commitment, the final element, helps to move the community from analysis to action. There was no predetermined outcome identified for the Power of One Portrait Project but engaging the participants in the process served to move them towards actively thinking about the possibilities of changing campus climate and even changing how they interact with the campus and the community.

Though this dissertation is not an arts-based study as defined by Leavy (2009) it relies on art as a vehicle to engage people in the viewing of the portraits and make things visible in a way that text alone cannot. The use of visual art in this study, however, is supported by the two theoretical frameworks utilized in this dissertation. Building on the organizing theoretical perspective of sociocultural proprioception and how linguistics is used as a way to examine how
a physical body is situated in social culture I expand upon this research concept and use critical discourse analysis to take a linguistic look at how social culture is used to examine individual situatedness within society. A necessary part of conducting quality research is situating the topic within a theoretical framework that provides conceptual clarity and organizational structure for the understanding of the collected data in relation to the body of knowledge to which it is relevant (Crotty, 1998). In this study, I use critical discourse analysis (CDA) as both a theory and a method in order to examine the data and scrutinize what Gee (2005) refers to as language-in-use, an approach that seeks to balance an understanding of both the cognitive and social dynamics of language interactions or discourse. When used as a method, CDA refers to the way in which these influences of discourse are analyzed, which in this study, was conducted through an analysis of the writing samples collected from The Power of One Portrait Project. CDA is a technique for relating the form and function of language and how those relationships correlate to specific social practices (Gee. 2004). When CDA is used as a theory to examine the nature of language-in-use, it can aid in explaining how discourse influences and is influenced by “ways of being in the world” (Gee, 2007, p. 7). This type of analysis of discourse as further illustrated by van Dijk (2001) is situated within and influenced by the social structure from which it arises and is also a product of social interaction in which it transpires. When considering the marginalization of LGBTQ identities, how text and language do or do not correlate with visibility and inclusion are central in understanding the social practices that can lead to erasure.

Critical discourse analysis is a merging of critical social research and linguistics to more closely examine the ways in which different kinds of texts reproduce social inequities and power by analyzing language and discourse. According to Crotty (1998), language is a powerful tool of transformation and a building block for knowledge and it is his view that “all knowledge, and
therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p. 42). The social context here is culture, it is the guidebook for humankind; it provides the rules and structure for organizing human behaviors and experiences. It is through culture that individuals view the world around and give meaning to their experiences (Crotty, 1998). It is this description of social culture that really illustrates the concept of how I use sociocultural proprioception as a way to organize and contextualize not only the literature, but the language within the data as well. According to Gee (2004), language is always used within a context from a particular perspective or point of view. The use of language is not neutral or impartial for the meanings within the exchange of language are socially-constructed. Language is used to familiarize the unfamiliar and make the abstract more tangible as well as provide a system for conveying thoughts and ideas to others. Individual and social factors both serve to modify language but language also modifies the individual as well as the social factors in which that language transpires (Vygotsky, 1962). Human beings have the unique capacity to arbitrarily assign meaning to words, objects, and actions. Thus, learning is interactive and embedded in the context in which it occurs. When others understand these shared meanings, they are a means for exchanging information, a way to communicate. It is here that discourse is vital to the transformational power of language for understanding social reality requires that individuals interact in critical reflection of a social reality and then generate change by taking action and then engage in further critical reflection of that action (Bakhtin, 1981). “Only through dialogue can one become aware of the perceptions, feelings, and attitudes of others and interpret their meanings and intent” (Crotty, 1998, p. 75-76). Without critical
reflection and action, dialogue is nothing more than a passive exchange of words and simply serves to maintain the status quo.

Fairclough (2000) identifies three central principles of critical discourse analysis: (1) How an individual is positioned in society, (2) the cultural constructs that mold and inhibit discourse, and (3) discourse, or the words and language used to mold and inhibit identities, relationships, and systems of knowing and beliefs. As LGBTQ individuals, individual and social identities, visibility and inclusion within society, and ways of knowing and believing are molded and inhibited by the language and words used by those LGBTQ individuals and the society as a whole. These concepts are presented in the following section to further elaborate on the use of CDA in this study.

**Position in Society**

Fairclough’s (2000) first principle of CDA is an examination of how an individual is positioned in society, this principle is represented in this study by the examination of presence. An individual’s position in society is shaped and constrained by the social structures of class, status, age, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. This positioning in society is at the core of what I meant when I introduced sociocultural proprioception as an organizing theoretical framework. In order to better understand how different individuals are seen and not seen, it is important to provide a description of how individual identities correlate to, and exist within, society. To draw upon the influence of arts-based research, how individuals in this study are seen is something that is both figurative and literal. On one hand, individuals are seen as they are portrayed in their portraits both individually and collectively within the context of the complete exhibit. On the other hand, the individuals in this study are also seen through their narratives and how they use language to tell their stories and express their views. To begin, I situate the reader
by utilizing sociocultural proprioception as a way explaining how an individual’s position in society relates to my study. An individual’s sense of position in society occurs through individual construction of understandings and knowledge of the world through experiences combined with reflection and consideration of those experiences (Piaget, 1962; Randsepp, 2005; Vygotsky, 1962). “Social practices set up roles or positions within which people become insiders, outsiders, or marginal with respect to the social groups whose practices these are, it follows that social practices create what we call socially situated identities” (Gee, 2004, p. 38). True to arts-based projects, individuals who viewed the Power of One Portrait exhibit and read the accompanying texts drew meaning from what they saw as filtered through their personal experiences, perspectives, values, and beliefs (Bakhtin, 1981; Galman, 2009). It is unlikely that any two viewers drew the same conclusions for any one portrait viewed. There within the white space of each portrait was a selected excerpt of text or drawings taken from each participant’s writings explained in more detail in the next section. As I present my research findings through my analysis of the erasure, visibility, and inclusion of LGBTQ identities, I hope that I am able to tell even more of those stories.

Individual knowledge is also linked to that individual’s position in society in that each individual is part of the society in which he or she exists but also has a separate and inherent value that reflects and expresses the society as a whole (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 2004; Vygotsky, 1962). Using critical discourse analysis to examine the writing samples from the Power of One Portrait Project, I looked at the texts and language of the narratives to better understand how the words of the participants describe their perceptions of their place in society, and how they viewed the social structures as supportive or as barriers to their sense of mattering. This study examines what the participants’ stories individually and collectively reveal about individuals and
their position in society by using CDA to analyze how power and positionality are represented in their writings.

**Cultural Constructs**

The cultural constructs that mold and inhibit discourse comprise Fairclough’s (2000) second principle of CDA, a principle that is reflected in how agency is examined in this study. The cultural constructs relevant here are heterosexuality and power. Heterosexuality is a cultural construct with associated rules and values (Butler, 2003). However, there is no one true way in which to be heterosexual, just as there is no one true way in which to be gay or lesbian. Heterosexuality idealizes itself and yet fails in its very performance because it seeks to replicate itself by placing itself in the position of copy for which there is no original. Although some LGBTQ identities may draw some of their structure from heterosexual frameworks, those identities are not bound or determined by those frameworks. Subjectivity in this sense, is best explained by describing the conscious “I,” or claimed identity (Butler, 2003). Even if a label or category is assigned to, or claimed by, an individual, it is never truly possible to know all that plays into that individual’s identity. What is true for one person is not automatically true for all other persons within that category; it is not even always true for that one individual.

Human beings have the unique ability to make choices and also to impose those choices upon the world (Piaget, 1962). The power of groups or institutions is a central construct of CDA and is explored by analyzing text and language to reveal the hidden aspects hegemony, or the ways in which language can be used as an attempt to regulate a state of being within a particular context (Butler, 2003; van Dijk, 2001). Essentially, power is the ability of an individual or group to exert some control or dominance over another individual or group. The power of the dominant group “may be integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits” and serve as a way to maintain status quo
which then becomes hegemony expressed through classism, sexism, racism and homophobia (van Dijk, 2001, p. 364). Often, categories of knowing only serve to position individuals somewhere in the margins of society, legitimizing some identities while disempowering others (Fine, 1999). For example, when sexual orientation or the cultural construct of heterosexuality is used to qualify or validate an individual’s identity, it is simply a way of regulating power. There can be value in using particular aspects of identities or labels as a way to make a point or to rally around a cause, but not as a way in which to limit the manner an individual can or cannot exist within that identity.

In research, it is important to consider the dynamics of power so as to not be tokenistic in the process or presentations of findings. Power, however, is not to be regarded as only a negative, influence, but as a dynamic that can be both repressive and positive in its role in the formation of knowledge (Parfitt, 2004). Knowledge, however, is not something that is just passively absorbed; there is power in the ability to seek and gain knowledge (Piaget, 1962). Knowledge is not an absolute and what is known and considered to be truth is a subjective classification colored by identity, life experiences, and education. Learning is situated within a social context and the values of a particular culture (Vygotsky, 1962). Using CDA, the analysis of discourse is positioned within and affected by the social context in which it occurs (van Dijk, 2001). This study invites people to see the words and faces of the participating campus community members and, perhaps, reshape how they see campus and themselves.

**Discourse**

The third principle of CDA, according to Fairclough (2000), is discourse, or the way in which a particular process of thought is expressed through the use of language shared between different members of society (Foucault, 1972). This third principle is reflected in this study by the
examination of voice. Use of language and words in society helps to develop and influence individual identities, relationships, and systems of knowledge and beliefs. Additionally, individual identities, the nature of social relationships, and individual knowledge and belief systems are also developed and influenced by the language and words employed through discourse (see Figure 3). Discourse can be used as a way to negotiate regulations and contradictions within social identity categories (Butler, 2003; Vygotsky, 1962). In this sense language is used in conjunction with behaviors, symbols, and tools to communicate and define categories of being for different members of society (Gee, 2004). Language sets up subjective boundaries and forms the rules by which lives are lived, a type of discourse which Butler (2003) refers to as regulating. For example, heterosexuality is the cultural standard to which all other identities are compared, a comparison which implies that queer identities are somehow less valid than heterosexual identities. Identity as a category, however, is temporal, in that it is continually being constructed, revised, and then reconstructed (Butler, 2003). Recognizing how individual experiences, perceptions and biases shape and influence discourse is an essential component to creating change for a more socially just world (Fine, 1994; Giroux, 2004). Using CDA to examine the language used to create and build socially constructed knowledge provides a way to break down the ways in which social inequities and power are replicated in the words and texts within that exchange.

Groups use discourse to construct knowledge for one another, collaboratively creating a small culture of shared artifacts with shared meanings. Learning is an active social process that is greatly influenced by subjectivity, power and language (Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1962). Bakhtin (1981) focused on dialogue between two people at a particular time and place and viewed language not as a fixed system of meanings but as a fluid process in which meaning is
Figure 3
Model of Discourse

- Intended message
- Communication sender
- Discourse
- Communication receiver
- Perceived message
- Identities
- Social relationships
- Systems of Knowledge and Beliefs
- Socio-ideological context
influenced by emphasis, context, and emotion. This plurality of meaning gave credence to “the power of the particular context in which the utterance is made; this context can refract, add to, or in some cases, even subtract from the amount and kind of meaning the utterance may be said to have when it is conceived only as a systematic manifestation independent of context” (p. xx).

When an individual is immersed within a culture, that individual is continuously learning how to be a part of that culture on many different levels.

“Just as all there is to know about a man is not exhausted by his situation in life, so all there is to know about the world is not exhausted by a particular discourse about it,” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 45). Understanding how individual positionality, cultural constructs, and the use of language and words shape and restrain social discourse is vital to understanding the use of CDA as a theory and lays the foundation to understanding CDA as a method.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study that relies on data from an arts-based project in which I use sociocultural proprioception and critical discourse analysis to understand voice, presence, and agency in a college community. The methodology used in this study is qualitative and primarily relies on critical discourse analysis as the process for examining the collected narratives. Sociocultural proprioception helped to drive the themes used for analysis by helping me to recognize the emerging patterns throughout the narratives that situated each participant within the context of society and self. Art is infused throughout this dissertation as a way to honor the arts-based roots of this project as well as way for me to make sense of, and communicate the different elements of my study. As a method, CDA is used to examine language and look for the meanings that make up the discourse (Fairclough, 2000; van Dijk, 2001). Typically this is accomplished through the use of content analysis to identify themes and schema in the texts of
the data. It is not enough, however, merely to quantify the occurrence of words or concepts within the data. Using a qualitative approach to critically examine the textual outputs of discourse allows for a much deeper and richer exploration of the role language plays in the social discourse and the production of power relations. Qualitative research as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) is an approach to knowing and understanding that acknowledges the presence and positionality of the researcher or observer in the identification and description of everyday situations and problems. Meaning making in qualitative research is iterative and not linear, emerging instead through the labeling, identification, and classification of emerging and interrelating concepts while discovering the patterns within the data (Hunter, et. al, 2007). This is a holistic process between analysis and interpretation and my use of CDA serves to connect these texts with underlying power structures in the larger society through a methodical examination of the socio-cultural contexts in which the narratives occurred. Analyzing the personal stories of the project participants provided insights into how these individuals did or did not feel empowered and also identified where social practices promote or deny visibility and inclusion.

The focus of this study is to analyze how different individuals experience voice, presence, and agency in campus culture. The research questions, for this study, explore how the participants reflect perceptions of voice, presence, and agency through their narratives, how they view responsibility for social climate, and how they perceive mattering and visibility. To address these questions, qualitative techniques were most appropriate given the desire to capture and understand the unique experiences of the participants.

In a qualitative research study, in addition to sharing the results of the study, it is important to share all the decisions and choices made throughout the process of conducting the study (Constas, 1993). Particularly, it is important for understanding what choices were made
while designing the study, what steps were followed in the process of formulating the research questions, how data were generated and collected, how data were processed and analyzed, and how determination was made for which data got presented (Chenail, 1995).

Project Description

The Power of One Portrait Project is an exhibit of 30 portraits of students, administrators, staff, and community members associated with Washington State University (Figure 4). On each of the portraits, the primary subject of that portrait wrote an excerpt of a personal narrative directly onto the finished photograph. These excerpts were taken from their compiled writings from two separate writing exercises. The portraits of the individual participants were photographed by Adam Mastoon, a professional photographer from Rhode Island, and were assembled into an exhibit in response to an incident of hate that occurred on the WSU campus in 2008. This project was intended to address the erasure and marginalization felt by the LGBTQ community and to facilitate voice, presence, and agency. Immediately after the assaults, when the President wrote that the campus remains a safe place, his words did not re-inscribe those individuals whose identities are not visible. If the campus remained safe after a series of assaults against the LGBTQ community, that statement only served to erase those LGBTQ identities.

My original goal focused specifically on LGBTQ experiences but the project is much broader than just the voices of LGBTQ individuals; this project looks at identities in a way that allows for a greater universality of understanding how any type of marginalization of a particular individual affects the social climate as a whole. As an arts-based community project, the goal of the Power of One Portrait project was to encourage people from the campus community to get engaged in thinking about the climate of the campus and community in different ways. As the participants respond to the different prompts of the project they are engaged in considering
Figure 4

Photo Montage of Power of One Portrait Project.

The Power of One

A Collaboration with Members of the WSU Community

Figure 4: This photo montage depicts each of the thirty-three individuals photographed for the Power of One Portrait Project.
what events and circumstances lead different individuals experiencing the campus and climate in different ways. The Power of One Portrait Project destabilizes identities just as described by Butler (2003). The Power of One Portrait Project is not about being gay, so it is also not about not being gay. Though this study draws upon the writings of a few individuals at one state institution, the issue of erasure is much broader. This study examines the data collected from the Power of One Portrait Project in order to analyze the texts and language correlated to the portraits of the participants so that they can be seen and heard while embedded in a larger context of identity. These identities are not fixed, not explained, and nor are they justified. They just are. This fluidity allows the viewers to engage with the portraits in complex ways that make it possible for all identities to exist.

The data from this project consists of the writing samples submitted by the project participants. In the exhibit, each subject was photographed against a white background and then the participants wrote an excerpt from their writing samples onto the finished portrait (see Figure 5). I analyzed the writing samples in their entirety in order to examine possible insights regarding the social structures which shaped and constrained the knowledge and belief systems of the participants.

**Participants**

To identify participants, I sent an electronic message to subscribers of five university affiliated mail lists (EGO, a list for members of the Educational Graduate Organization; GIESORCNews, the weekly electronic newsletter for GIESORC; RED, a list for the Department of Residence Life; SAED, the weekly electronic newsletter for the Division of Student Affairs, Equity and Diversity; WSU Announcements, a twice-daily bulletin for events and news items related to the campus; and WSUGLBTA, a list for individuals associated with the Associated
Students of Washington State University committee for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and ally students) describing my project and inviting individuals to take part in the Power of One Portrait Project. I received responses from twenty-nine different individuals who expressed an interest in the Power of One Portrait Project, I also committed to participating in the project.

Once I received communication from individuals expressing interest in participating in the project, I sent out an electronic letter introducing the first writing prompt (Appendix A). Following this email, two individuals decided not to participate after they understood the time requirement and focus of the project. Three individuals who initially agreed to participate, later voluntarily withdrew from the project because of scheduling conflicts. Prior to Adam Mastoon’s visit to Washington State University, twenty-five participants had committed to the Power of One Portrait Project. Once he arrived, he personally invited the three undergraduate students who were working as his on-site assistants in the photography studio to participate in the project as well.

Of the thirty-three different individuals represented in the thirty portraits, only twenty-eight are actual research participants in my study. For the purposes of this study, research participants are defined as those who completed all or some of the writing portions of the project. Of the five individuals who were photographed with one of the 28 participants in the portraits but not included in my study, three are the infant children of two different participants, one is the spouse of a participant, and one was dating a participant at the time the portraits were taken. Of the research participants, eleven are male and seventeen are female. Among the 28 participants there are ten undergraduate students, four graduate students, one community member, twelve administrators, and one staff member. Fourteen participants identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Seven identify as individuals of color.
Figure 5

Portrait Sample.

It all starts with

One Act.  
I am that

ACT. I am the straight one at the gay rally. I am the one stopping her friends from saying "That’s so gay."

It’s an act I want to live by and by living by example inspire others to do the same.

The more comfortable I am with diversity, the more encouraged others will be to shed their fear.

When the fear is gone the change has already happened.

Lori
Each individual who participated in this study volunteered to take part in the project and write their personal stories. Individual narratives were produced revealing powerful, thought-provoking stories about the participants’ experiences and perceptions. The narratives, at times intensely heart-wrenching and boringly mundane at others, are each genuine and sincere in their telling. Some stories talk about family, some describe the role of administrator on campus, others recount the personal struggles associated with the participants’ coming out process, and others express their sense of what it is like to be who they are at this place and time. Throughout the narratives, identity, feelings of loneliness and hope, a desire to matter, and a sense of connection to the campus or community are interwoven into the tapestry of the participants’ stories. Each participant’s story has a thread of some aspect of life that most anyone can connect to regardless of identity, role, experience, or beliefs. It is this everyday ordinariness that allows for the project to resonate with so many different people in so many different ways.

Overview of data analysis process

Here I provide a synopsis of the data analysis process for the Power of One Portrait Project. This study consisted of an analysis of the collected narratives from each of the 28 participants in order to examine voice, presence, and agency as experienced by these individuals in this particular campus community. To conduct my study on the Power of One Portrait Project I first sought and obtained approval through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix B) and then I began to analyze the written narratives. The narratives were collected from the participants in the Power of One Portrait Project who submitted writing samples in response to two separate series of prompts on two separate occasions. One month prior to photographer Adam Mastoon’s visit to campus, I delivered the first prompt (Appendix C) to each participant via email. This prompt consisted of thirteen questions related to campus climate, perceptions of
individual responsibility, perceptions of safety and questions related to personal history. The second prompt (Appendix D), was part of a two hour creative writing workshop facilitated by Mastoon. During this writing workshop, Mastoon gave a broad overview of the Power of One Portrait Project and then explained how he would photograph each of the participants during an individually scheduled 30 minute portrait session. He further explained how he would be reading the writings of each participant and using that information in order to help him decide how he wanted to pose each individual during their portrait session. Mastoon also invited participants to bring something that they felt expressed their identity and that he would try to incorporate that item into their portrait. He explained that each portrait would be photographed against a white backdrop so that the finished portrait would have white space in the background in which the participant would be writing a selected piece or narrative from their writing samples. Mastoon then explained how he would facilitate the writing prompts. Each prompt had an assigned time limit and he instructed each participant to write whatever came to mind and to just keep writing continuously during each allotted time.

The data for this study are comprised of the collected writings from the two different writing prompts given to the 28 participants of the Power of One Portrait Project. The writings that were submitted to me through electronic mail after the first writing prompt were stored in individual digital files sorted by the first name of each of the participants. After the writings were collected from the participants following the second writing prompt, I transcribed those handwritten documents into digital files and saved them with the corresponding writings submitted by each participant during the first prompt. I then took all of the digital files and compiled them into one single digital file and assigned each participant a number based on their assigned time slot for the portrait sittings.
In order to engage with the texts and language of this study I used content analysis to examine the writings from the participants of the Power of One Portrait Project and the ways in which the participants constructed their social realities. This process enabled me to determine what words, concepts, and themes occurred most frequently and in what context. To begin this content analysis process I entered all of the text from all 28 participants’ narratives into an online tag cloud generator (tagxedo.com) in order to generate a visual depiction of the frequency of word use within this particular body of words (see Figure 6). Single words within the narratives were counted by this online tool and then grouped into a visual design in which the font size or color shows the importance, or frequency, of a particular word within the overall body of text. For example, as seen in Figure 6, the larger font used for the words “people,” “life,” and “campus” indicates that these words occurred at a much higher frequency than did the words “perceived,” “compassionate,” or “parents.” Taking this information I then identified the starting points for coding the data.

After concluding the content analysis and coding of the collected narratives, I utilized the concepts of sociocultural proprioception and identified ten themes that could be sorted into two predominant categories. This theoretical framework, combined with that of critical discourse analysis, is used to examine how voice, presence and agency were perceived by the Power of One Portrait Project participants as shaped by their perceptions of history, identity, climate, and laws and policy. The two predominant categories are environment and self. The ten themes within these two categories represent commonalities among the participants and I determined their headings based upon the ideas being shared. Within the category of environment, the five themes analyzed are: (1) social status and privilege; (2) accountability; (3) climate and safety; (4) support systems; and (5) law and policy. The five themes analyzed within the category of self
are: (1) values and beliefs; (2) mattering and visibility; (3) resiliency; (4) authenticity; and (5) connection. It is the participants’ perceptions in the overarching theme of “environment” and how the campus and society work to include or exclude different individuals that are explained in Chapter Four. Chapter Five is dedicated to the second overarching theme of “self” and how each participant expresses their own sense of identity.

**Tools for analysis.** Qualitative research, specifically critical discourse analysis, allows for a more reflexive process of engagement with the texts and language of this study. This definition of reflexive means that the context influences the interpretation of the utterance, and the utterance also influences the interpretation of the context (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 2004; Vygotsky, 1962). CDA is concerned with examining the process of sociopolitical struggle by seeking to explain the ways in which social realities are formed, replicated, resisted, and transformed (van Dijk, 2001). CDA examines the social power of individuals, groups, or institutions (van Dijk, 2001). Power is the ability of one entity to exert influence or control over other individuals or groups. This ability “presupposes a power base of privileged access to scarce social resources, such as force, money, status, fame, knowledge, information, or culture” (p. 755).

In CDA it is also important to acknowledge the impossibility of neutral or impartial research; a fundamental principle of CDA is that text and language are not arbitrary, whether the word choices are conscious or not they are purposeful (Sheyholislami, 2001). Because verbal interactions, language use, and communication occur at the microlevel of social order but power, dominance, and hegemony between social groups are typically analyzed at a macrolevel, CDA needs to bridge the gap between these two approaches (Gee, 2004; van Dijk, 2001). I did this by analyzing the words used by the participants first for what I perceived their intended
Figure 6: This tag cloud was generated by taking just the text used by the participants’ in the white space of their portraits and then entered into tagxedo.com in order to generate this tag cloud in the shape of a text bubble. To provide a starting point for the content analysis of the data I underwent the same tag cloud process this time using all of the text from all of the participants’ narratives. I then used the generated tag clouds to assist me in identifying the general themes for analysis and to compile a series of codes to apply throughout the narrative text in order to locate the words as they were used by the participants and then further refine my content analysis of the body of text and determine more focused themes.
meaning to be and then looking more critically at how their word choices reflected how voice, presence and agency are played out in dominant society.

There are two tasks in CDA: (1) Analysis of utterance-type meanings by examining the correlations between form and function in text and language (Gee, 2004). Form refers to the syntactic structures such as the use of morphemes; the smallest part of a word that still carries meaning. Function refers to how form carries meaning or communicative purpose. (2) Analysis of utterance-token meanings by examining the situated meanings of forms used within specific contexts. Within the analysis of situated meanings there is what Gee (2004) refers to as a “frame problem” (p. 29). This results in a problem with validity because there is a great amount of difference in analysis of situated meanings as opposed to utterance-type meanings. In the utterance-type meanings, analysis depends upon examination of syntax and the ability to rationalize or justify a particular grammatical approach to understanding the relationship of form and function. Or, put more simply, with utterance-type meanings words are taken more at face value according to dictionary definitions. Using this explanation, the word “portrait” means a photograph or visual representation of an individual or object. The same word, however, could be interpreted differently in different contexts.

To address the first task of CDA, an examination of utterance-type meanings, I generated tag clouds of the compiled narratives of the Power of One Portrait Project participants utilizing an online tag cloud generator (tagxedo.com) as described in the previous section. This approach is similar to a tool used by Sameshima and Sinner (2009) in “Awakening to Soma Heliakon: Encountering Teacher-Researcher-Learning in the Twenty-First Century,” in which they used a tag cloud to objectively analyze semantic frequency within their poem and create “a mathematical rendering of the poem based on word usage,” (p. 273). Simply performing a
content analysis, however, was not sufficient for this study because that would have led to a decontextualization of the words from the discourse I was examining. Since words can only be fully understood within the context they occur, I needed to merge the content analysis with the critical discourse analysis in order to fully examine the relationships between the words and their context. From here I then address the second task of CDA, examining the situated meanings of the words as they were used within specific contexts. Within this process I drew upon the concepts of sociocultural proprioception as I began to examine how the use of language within the texts of the participants’ narratives and the socio-cultural contexts in which their words occurred in order to identify common themes between participants. It was my initial experimentation with the tag clouds as a visual presentation of the data in a creative format and conversations with Sameshima that actually first inspired my use of art within this dissertation. The use of an arts-based perspective and sociocultural proprioception as a theoretical framework helped me to identify the prominent constructs and ideas woven throughout the narratives and served as a way of organizing the themes into two overarching categories – the cultural context and self-mattering – and passages were drawn from different participants’ narratives to represent each of the themes for further examination through critical discourse analysis.

In this type of linguistic analysis it is important to remember that language is a dynamic process in which meaning is impacted and changed in subtle ways by the context in which it occurs (Bakhtin, 1981). Context, however, is indefinitely large and no matter how much context is considered in the interpretation of utterances, there is always the possibility of considering infinitely more aspects of context, and these new considerations may change the interpretation of the utterance (Gee, 2004). The problem of trustworthiness comes because in any discourse analysis there is always the question of whether the situated meanings attributed to the material
analyzed might change if other aspects of context were considered. The only way to address this issue is to argue that the particular aspects of context considered in the process of analysis of this data are the important and relevant pieces for these participants and for the analytic purpose of this particular study. Using CDA to examine the data helped to analyze the participants’ perceptions of visibility, inclusion, and power within the larger society and the findings from this analysis are presented in Chapters Four and Five.

**Trustworthiness**

In a qualitative research study, in addition to sharing the results of the study, it is important to share all the decisions and choices made throughout the process of conducting the study (Constas, 1993). Particularly, what choices were made while designing the study, what steps were followed in the process of formulating the research questions, how the site was selected, how data were generated and collected, how data were processed and analyzed, and how determination was made for which data got presented (Chenail, 1995). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that in a qualitative study such as this, the validity of a study is established by describing the trustworthiness of the process and the findings through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Lather (1991) argues that social science must be premised on the development of research approaches that both empower the researched and contribute to the generation of knowledge capable of enhancing change. Eisner (1998) describes validity in qualitative research as something that can be achieved by viewing the data through three different lenses: corroboration; consensual validation; and referential adequacy. In this study, I use the term *trustworthiness* to denote the effort I made to meet the criteria of validity, credibility, and believability of my research—as assessed by the academy, my community, and the participants of the Power of One Portrait Project.
**Corroboration.** The point of corroboration is not to confirm whether the participants’ perceptions were accurate or true reflections of the campus climate but rather to ensure that my findings for this study accurately reflected the participants’ perceptions, whatever they may be. To this end, the purpose of corroboration in this study is to assist me in presenting findings that are credible and worthy of consideration by others.

The credibility of a qualitative research report relies heavily on the confidence readers have in the researcher's ability to be sensitive to the data and to make appropriate decisions in the field (Eisner, 1998). Credibility is described as the confidence within the truth of the findings and can be checked through various methods. For the purposes of my study, I focused on member checking as a way to assure credibility. The process of member checking involved working with the participants of my research project in order to test the accuracy of my data transcriptions, analysis, interpretations and conclusions (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). This was helpful to the process in that it allowed the participants to intervene in my interpretations of their writings. As a part of member checking I sought input from the participants to invite them to either affirm or refute that my analyses correctly reflected their views, feelings and experiences. This was done by working with the participants via email, phone, or face-to-face throughout the analysis process. This was especially helpful in the process of transcribing the handwritten writing submissions of the project participants. For example, one participant used several Japanese characters and mathematical symbols in one of his writings and to ensure that I correctly transcribed these characters and symbols into a digital format I asked him to review my efforts. In terms of coding, I created a representative sample from the narratives and asked four different individuals to use my coding key in order to determine if my codes would be generalizable. Two of the individuals who assisted me with this were external to the project and
provided an unbiased backup to my coding process. The other two individuals were both participants in the study and the narrative excerpts used in this member checking exercise included parts from their own writings as well as samples of writing from other participants in the project. This helped me not only in assuring that the codes I used were generalizable and consistent between raters but reinforced that the concepts I had identified for coding matched the intentions of the individuals who wrote the words in their narratives. In terms of my interpretations and conclusions I have regularly consulted with a few different participants throughout the process of interpreting the data. I have been able to ask for clarification and ensure that I am not taking the words of the participants out of context and assigning meaning based upon my own research agenda.

Though member checking is a valuable tool, it can also be problematic, in that this process assumes that there was a fixed truth of a reality accounted for by me and verified by the participants when in fact understanding is co-created by all participants, including me. As a researcher I want to do work that is consistent with how I view my role as an individual committed to social justice. I was drawn to this topic and this approach because of how it acknowledges the complexity and fluidity of the participants’ lives and identities and challenges preconceived ideas about what is known. “Knowledge is not a substance mined from the experiences of others but rather a co-constructed social text, the representation of which is not just a matter of epistemology or method, but a matter of power” (Galman, 2009, p. 198). I am not claiming to know better than the participants what they really thought and meant and I want to present my research in a way that does not overwrite their stories and experiences but instead utilizes a form of "retrospective generalization" that can allow for understandings of past and future experiences in a new way (Eisner, 1991, p. 205; Lather, 1991).
Words are not innocent, however, and this process can also be problematic in that the participants and I are all stakeholders and have different stories to tell and agendas to promote with can lead to conflicting interpretations (Milner, 2007; Sparkes, 1995). This said, the power of the research is in the power of the stories and it is important to let the research speak for itself and allow the reader to draw their own conclusions from the data.

**Consensual Validation.** As a researcher I am answerable to my community of origin and to my community of interest (hooks, 1984). I believe the purpose of my research project is a greater understanding of the participants’ perceptions and the meanings they give to them. What I do with these understandings, how I interpret and represent them, and what audiences I present them to are all places where the trustworthiness of my research comes under scrutiny. The trustworthiness of my research does not end with the methods I employed and so I must continue to strive to represent the participants’ narratives in ways that I believe honor their commitment to my study and my commitment to their desire to contribute to a project that is meant to enhance understandings of how individuals experience voice, presence, and agency on our campus.

Consensual validation, as used by Eisner (1998), refers to the degree of mutual understanding between the reader and my own perceptions as the researcher in regards to my presentation of my research findings. This understanding develops through my ability to explain my interpretations, the strength of my arguments, the robustness of my study, and my own voice as the researcher. Qualitative research allows for multiple understandings and forms of inquiry in the pursuit of understanding social issues and their causes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Often these forms of inquiry include interpretive and critical paradigms with the goal of clarifying the issues, increasing awareness, and broadening understandings.
In this study I am examining the writings of the participants from this particular university culture in this particular context. Specifically, I am looking at The Power of One Portrait Project and how the participants describe their experiences and perceptions of the campus and the world around them. Though this study is looking at how this university is doing this one project to address a particular need as a result of a particular situation this is not to say that this project could not be done elsewhere with similar results even though the context would be different. The way I establish mutual understanding is by providing very thorough and detailed descriptions of the research, context, and methods. This process is known as “thick description” (Geertz, 1973). In my study, I apply this process by providing great detail in describing the process of defining the focus of the photo project, teasing out the questions and prompts for the writing samples, and by explaining how I have analyzed the writings of the participants.

**Referential Adequacy.** According to Eisner (1998), interpretation of the context and evaluation of a particular issue is “referentially adequate when readers are able to see what they would have missed without the critic’s observations” (p. 114). In qualitative research, the reader must turn a critical eye to the findings and evaluate the credibility and believability of the work right along with the researcher.

Using the data collected from the narratives of the participants, my own reflections, and the Power of One Portrait exhibit I use this information to support my interpretation and evaluation of the campus climate. Throughout this process I bring my particular experiences, unique perspectives, and personal writing style to this process of inquiry. Though some degree of ambiguity and uncertainty are likely to remain, I hope that I provide a coherent case and strength of evidence in appraising the results of this research and that my presentation of the information
brings the data to gather in such a way as to reveal enduring understandings and themes related to campus climate.

**Research Limitations**

As with any research study, there are shortcomings that must be considered. Some of the limitations associated with this particular study include:

- Use of preexisting data prevents the researcher’s ability to develop questions specifically for this study.
- Researcher’s potential to assign greater importance to findings that warranted.
- Sample size could be small given the existing data.
- Researcher desire to advocate for LGBTQ individuals could distract from hearing the voices of all participants and that bias could filter how findings are interpreted.
- Some individuals might not have felt safe participating in such a visible project so might not be represented in the study.
- Self-reported data from the participants cannot be independently verified and could be skewed by how they portray themselves in their answers.
- The findings may not be generalizable to a larger population or different setting.

These limitations, if not taken into consideration and accounted for, may potentially impact the findings of this study.

Even with the purest of intentions, a researcher can inadvertently introduce personal bias into the interpretation of the data. The power of the research is in the power of the stories and it is important not to romanticize the participants but to let the reader draw their own conclusions based on the data presented in the research. The goal of true measures of trustworthiness is to
provide the reader with a clear understanding of the research process and how I achieved my results.

Summary

This study was inspired by the 2008 assaults against members of the WSU LGBTQ community and the resulting meetings to discuss the university’s response. Through my involvement in these meetings as an administrator, I became increasingly aware of how responding to a checklist of concerns did not address the alienation felt by the university community of LGBTQ people and our allies. The invisibility and erasure felt by the community was so profound that it was immaterial if the action items were addressed or not. As a lesbian and social justice advocate, I began to recognize that the conflict was not really about content, it was about affect and policy alone does not make people feel that they matter. What matters most is being visible, being heard, having identity, being present, and having agency and power. As an artist I sought out Adam Mastoon to create a community-based art project that would offer a way for members of the community to be visible, express themselves, and find empowerment. As a researcher I also recognized the richness and depth of stories behind the portraits, the written narratives of those who participated in the Power of One Portrait Project.

A critical discourse analysis of the collected texts of the Power of One Portrait Project participants and external documents provides a way of looking at how text and language influence, replicate, and resist social power, dominance, and inequality in social and political contexts (van Dijk, 2001). According to Vygotsky (1962), language is culturally bound in context and it is through social interactions that individuals learn the cultural values of society. Cultural tools are important for the development of group-constructed knowledge because they are shared artifacts with shared meanings. Sociocultural proprioception provided the tools for
this analysis by helping to drive the themes for investigation, inform my overall thinking, and serve as an organizing lens for my findings. The portraits associated with the Power of One Portrait Project serve as alternative forms of reality and are the cultural tools I use to share the stories, experiences, and perceptions of the study participants. The use of an arts-based perspective is crucial in this project because although this study is not arts-based in structure or methodology it is a project in which the data is bound by art and it is through this art that the participants present themselves and share their stories.

For this particular study, data includes narratives from the 28 individuals, who participated in the Power of One Portrait Project during February, 2010. The information gathered through the content analysis of the collected narratives was organized into meaningful units of analysis of two prominent themes; environment and self. The first overarching theme, environment, included the subsets of social status/privilege, camps climate, laws and policy, accountability, and support systems. The second theme, self, included the subsets of values/beliefs, authenticity, mattering/visibility, resiliency, and connectivity. The analysis of these themes and subsets provided a better understanding of how the participants of this study perceived the campus and made sense of their own identities. This type of knowing, as experienced by the participants, is an ongoing process that is created and recreated through the discourse of voice, presence and agency. In chapters five and six, I examine each theme in detail using Gee’s (2004) concept of “big D” Discourse to discuss the participants’ use of language in conjunction with their expressed values, belief systems, and perspectives. Though the participants differ in age, race, sexual orientation, gender, and role they are all part of this campus community in one way or another.
Standing in the wings
I watched the world pass by.
Hesitant to speak,
I never questioned why.
For alone I was, and could always be
No questions, no answers.
And nothingness rained,
And reigned.

The lights were dimmed
And I was center stage
No one moved, breathed, or dared.
I closed my eyes and drew my breath
Then stood my place in life.

Chapter Four
The Environment: Contextualized Experiences

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze the narratives gathered from the
Power of One Portrait Project, an arts-based community project that took place on the
Washington State University campus in spring 2010. The narratives were used to analyze the
participants’ perceptions related to their experiences on campus and in the community;
specifically looking to see how they incorporated the concepts of voice, presence, and agency
into their writings. The research questions that guide this dissertation are:

1. How do the narratives of The Power of One Portrait Project reflect the participants’
experiences of voice?

2. How is presence in terms of mattering and visibility perceived by the participants?
3. How do the participants view responsibility and agency around the issue of social climate?

**Environmental Themes**

Some of the recurring themes identified as related to environment include: (1) social status and privilege; (2) accountability; (3) climate and safety; (4) support systems; and (5) law and policy. When I refer to environmental themes, I am examining the campus and encompassing community and the many different ways in which that environment is experienced by the participants of the Power of One Portrait Project. Environment is all of the external factors that influence the life and activities of each and every individual. This can include geographical location, seasonal weather conditions, and the particular physical setting of any given activity or place of community. Environment, as mitigated by sociocultural proprioceptiveness or cultural context, can also refer to a set of external conditions that affect the quality of social interaction and personal existence. Social status and privilege, campus climate, laws and policy, accountability, and support systems comprise the themes that make up the particular external factors impacting the ways in which the environment was perceived by the participants of this study.

The first theme, social status and privilege, refers to the way in which an individual is positioned in society. This positionality can be earned by way of the individual’s efforts and achievements or it can be an ascribed status based upon the sex, gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation of the individual. Privilege is a byproduct of social status in that it is an advantage or benefit that is afforded to some individual, based on an arbitrary, socially-assigned identity. As the participants in this study are all affiliated with the university community, it can be assumed that each of these individuals has some degree of privilege that has enabled them to
access higher education. Indeed, most of the participants very clearly articulated the facets of their experiences or identity that gave them privilege as well as acknowledging those aspects that were potentially marginalizing (Figure 7).

Campus climate, the second theme, is a term used to describe the cumulative and ongoing perceptions of the degree to which students, faculty, and staff feel safe and included. These perceptions are most often influenced by the attitudes, experiences, and behaviors which affect the personal development of the campus community. When discussing campus climate in their narratives, each participant shared their perceptions of how they experience language, discrimination, bullying, harassment, disempowerment, and judgment within the context of campus and community. In the context of this study, when analyzing the theme of campus climate, I am also examining the participants’ perceptions of safety and how they view and refer to campus efforts, dialogue, community events, freedom of expression, and individual actions in terms of creating a safer and more inclusive campus climate.

Laws and policy comprise the third theme and although several participants admitted that they did not know a great deal about the federal, state, or local laws in terms of protecting individuals who are not part of the dominant society, most felt that these laws were not as extensive or effective as they should be. Several participants indicated that if a hate crime occurred that it often fell to the victim to prove that the incident occurred and that it was indeed a hate crime. Many participants also stated that laws and policies are only as effective as those who enforce them and hold perpetrators accountable.

Accountability is the fourth theme and is often used synonymously with responsibility with the associated meaning of answerability. This is particularly relevant in the context of this study throughout the examination of assigned responsibility for creating and maintaining an
Figure 7: On the door I used the International Phonetic Alphabet to write out part of the poem I used to open this chapter. The poem speaks to the sense of isolation and powerlessness that can come from marginalization. The door symbolizes individual access to voice, presence, and agency and how that access is influenced by sociocultural proprioception.
inclusive and safe campus climate. Accountability is the acknowledgement and assumption of responsibility for actions, decisions, and policies including the administration, governance, and implementation within the scope of the role or employment position and encompassing the obligation to report, explain, and be answerable for resulting consequences (“Accountability,” 2011, para. 1). In the participants’ narratives, accountability is a construct that includes different types of responsibilities, the responsibilities associated with the particular roles of administration, faculty, staff, students, and even a sense of collective responsibility. Most clearly, however, accountability, as conceptualized by the participants in this study, is directed at the personal responsibility within each individual to take action, serve as a positive role model, get informed, examine personal biases, and to accept the consequences for any given action.

The final environmental theme of support systems refers to the structures and services that support individuals by offering resources, safety, or even a visual means of identifying allies. The availability of offices and safe spaces on campus were discussed as well as the ways in which individuals made themselves available and the acceptance that expressed. The findings are presented as they relate to the ways in which the participants perceived the social environment of the campus, surrounding community as well as some glimpses into how they make sense of the society as a whole while reflecting on the answers to the following research questions:

- How do the narratives of The Power of One Portrait Project reflect the participants’ experiences of voice?
- How do the participants view responsibility and agency around the issue of social climate?
These questions tie to sociocultural proprioception in how the answers reflect the participants’ perceptions and understandings of history, climate, and policy.

Social Status/Privilege

Individual access into mainstream society or dominant culture is often largely dependent upon the amount of social status or privilege available to the individual. An individual's self-concept may be grounded in part by how securely that individual feels that he or she belongs in certain social groups; a dynamic that certainly influences an individual’s perceived sense of safety when considering whether or not that access or sense of belonging is available (Ouwekerk et al., 2000; Rankin, 1998; Vaccarro, 2010). Many of the participants of the study were very self-aware of their social status and the privileges that their status did and did not afford in terms of acceptance and personal safety. Melynda, a senior-level university administrator, shared:

Yes, I feel safe to be myself. But my self is a very conventional one in many ways: I’m cis-gendered female, I’m married, I’m a mom, I’m an administrator, I’m educated, I’m white, I’m middle-class, I’m middle-aged, I’m able-bodied, I’m fully employed, I like to read and knit and bake…there’s very little about me that pushes the envelope of social comfort. Being a lesbian seems less volatile as part of this conventional package.

Thinking about knowledge through the use of Rankin’s (2008) transformational tapestry model lends itself to a better understanding of how she regards knowledge as presented “through a power and privilege lens, a lens we have found to be more inclusive because it incorporates an understanding that each of us has and understands our own power and privilege. Our power and privilege perspective is grounded in critical theory and assumes that power differentials, both earned and unearned, are central to all human interactions” (Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 5).
Aaron, a graduate student, wrote:

I have never really had to sit and think about how it feels to be me on campus. Demographically speaking I am a white male, middle class, and gay. So really, for all but the last one I fit in with what is perceived as the “power” in today’s society.

When thinking about power within the context of social status and privilege comes the notion of in-groups and out-groups which can result in othering. Most of the participants in this study consciously referenced and identified ‘others’ as those who were somehow relegated to the margins of society (McLaren, 1991). Interestingly enough, even those individuals who might be othered by those in the dominant social discourse did not themselves identify as other. One participant, Jill, a university staff member, spoke of others and positioned herself as an advocate for social justice but the positionality used in her writing seems instead to unintentionally further other those in the margins and, rather than empathizing and working with those who are othered, she appears to be working on their behalf but also distancing herself from their experiences. Jill’s reflection follows:

I come from a background where I was always afraid. Afraid of what people thought of me, afraid of what they wouldn’t think, afraid of what I was supposed to be, do, not do, or say. Those fears also resulted in an intense desire to protect the “underdog” or what I perceived to be the “underdog.” I suppose given my fears I had this desire to protect others so that people would not harm them for being “different.” Different was the basis upon which my fears were built, that and the recognition that different led to negative consequences, perceptions and
treatment. My uncertainty and insecurity with myself left me always willing to focus on others and, in particular, justice for others.

The term underdog refers to an individual or entity that is not expected to win a fight. The use of this term unintentionally perpetuates the notion of Other by creating a power differential in which one individual with power, social status, and/or privilege adopts the responsibility for standing up for individuals based on the preconceived notion that they cannot stand up for themselves and are not expected to. I think that when one begins to think of social justice in this way that it becomes far too easy to slip into a position of dominance or power or privilege and to justify it by thinking it is for the greater good. Britzman (1995) states that “the commitment to tolerance only turns on modernity’s ‘natural inclination’ to intolerance; acceptance of otherness presupposes as it once necessitates the deligitimization of the other” (p. 160). So, through the categorization of advocate and underdog, the concept of Other is further establishes as something with less value than what the Otherness is set against. In considering this I am reminded of a lesson I learned several years ago at a social justice conference. It was there that I was first taught to understand the difference between coming in with my White privilege and doing something for those who may not share my privilege and doing that something because I thought I could make a difference and doing something in collaboration with those who may have less power because we are working together to create change. The first approach still serves to reinforce the power differential, in that model I may be contributing to change in some positive and meaningful ways but it is through an approach that is still keeping that hegemony alive in the way that is counterproductive to the overall intentions. The second approach is centered within the momentum of the people and does not emphasize the separateness of power and privilege.

Often, the notion of social justice is associated with philanthropy, kindness, and equity
but when social justice is implemented solely in this manner it can conversely serve to perpetuate the very inequities it originally sought to dismantle. Mike, a university staff member, described this unearned privilege and associated responsibilities in his narratives by writing “Every day I am reminded of all the differences which society has placed upon everyone. I try to be aware of what I can do or say to make a difference in someone’s life. To be a positive force for the people around me.” When I first started planning the Power of One Portrait project my intention was to provide visibility and voice to the LGBTQ community at this campus, specifically those who had been touched by the reported incidents of hate in October 2008. As I began to focus on examining the collected narratives from the project as the basis for this study my perspective began to shift from one of wanting to do something for a specific group of people to wanting to work with those individuals, whichever individuals they might be, to talk about campus climate in a way that went beyond just pointing out the injustices to a point where we could share our experiences in a way that would allow us to truly be seen by those who may view the project.

Social status and privilege in the simplest terms refers to understandings of who has access and who does not. Stephanie, an undergraduate Latina woman who grew up speaking English as a second language, wrote about her experience as a young girl in the classroom, “I was reprimanded for what I had said, and I couldn’t understand why. All I could do was sit and quietly accept it. I was too afraid to try to explain what had happened for fear that it might be misunderstood. Ever since then, I watched everything I did so that I could try to fit in as much as possible.” Stephanie is not describing a situation that placed her in the role of an underdog who is not expected to win; her story describes an experience of Othering. Stephanie was denied access to the educational system because of her developing skills with the English language. There is an increasing awareness that there are cultural differences between individuals that
affect communication and the ability to communicate through those differences, but there are not always enough skills to address these needs (Pope & Mueller, 2000). Her words describing her fear of saying anything more because she did not want to be further misunderstood reflect that she was conscious that in her assigned role as Other she was also perceived as less than. She also recounted how from that point on she was very mindful about trying to blend in and not draw attention to herself for being different.

**Campus Climate**

An individual’s interpersonal environment on campus and in the surrounding community impacts his or her values, attitudes, and psychosocial development, and as such, the campus environment should foster the exploration of cultural differences as difference that is not necessarily wrong or right, but simply is (Vaccaro, 2010). Campus climate pertains to feelings of acceptance; when a campus is not inclusive or responsive to addressing the various -isms in society, the campus climate is understood to be chilly or unwelcoming (Hall & Sandler, 1982; Rankin & Reason, 2008). To introduce and sustain a positive shift in campus climate, institutions of higher education need to create an environment that allows for positive interactions among all persons. In a similar vein, Eleanor, a university administrator, wrote “I want all community members to recognize that they have a part in fostering a nurturing and supportive environment that demands safety and values inclusion at the heart of all that we do.” This shift in campus climate is not something that just happens, it is a process that must be continuously analyzed, fostered, and supported by those who work most closely with the campus itself (Rankin & Reason, 2008).

In this study it was a group of concerned students, faculty and staff who voiced criticism of the campus climate and how it was not creating visibility or safety for LGBTQ individuals.
From that initial concern a series of actions fell into place and led to the Power of One Portrait project which is now my undertaking in terms of analyzing, fostering, and supporting a campus climate that recognizes the voices that may have previously existed only in the margins.

Looking beyond how the literature defines campus climate to how it is perceived by the actual participants in this study it is clear that many students and staff associated with the university have very clear-cut expectations for what it would mean to be a part of a campus that is inclusive and fosters individual identities for who they are and what they bring. Eleanor provided a very concrete picture of what she valued and expected in terms of campus climate in her writings:

It matters to me that I am able to learn, work, and serve in a supportive, open and affirming environment. When I consider what I need, the following things come to mind: A perceived and real sense of safety, open and affirming colleagues who are willing to discuss gbt-related topics and issues, encouragement to deepen my own knowledge and understanding (like the support that I receive from my chair/advisor with my trans research), transparency, being named in the university’s nondiscrimination clause as a protected class, acceptance of who I am, and a spirit of celebration surrounding diversity within an intercultural, multigenerational community. I want to be able to discuss matters of diversity and social justice, to critically think about access, power and privilege, and to model acceptance.

A campus culture is the context in which a student’s learning is embedded. University administrators have a responsibility for fostering a campus culture that normalizes all of the marginalized voices without tokenizing their experiences. But even here, the word normalized is
laden with value and somehow implies that there is something wrong or abhorrent about those who have been marginalized and that those individuals need someone else to bring them out of the margins. Transparency is a term that is frequently used in higher education to conceptualize the concept or notion of open communication and accountability. I feel that if university administrators are truly transparent in discussions with students, faculty and staff that it would then be possible to engage in the dialogues about creating an inclusive campus in a manner in which all individuals are valued as stakeholders and contributors towards possible solutions rather than an entity that must be dealt with or managed (Baird, 1990). Melynda reflected on her beliefs about campus climate:

Colleges and universities are learning environments and it should be expected and supported that all people are able to express who they are and how they choose to live their lives. That’s part of the education you can acquire…becoming more aware and knowledgeable about the diversity around us and how to live and contribute in meaningful ways within an interculturally rich space.

“Making the campus safe and inclusive is a constant and ongoing battle or effort,” wrote Diana, a university staff member. “It is my responsibility to work in whatever ways I can. I believe in the educational process and visibility helps in that process.” I think that is part of the role of administrators, to walk within the space between them and us and to provide for that space of alterity regardless of whether or not that space gets filled. But that responsibility does not belong to the administrators alone. Among all of the participants in this study, each and every one echoed the sentiments voiced by Matt, a university administrator and graduate student, when he wrote “We all individually have an inherent duty to create a safe and inclusive community.”
Participants held very strong beliefs about freedom of expression and the individual right to be who they are but they also seemed to agree that that same freedom did not come without costs or responsibility. As a participant, I stated:

I believe in the freedom of choice and expression but I also believe in cause and effect...consequences. I think our society has certain expectations and an unspoken rule about appropriate and acceptable behaviors.

So, is it buying into a system that privileges some identities over others to believe that with the freedom of individual expression that it is fair to assume that with self-expression comes the responsibility of accepting the consequences for words and behaviors? In looking at many of today’s headlines and reading of the various wrongdoings of some high profile political figures, celebrities, and even university personnel, it might be safer to assume that those who have privilege, power, and access take it for granted and often seem to appear as if they do not feel that consequences should apply to them. Many individuals have experienced marginalization first hand, like some of the participants of this study, and do not seem to take their freedoms for granted and are aware of the potential for negative consequences. That is not to say that they do not wish to have support available in asserting their choices, they do, as evidenced in the following statement as expressed by Jon, a graduate student and teaching assistant:

Support of an individual’s right to make choices in life does not mean that everyone will necessarily approve of those choices, however individuals should be free to make choices for themselves and to accept responsibility for the consequences of the choices they make.

This only indicates that these individuals understand and acknowledge the potential for associated repercussions of their choices.
Laws and Policy

Although federal laws do not currently recognize sexual orientation and gender identity/expression as protected classes, Washington state law does. Further, Washington State University has adopted the language and definitions set forth by the Washington State Human Rights Commission in terms of inclusivity. Unfortunately, there is a widespread perception among students that this is not the case. Though Washington State University provided protection to individuals regardless of gender identity/expression and sexual orientation in its Washington Administrative Codes (WAC) prior to various bias related incidents and hate crimes on campus this October 2008, the LGBTQ students’ reactions displayed that they were not aware of these protections. It is likely that the student population was unable to demystify the legal codes and understand the intention of WSU’s policies. Likewise, faculty and administrators in the community were also unaware of campus policies that were set forth in order to help educate the students; sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are qualifiers for legally protected status. It is not a surprise that students were not able easily pick apart legal terms and rhetoric which require the student to navigate and view multiple codes in order to fully grasp their legal protections.

The ongoing existence of hate crimes and acts of bias on college campuses makes it essential for university administrators to develop strategies and programs that alleviate the strains these acts place upon college communities (Prutzman, 1994). It is also necessary for university administrators to take proactive and preventative measures in developing appropriate and effective interventions for overcoming hatred and bigotry on campuses. Students, faculty, and administrators are empowered and obligated to take a stand against hatred and bigotry within the campus community. Acts of bigotry and hate may often begin as seemingly minor incidents; if
left unchecked these events can escalate into far more serious situations. When teachers and administrators become aware of bias incidents as they occur, they can better implement and enforce school policies that create a more supportive campus environment in which acts of bias are not tolerated. Violence prevention, zero-tolerance policies, and bias awareness are proactive measures that may help to prevent the occurrence of hate crimes (Prutzman, 1994).

In addition to direct attacks of violence or harassment, LGBTQ individuals also face secondary discrimination. This is described as negative treatment received by an individual when others act adversely based on his or her identity (Bantley, 2008). This could include being ignored by the professor in a classroom, not being permitted to join a club or organization, and being passed over for promotions, tenure or even successful completion of a graduate degree. How the university takes or does not take action toward secondary discrimination conveys the message to those perpetuate these acts of discrimination and to the rest of society that there are no consequences for anti-gay hate crimes punished and that secondary victimization of gay people is acceptable. If this is true, then one could speculate that as long as the university continues to allow LGBTQ individuals to be treated differently than heterosexuals, acts of violence against LGBTQ individuals shall not decrease. The element of secondary discrimination compounds the direct effects of violent attacks or harassment upon members of the LGBTQ community. It is a serious issue on university campuses because the mistreatment experienced by those who are targeted results from knowledge of the victims’ sexual orientation or gender identity. This cycle is not a problem that exists only for LGBTQ individuals, as long as one group is targeted for their identity then it stands to reason that other individuals or groups are also at risk for the same negative treatment. Melynda shared some of her views on the
limitations of laws and policies:

        Our state and campus policies are quite clear and well-developed. But laws aren’t necessarily a deterrent for hate crimes: I don’t think anyone says, “Well, I really feel like being hateful, but since it’s against the law, I won’t.” Instead, people choose surreptitious, cowardly, essentially untraceable actions, which can’t be investigated or prosecuted. If we expect the law or policies to prevent that, we will always be disappointed. The lower-level stuff is incredibly painful and debilitating, but it can’t be addressed by policies directed at the actions.

        Changing the larger culture around violence, identity, difference . . . that can’t be done by changing a policy.

        She is not alone in her sentiment. Several participants made reference to the issue that laws and policies are only effective if they are followed and/or if they are enforced when they are not followed. As Sarah Ann, a university administrator, stated, “I believe laws can only protect you if you are surrounded by folks who believe in and follow those laws.” More concerning is the acknowledgement that personal biases can also impact how those laws and policies are interpreted and enforced by those responsible for upholding the laws. Adrianna stated:

        Laws are only as good as the people enforcing them. If they have a bias it may indicate how well laws will be enforced. Education is important for those given the task of enforcing the laws. It is up to the local community residents to know what these laws are and report when they see a problem. It is also important to follow up to see what action was taken.

        Recognizing the biases and prejudices that arise from the personal beliefs and values of those individuals who are often responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the laws
and policies ultimately intended to ensure the safety of the students, faculty, and staff who comprise the university community can be a harsh but necessary part of increasing the visibility and inclusion of all members of the university community. Within the university values are clearly stated objectives that embrace diversity as part of the institutional mission. In his narrative, Jon expressed his concern about how knowledge of his sexual orientation could cause friction within his graduate committee and hinder his ability to complete his PhD and voiced his cynicism when he wrote:

I know that when I say that the strategic mission of the university says that it values freedom of expression, integrity, trust, and respect, that it also means that if a faculty member has tenure, they can get away with homophobic language in their classroom.

Broadly-worded statements of tolerance, similar to the reference made by Jon, are currently in place at Washington State, Central Washington, Western Washington and Eastern Washington Universities, Evergreen State College, The University of Puget Sound, and The University of Washington. While such statements might appear to safeguard universities against successful hate-crime litigation, important cases in the lower courts have not borne this out (Kaplin & Lee, 2007). “Although no case involving campus hate speech has yet reached the U. S. Supreme Court,” it is important to ensure that policies are implemented in such a way as to guarantee equal protection to LGBT students, particularly when considering the implications of secondary discrimination (p. 496).

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demonstrated that they were not aware of these protections. It is likely that the student population was unable to demystify the legal codes and understand the intention of WSU’s policies. Likewise, many faculty and administrators in the community were also unaware of campus policies that were set forth in order to help educate the students; sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are qualifiers for legally protected status. It is not a surprise that students were not able easily pick apart legal terms and rhetoric which require the student to navigate and view multiple codes in order to fully grasp their legal protections.

Who do the laws and policies protect and how do they work if they are put in place by those who do not need the protecting? Laws and policies themselves are comprised of words that only have meaning in the particular context to which they were ascribed. Like many of the other participants in this study I have only a vague understanding of my rights and the ways in which I am protected. If something were to occur that violated my rights or limited my access because of who I am I am not sure I would know all of the things I would need to do to reclaim my sense of safety even though I feel I have a positive connection and relationship to the police officers and other administrators whom I might call upon for assistance. But I recognize that this is not the case for all people and that there is a certain degree of privilege in being in a position to be able to ask for help and to expect that help will be given fairly and without bias. Jill described this access and power differential in the following way:

I feel like the procedure for protecting people against hate crimes requires the victim to open themselves up frequently to more hate and bias. I think that ultimately the mechanism for implementing the laws tends to create pockets where hate can thrive rather than dissipate.
The legal system is not blind in the distribution of justice, nor is it all-seeing. If a crime or discriminatory act occurs, the only way it can be addressed is if someone calls attention to the incident. This ultimately requires the targeted group or individual to describe the event and provide enough detail to allow the investigators to determine that a crime was indeed committed. This can be further traumatizing to the individual who was targeted, as Jill explained “I believe that the intention of hate crime laws are exactly what we want, however like many progressive laws, hate crimes tend to re-victimize the victim and put the burden of proof on the victim.” Another related statement came from Stephanie:

Campus policies are similar to those from the federal and state laws in that if an incident occurs, you must report it to the police. I feel that although this is a good method to report crimes and bias acts, it is difficult for victims to get the proof they need in order for police to make a conviction.

The safety and security of our LGBTQ community and the WSU community as a whole is tightly-linked to the efforts made to create a safe environment. State and federal laws as well as university policies all work together to build the foundation for a safe and aware community. In recent years laws have been rapidly changing to address the needs and concerns of a changing demographic that is beginning to tip toward a more liberal and inclusive climate. There is much work yet to be done but there is also hope. Charles, a graduate student, quite eloquently expressed this notion of hope:

In an ideal world, within five or ten years gay issues would be off the national agenda. Political parties will no longer look toward gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people as an easy way to get votes (either by demonizing them or paying lip-service to their interests), and people will look back and wonder what
the big argument was all about. Marriage equality will not cause the institution of marriage to dissolve, forbidding workplace and housing discrimination will not cause a breakdown in the capitalist system, tolerance for variation in sexual and gender norms will not mark the end of morality, a military accepting gay and lesbian recruits will not devolve into anarchy, and the weather forecasts will still be remarkably free of a torrent of brimstone-laden divine wrath.

To afford equal rights to all peoples regardless of their identity, race, sexual orientation or religion does not diminish or take away the civil liberties of those who already possess those basic human rights.

Accountability

Two of the writing prompts for the Power of One Portrait project asked participants to describe who they thought should be responsible for campus climate. In this context responsibility refers to those individuals who have a moral, legal, or professional obligation to respond to and address issues affecting campus climate. For many participants it was clear that the bulk of that responsibility should fall on the shoulders of the university administration. This is quite clear in the following excerpt from this narrative written by Adrianna, an undergraduate:

Administrators, faculty and staff are responsible for making it known that hate and intolerance are not acceptable in a learning environment, regardless of personal beliefs. They have a duty to make campus safe for everyone who has come here to learn. Each student has the right to be able to pursue their college goals without feeling unsafe.

Some of this assigned responsibility is because as university administrators these individuals have a direct impact on the development, implementation, and follow-through for
university policies. This is due in part to the real and perceived power held by those employed by the university. “Given that the administrators/faculty/staff have the ultimate power to effect change on WSU campus,” wrote Lena, an undergraduate, “they should not stand for any types of prejudice activities on campus or by campus affiliated groups.” But it was also clear to me that the participants did not feel the responsibility for campus climate was fully that of the university administrators, many shared a perspective that revealed a sense of shared or collective responsibility. Jill offered this in her narrative:

I believe it is the responsibility of all people to be a part of the solution, to be part of the solution to exclusivity by our every action, our words, our choices, our body language, our behaviors and our honesty. I don’t believe any one person has this responsibility, I believe it is all our responsibilities, even though we may feel somewhat powerless to do much.

Jill’s reference to a sense of powerlessness is indicative of how social marginalization is perpetuated. Individuals often recognize issues or concerns in society but oftentimes don’t have the tools, knowledge, or available resources to address the situation. So how can individuals who do not see themselves in positions of power find the sense of empowerment to create the changes they wish to see? Rappaport (1995) suggests “the ability to tell one’s story, and to have access to and influence over collective stories, is a powerful resource” (p. 802). Perhaps that is part of the power of the Power of One Portrait project, in the sharing of the participants’ stories there is access to a common understanding of expectations for campus climate.

In analyzing the responses it seemed clear to me that more than responsibility the participants were concerned with the issue of accountability. Accountability implies much more than an obligation it indicates that an individual or individuals must answer to someone else for
the outcome of whatever task they were responsible for. Even in the previous section regarding laws and policy, it was clear that what the participants were asking for was accountability from lawmakers and university administrators for what protections those laws and policies were intended to offer. When asked in what ways they thought the administrators, faculty and staff were responsible for making the campus safe and inclusive, Kim, a university administrator, wrote:

Listening and then acting. I think they need to open themselves up more to the general population on campus and really listen to their needs and then provide the foundations for active programming, providing assistance with follow up and reassessments to see what is working and what is not.

This passage implies that this is not something that administrators are currently doing. A prime example of this might be the reported assaults in October 2008. During that period several administrators gathered to discuss the situation and determine how to best address the concerns raised by the community. During the discussions, representatives from various campus departments and offices read over the “Aggressively Recommended Action Items” from the document delivered to senior-level administrators by the Coalition Against Hate. I think it is fair to say that administrators took the situation seriously and tried to address the concerns presented by the Coalition, however, many of the demands outlined in the documents were points that were already in place within the existing university structure. Additionally, the way in which the document was written made it difficult to afford credibility to the “Aggressively Recommended Actions” items and the members of the Coalition Against Hate who drafted them. It is not a surprise that students were not able easily pick apart legal terms and rhetoric which require the student to navigate and view multiple codes in order to fully grasp their legal protections.
Consequently, as administrators prepared their response process began to feel more like crossing off items from a checklist rather than really connecting with and addressing the real concerns of the community who voiced them. Eleanor provides a cautionary note that encapsulates the role of accountability in addressing and changing campus climate concerns:

   To check ourselves when our own bigotry comes knocking on the door.

Ultimately, we each have a choice in how we engage with others be it peacefully or doing harm. I want all community members to recognize that they have a part in fostering a nurturing and supportive environment that demands safety and values inclusion at the heart of all that we do.

Jon wrote, “If I do not hold myself to these responsibilities I become a silent partner to the atrocities that are committed in the name of ignorance, religion, and bigotry.” This notion of individual accountability and collective responsibility are carried through the writings of many of the participants of this project. “It all starts with one act,” stated Lori, a university administrator, “I am that act.” To be that act, as Lori suggests, is not an easy undertaking nor is it passive. As Eleanor suggested:

   It is important to actively engage in conversation around bias, heterosexual privilege, and oppression, modeling my own accountability and willingness to stop hate so that we can all feel safe and included.

Nico, an undergraduate, wrote, “One voice is enough to start a revolution, and we have millions. The evolution of society into a tolerant and just society is well under way, and it’s calling to everyone to make a stand for human rights.” Actively engaging in dialogue can often produce conflict, a result of different understandings of social representations. So, how can opposing social representations be coordinated and/or conciliated? How can this conflict, which is the
negative side to diversity, be managed? In answer, dialectical perspective purports growth arises from conflict and that "heterogeneity in tension between different elements of the system is a prerequisite for development” (Raudsepp, 2005, p. 464).

**Systems of Support**

Individual development is embedded within the context of the culture. In understanding this, one might focus on how individuals within a particular culture come to participate in the practices of that culture, how participation in one practice relates to participation in another, how cultural practices frame and support developmental processes, and how the activities in which individuals engage transform cultural practices (Goldhaber, 2000). The support systems of campus culture have a great deal of influence on the success, retention, and wellbeing of the different members of the university community. Jon expressed this quite eloquently in his narratives when he wrote about how he experiences GIESORC:

> In a room, of the highest floor, of the highest building on campus, there is a place where my kind goes; the kind that accepts everyone regardless of who they happen to be attracted to. If it were not for the people that accept me there, I may not have come out at all in this educational setting.

> “Does the triangular sign posted outside our office, meant to designate a safe environment, really mean anything to a person who might need a safe haven or support?” asked Julie, a university administrator. Newly developing identities necessitate space of their own in which to be asserted, and are also rooted in and influenced by the specificities of the particular environmental context (Adams & Marshall, 1996). Having a safe space such as GIESORC offers resources to individuals who may be struggling in their identity development process. Diana
described how she utilized the center’s resource during her coming out process:

When I was first coming out as a gay person I had a lot more needs! I had a lot of questions, I needed some kind of resource from which to explore and find answers, I needed people that I could feel comfortable to talk to and I needed a safe place here on campus where I could totally be myself and feel comfortable there. The Center served all those needs and I used it often.

The need for supportive structures is not exclusive to the LGBTQ individuals on campus; it is a need that each participant talked about in different ways throughout their narratives. Some of the structures most frequently named included: general resource centers, Student Involvement and Leadership Development Center, Center for Human Rights, professors, mentors, Multicultural Student Services, GIESORC, and the Women’s Resource Center. What participants are seeking in terms of support on campus includes what Jill describes as “consistent reliable help with resource access, information gathering, and listening.

In a university setting, the focus is on learning and providing the context and support to make that learning as successful as possible. On college campuses, one of the most important interactions an individual has occurs in the classroom between student and professor. So it is only natural that relationships with mentors and professors should be named as an important part of support structures by the participants in this study. For many, this interaction is positive and supportive. Eleanor shared this statement about her experiences as a graduate student on this campus:

I think my mentors are mostly calm, thoughtful and spend more time listening than talking. They allow brainstorming, allow the discussion to flow and they
believe that we are whole people who come to the table, not the role we are in at the time, nor the stereotype we’ve been placed in at the moment. This, however, is not the experiences of all students and I feel it is of critical importance to note that when asked about campus climate and safety concerns the one place that consistently was described as unsafe was the classroom. Clearly professors are the designated overseers for the safety and interpersonal interactions that take place within those spaces, so what happens to create that dissonance between identifying a professor as a mentor and supportive structure and labeling the classroom as one of the least safe spaces on campus? Jill shared this insight:

I think having a high trust environment with teachers is critical for setting up people for success and I believe that this requires faculty, staff and students to have some level of awareness of their own implicit biases. Is it that people are unaware of their biases or is it that they are unable or unwilling to address them? Melynda wrote, “We need to support the exploration and learning that students do while they are here. We also need to help students (and employees) manage the conflicts that are inevitable in a diverse community.”

**Summary**

The environmental themes of social status and privilege, campus climate, laws and policy, accountability, and support systems offer insight into the complex constructs of voice, presence, and agency as experienced by the participants of the Power of One Portrait project. In their discussion of leadership practices and diversity in higher education, Aguirre and Martinez (2002) suggest that in order to challenge the academy to develop policies and practices that foster a campus climate that is inclusive of marginalized individuals, it is important to build and promote an inclusive community on campus.
Typically, after a hate incident occurs on campus, the focus is more on defusing the immediate crisis rather than thinking proactively to prevent further crises. Schlosser and Sedlacek (2001) identify two main factors that potentially contribute to this problem. The first issue is that initial attempts at intermediation typically take place immediately following an incident and those efforts are usually short term in nature. An issue with this approach is that in time of crisis emotions run high and can interfere with potential effectiveness of any given intervention strategy or successful dialogue. Consequently, the individuals who do participate may be speaking from their emotions and more likely to be reactive, rather than responsive to what others have to say. The second issue is simply that unless there is a crisis, many people do not know how to engage in dialogue around sensitive issues.

Sociocultural proprioception helps to place the themes of analysis within the larger context of history, social climate, laws and policy, and identity. This contextualization is important because “the challenge to achieving meaningful diversity,” according to Brown (2004), “or a positive campus climate that is inclusive of others is to move beyond surface solutions that do not disturb the underlying assumptions and perceptions that rigidify the institution against ideas that are perceived to be contentious to the status quo” (pp. 25 – 26).

Positionality, feelings of inclusion or exclusion within the campus community, knowledge and understanding of laws and policy, assigned responsibility for change, and the campus structures and services of support and safety are all external factors that impact the lives and experiences of each and every individual. Using CDA provided a useful tool to examine each of the environmental themes in a manner that allowed for a deeper look at how language reflects the beliefs and views of the greater society in a way that provides an access point for
challenging the status quo. In chapter five, the focus shifts toward an examination of the internal factors that influence how each individual expresses his or her identity.
We are individuals, each of us
We are undergraduates, graduates, community members and professionals
We are proud of who we are
Proud of our academics, our accomplishments, our progress
And where we are
We are proud of our sense of humor, our spirituality
Our vision and our hope
We are proud of being parents and struggling students
We are proud to be survivors and proud to be allies
We are proud to be gay
We want to be remembered and to remember ourselves
We want to remember ourselves
We are individuals, each of us
And we are, each of us, connected to each other

Chapter Five

The Self: Individual Awareness

Introduction

In examining the narratives of the individuals who took part in this study I found that each participant expressed a strong sense of self and a desire to be acknowledged and accepted for being the person they envision themselves to be. The sense of self is an innate quality of what it is to be human, this sense of self means that individuals are able to reflect upon themselves as both the one who takes action in the world as well as the one who is acted upon. Self is the basis of individual awareness; the source of individual thoughts and actions; and the core essence of what it is that makes an individual the person they are. Ultimately, this brings questions about who individual identity and the nature of self-importance.

There were several questions within both of the sets of writing prompts associated with the Power of One Portrait project which invited participants to describe their identities. The questions specifically asked participants to describe what it was like to be them in any given
day, to tell their sacred story, and to describe what superpower they possessed. Almost half of the participants expressed a strong proclamation of self in responding to the “I am…” writing prompt by claiming individual identity by simply stating “I am me.” For some this assertion of self was mitigated by qualifiers, facets of identity traits such as fear, angst, and a sense of not belonging or feelings of helplessness. For others, this claimed identity held no apology or justification, just a request for respect and a freedom to live life according to their values and beliefs. Throughout, however, as participants wrote about themselves and their lives, it was very clear that a sense of mattering was a core desire amongst each of the participants. The five themes analyzed within the category of self are: (1) values and beliefs; (2) mattering and visibility; (3) resiliency; (4) authenticity; and (5) connection.

Themes from the “Self”

How individuals make meaning from their environment and social interactions comes in great part from each individual’s personal values and beliefs, or ideology. In this first theme, many of the participants shared a sense of value for justice, integrity, and hope, values linked by authenticity (Figure 8). Not surprisingly, since all of the participants are associated with the campus community in some way, a strong sense of value was placed on knowledge and learning. Although, several participants made reference to a belief in God, or some higher power, religion itself did not seem to be strongly valued by the participants of this study, or at least the prompts did not elicit material expressing that particular value.

In terms of authenticity, this second theme refers to how the participants described how they reveal their true selves as well as the process of self-discovery and various levels of self-acceptance. A description of the coming out process, or awareness of sexual orientation was a common revelation for those participants who identified as lesbian or gay. Non LGBTQ
What Lies Within

Figure 8: In this painting I have created a visual way to view individual identity as a collage of different experiences, social interactions, values, and beliefs to which an individual applies meaning based on personal interpretation of the events and objects with which they engage.
identified participants, however, also wrote of their own identity development processes in a way that described a life-long and often difficult struggle for self-acceptance. Authenticity in this study also refers to the extent to which the participants perceive acceptance from others in the context of their true or authentic selves. Individuals tend to act in ways which maximize personal reward and minimize costs by considering their alternative choices (Blau, 1964). For some participants, the perceived cost of being authentic outweighed the potential benefit of living as their authentic self. For these participants shame, aloneness and powerlessness often served as the barriers and inhibitions to their authenticity.

The sense of mattering as described by the participants in the third theme is a core construct in this study. Visibility and the sense of value to others is a crucial piece of my findings. The sense of an individual who feels as if they are somehow other is strongly associated with narratives that describe feelings of isolation, abandonment and low self-worth (Schlossberg, 1989). These feelings as described by the participants were not always externally expressed in their day-to-day lived experiences but, instead, sometimes held deep within and expressed only in their written narratives while tied to the construct of authenticity and the proclamation of self.

The fourth theme, resiliency, was evidenced through a strong recurrence of expressions of overcoming difficult life situations and perseverance. Many participants shared stories that described an internal decision to identify as a survivor and not a victim and to adapt to life’s circumstances and persist through it all while maintaining hope and visualizing the future with optimism (Erikson, 1968).

In the final theme, the ways in which the participants describe connection as experienced through their participation in community service, affinity groups, and social opportunities. With
this, there is a common theme of a sense of empowerment and inclusion (Hall, et al., 1982). The participants’ engagement in social relationships and the sense of encouragement they feel from these interactions all speak to their perceptions of connection.

**Values and Beliefs**

To start at the very beginning is to lay the building blocks of constructed knowledge, a sort of foundation upon which to build the lighthouse that illuminates an individual’s epistemological perspective, or way of knowing how an individual knows what he or she knows (Figure 9). This foundation of knowing establishes an individual’s system of beliefs and shapes how it is that the self is able to navigate the surrounding world. Knowledge is not a substance mined from the experiences of others but rather a co-constructed social text, the representation of which is “not just a matter of epistemology or method, but a matter of power” (Galman, 2009, p. 198). Part of this power is the matter of claimed choice, an individual’s ability to choose an outlook and to pursue a particular quality of life or system of beliefs. When reflecting on her perceived power to change the world, Jill, a university staff member, wrote that to her, this power is:

Choosing to desire a world where we can truly accept that we each have a story, we are each a whole person, not simply a homo-sapiens segmented into our different roles, but a whole person with roles, values, beliefs, discourses and frameworks from which we live out our everyday experience.

In many ways, the focus of this study is to address the invisibility and marginalization of LGBTQ individuals. Evans and Rankin (1998) assert that “LGBTQ students must be shown that the issues they face are taken seriously and that the institution cares about them as people” (p. 177). As Jill indicated in her narrative, however, this need to accept and value the individual
Figure 9

Epistemology of Self.

Figure 9: As a new researcher I am very conscious that when I examine the world around me and define truth that my interpretations are relative. How I make meaning and how I draw conclusions are based upon my own perspective and my own truth, this is my way of knowing. The observations I make, the words that I choose and the story I tell are all influenced by my own history, experiences, and identity.
stories of people applies to all people, not just those who are LGBTQ. I am intrigued by how Jill defines her power to change the world by how she is “choosing to desire.” Jill’s observation is insightful in many ways in that oftentimes those who advocate for social justice make broad sweeping statements about wanting world peace. But the issue is deeper than merely speaking the expected rhetoric of advocacy, there really is something to be said for choosing to desire the type of inclusion that recognizes and values the inherent worth of each individual. This value of respecting individual perspectives is shared by Susan, a community member and ally, who wrote she “would hope that we would all see the importance of “reverence of life” and realize how small and fragile life is. We all have a story and each one is worth listening to.”

It was important for me to learn to listen to the voices of each individual participant so as to truly hear how they expressed what it meant to them to be empowered in their particular context. This acknowledgement and valuing of different perspectives can also be extended to include a broader understanding of society as a whole. Jill wrote of this in her narrative:

Every person has the right to have a safe place to share their views, to be heard and to differ. We have the right to attach morality to behaviors, views and the life, it is the luxury we have been given with our ability to analyze different perspectives.

Sometimes, in working for inclusion, the viewpoints and interests of each individual are neither obvious nor easily expressed because there is no place for them to be voiced. The many different –isms used in society as a way to categorize individuals into a spectrum of arbitrary value can serve to disempower and silence the voices of some individuals. These –isms influence individual belief systems and impact interpersonal relations. Lori, a university administrator, wrote, “It is important for every single person to self-analyze, so they know exactly why they
hold the beliefs they do, in order to be confident in their self-expression.” Stereotypes and
generalizations exist as part of the socialization process, but circumstances that facilitate a sense
of commonality, equality, connectedness, and collaboration may reduce prejudice by changing
how individuals choose to act on the labels and categorizations they are taught (Simoni, 1996).

To counteract the –isms can require the adoption of a different system of value and belief
or perhaps just a change in behaviors. Participation in activities perceived as rewarding (e.g.,
participation in, or viewing of, the Power of One Portrait Project) has potential to shift the
perspectives of the viewers toward adopting behaviors that are more tolerant of differences.
There is no one single way to believe or exist. By inviting each participant of this project to look
back and reflect upon their individual life histories and use that information to relate to their
community and their past experiences, viewers of this exhibit can see the portraits and narratives
and then begin to acquire new perspectives and relational understandings which may then carry
over into general life situations (Berzonsky, 2000). As Matt, a graduate student and
administrative professional, stated, “It is my belief that everyone has an inherent right – god
given if you will – to be themselves and to express who they are. There is much wrong in the
current society but there are also positives that come from those with optimism and hope for a
better and more just world.” Matt also shared his unique outlook and *joie de vivre* in this
narrative:

I’m 24, gay, musical, a great kisser, humorous & a plethora of other things. Oh
yeah, and I’m changing the world. Maybe not on a monumental scale, but it is
changing all right. I stand up for what I believe, and I am not scared to do it. I am
a role model, a mentor, a brother & a friend. I am a change-agent & a personally
powerful man. I have the power to change the world around me because I believe,
I know, & I act. That's not to say I see myself in a cape & tights, spandex & I
don't mix, but I believe we have everyday heroes who advocate for a better life.

Though visions of everyday heroes in tights and spandex are humorous, I believe there is power
in visualizing the reality one wishes to achieve. Charles, a graduate student in economics, tried to
create a model to express his values and beliefs:

The principles of love, honesty, and joy may not be as clearcut as

\[
\begin{cases} 
\pi < h & \text{reject offer} \\
\pi > h & \text{accept offer}
\end{cases}
\]

But life is not an economic model and this will do for now.

Even as he wrote out the equation he acknowledged the challenges of such a formula for life. It
is not simple or easy, but I believe it is possible. Dan, an undergraduate, wrote:

Happiness is what we all seek in one way or another, but what truly defines us are
the things that make us happy. For me, it is simply being here and having the
drive to make the most of it while I can. Smile.

**Authenticity**

There is agency in the ability to live life with the freedom to fully express individual
identity. The need to be unique or special, a sense of feeling significant to oneself, the
construction of self within society, and mattering to others are all important themes in the
identity of self as a social function (Adams & Marshall, 1996). This is something that is often
taken for granted but for some, it is something that is never far from consciousness. When asked
what a typical day was like, Jon, a graduate student in Chemistry, wrote:

A day in my life starts at the closet. Will what I put on today reveal my
sexuality? Who do I intend on meeting today? Will they care? So much of my
day’s preparation begins with covering myself up to be what everyone expects me to be.

This fear of disapproval and resulting marginalization experienced by individuals based on real or perceived sexual orientation, or any other identity category for that matter, robs them of the opportunity to fully engage in the campus community and can even inhibit developmental growth into adults with positive self-identities (D’Augelli, 1994; Macgillivran, 2004). There is no one true way to be human, identity of self is the performance of the cumulative messages of what an individual learns about whom he or she thinks is expected but it is not concrete or finite.

In this search for self and social acceptance, the self can be overwhelmed and threatened to a point of potential extinction. Timbo, an undergraduate in the Greek system, wrote of the angst he experienced in trying to create a sense of self based on external pressures and expectations:

    In high school things got out of control. I was senior class president, working [two] jobs, [cross country]/swim captain, director of the drama department,. editor in chief of the yearbook, director of finance for FCCLA, and I became the WA State parliamentarian for [two] years in a row. The list went on and on, but at the same time I was losing myself and my personality just so I could “please” others.

Identity is established through beliefs and values, which can either be assigned by others or selected by self. Individuals tend to learn and repeat behaviors for which they are rewarded and accepted and will often attempt to change their behavior in order to receive those rewards and the sense of social acceptance (Blau, 1964). In his desire to gain external approval and acceptance, Timbo became cognizant that he was losing his sense of self. There is no such thing as a stable identity but creating spaces within the community that accepts individuals for who they are and
allows them to just be can serve to mediate the radical, complex destabilization of identity for those individuals who find themselves always having to restate, reclaim and reassert an identity that is not stable to begin with. Kim expressed this sentiment by stating “It is essential that people take the time to get to know me and not expect that I have all the answers about who I am or what my life is like—that keeps changing”.

Identity is constructed within the individual narratives of who an individual is, who that individual would like to be, who an individual has been. Individuals who are perceived as too different from their peers tend to be rejected by their peers (Adams & Marshall, 1996). Individuals who are afforded the opportunity to balance individual self-expression with a supportive, helpful, and responsive connection to society are likely to have a better sense of self and a stronger commitment to their goals. Diana, a university staff member, wrote of the importance of this kind of support in her narrative:

Anyone who is comfortable being exactly who they are and is out and not afraid to be out could be a role model for me – sometimes I am still in my learning phase, to have confidence and be out there takes some effort and courage for me. So I often look to these people, and how they handle situations, for answers.

In articulating vision about possible identities and ways of being, it makes it possible for individuals, like the participant above, to make sense of what it means to exist in a particular and authentic identity position.

**Mattering and Visibility**

“Mattering” has been defined by Schlossberg (1989) as the "beliefs people have, whether right or wrong, that they matter to someone else, that they are the object of someone else's attention, and that others care about them and appreciate them. " It is the feeling of being wanted,
needed, missed, depended upon, or attended to by others. There are many lines that serve to divide society into categories according to age, race, religion, sexual orientation, beliefs, and socioeconomic status. Despite all of the divisions that exist within society, there is still something that connects individuals and ties them together into a collective sense of existence. Schlossberg framed the constructs of marginality and mattering by raising questions about how it is that individuals feel a part of things; a sense of belonging; a feeling of connection or exclusion. As individuals seek to find a sense of shared humanity they might also wonder if they make a difference and if others care about them. As evidenced in Matt’s writings, the need to feel connected can be quite strong:

   Going through life alone, while needed sometimes, is not a very good feeling.
   That said, I need encouragement, a shoulder, a helping hand, someone who will listen. In essence I need affirmation of my humanity, and of my existence in more than my own mind. This is not to be confused with recognition however; I am just wanting a head nod, a conversation, something to signify that I am here and that I matter to you. I tend to be more of a loner, but I am terrified of being alone.

   The ability to integrate successfully into society involves the negotiation of social roles and functions, interrelational skills, as well as the ability to relate to social and cultural value systems and beliefs (Adamson & Lyxell, 1996). Group perspectives are acquired, understood, and defined by others as an important part of a process that transpires as a merging of different views and experiences of the members of the group begins to occur, allowing members to begin to reflect upon their own experiences, negotiate peer influences, form smaller groups, and acquire experiences and relational skills that can carry over into other life situations (Berzonsky, 2000; Wilson & White, 2001). Marginalization, a result of social exclusion, may lead to an
individual’s lessened sense of mattering to others thus weakening their ability to achieve identity commitment (Bartle-Haring, 1997). Kim is an administrator who was adopted into a White Jewish family during the era of Vietnam Baby Lifts, an experience that has left her feeling disconnected and tokenized. She wrote of her sense of being an outsider with no sense of connection:

I have no past I can relate to of my own & years later as I enter my 40’s with no ability to have my own children I am realizing how utterly alone I am - just me. No beginning to relate to and no future to carry bits of me forward. I’m driven to accomplish all I can now. Before I disappear for good. My greatest fear is that there will be no memories of me left when I am gone. Once again I will just disappear.

Kim’s writings suggest a sense of alienation and disillusion. This emotional state, which may also be compounded by experienced by feelings of self-doubt and feelings of uneasiness, is one which is frequently faced by individuals who struggle to fit in and find a sense of belonging.

Individual success is largely dependent upon the degree to which individuals feel they "matter," when they don't feel like they matter, they will tend to feel marginal and unaccepted and much are much less likely to succeed (e.g. students of color in predominantly white institutions are often most susceptible to these feelings of marginality). That success depends also upon the context of and attitude toward their environment, including their sense of social inclusion and exclusion (Silverschanz, Cortina, Lim, Konik, & Magley, p. 181). Schlossberg has suggested that mattering occurs at multiple levels. At its most basic level, people need to be visible—to feel that their presence is recognized and that they are welcome. Andy, a university
staff member, articulated this in stating “Every person in this world contributes in a meaningful way. Whether we think it is good or bad, we still contribute to this life experience.”

While it may seem rather basic, research indicates that mattering makes a significant difference in individual engagement and action within the community (Schlossberg, 1989). When individuals do not feel as if they matter as a member of the community, they generally withdraw and relationships break down. As a participant I wrote, “There was a storm inside of me. Swallowing me from the inside out.” Conversely, if individuals believe that they do matter, they tend to be motivated to work collaboratively and achieve positive outcomes. This leads me to consider how might individuals find meaningful experiences of mattering in a world where they might not actually matter in important ways. Perhaps it is that each individual selects or embraces his or her own sense of what mattering is. In the context of the “aggressively recommended action items,” no amount of action from the university administration could have created satisfactory mattering in that situation because the issue was greater than addressing items listed in a document, the issue was that the members of the Coalition Against Hate and many LGBTQ individuals did not feel that they mattered as part of the university community.

**Resiliency**

The ability to persevere and continue toward a goal or life pursuit is the essence of resiliency. Many of the participants in this study shared very personal pieces of their lives and their honesty and openness led me to want to honor their stories by acknowledging the resiliency it took for many of them to just survive, let alone pursue academic and personal success in higher education. In my narrative as a participant I wrote:

My wrists are covered with scars from all of the times I took a razor blade to try to cut out the pain. I thought that I wanted to die but I realized that I just didn’t
know how I could survive living anymore. So for me, school was everything. It
was my refuge and my saving grace and I clung to learning as my escape from a
life where I knew I did not belong. I chose to live. I chose to find strength and
hope where I thought none existed.
Connections, being seen, mattering, and personal beliefs all tie together to form an individual’s
sense of resiliency. Certainly, a great deal of that strength comes from a core sense of self but the
social context cannot be ignored. “I have a superpower,” shared Nico, “its invisibility. Every day
I hide who I am. I do it to avoid pain and ridicule. I do it because I’m scared.” For Nico,
visibility is both where he draws his strength and also that which serves as a marginalizing
factor. To avoid his fears of being rejected for who he is he has chosen not to reveal that part of
his identity to general society. Charles addresses the potential costs of not being able to be true to
oneself in his narrative:

    The metaphor of being in a closet is very apt on a great many levels, for although
    it may feel safe and secure, living there constrains growth and leads to soul-
    crushing isolation.

    Resiliency, however, is the part of one’s character that can work through the difficulties
and disappointments and find hope that there may be something better up ahead. Stephanie, an
undergraduate, was in a car crash a few years ago driving in difficult weather with her family for
the holidays, unfortunately Stephanie’s younger sister did not survive and this has greatly
impacted Stephanie’s outlook on life:

    It is not easy to go on with my life, but I like to believe that things happen for a
reason and that I need to take this, learn from it, and keep living. Life can be
tough sometimes, but no one is going to live our lives for us. I am going to make the best of the rest of my life.

Kim offered an interesting perspective, “I am rooted in my strengths and fortified with my weaknesses.” Perhaps this is what is at the core of resiliency, an acknowledgment and acceptance of all of the parts of oneself, the positives and the negatives. This statement certainly supports Erikson’s (1968) theory of identity development. Resiliency is adapting to life’s crises in a way that fosters individuality, personal character, and sense of belonging and acceptance in society. As Jill states, resiliency is working through the fears and anxieties that can otherwise hold a person back.

Every day is a blessing to wake up to, living in the present and looking forward to the future. Being creative and being myself. But even for me, times get desperate and I’m pulling at my hair in anxiety – afraid that because I made a mistake, because I didn’t do what everyone else did, or because I was different I will be punished. But if you’re in that state of fear and anxiety long enough you figure out how to get past it.

Connection

As human beings we are part of the society in which we live, independently we each have a separate value that reflects and expresses the society as a whole. We develop our identity independently but also through our relations to others and to the society as a whole. Social connectedness also induces a sense of “belongingness, independence and equality, responsibility and participation, and shared existence and identity” (Hall et al., 1999, p. 440). This concept was very clearly evident in Nico’s writings, “I am me. I am you. I am everyone. And everyone is me. Society shapes the individual, and individuals shape society.” It is through
these human connections and face-to-face interactions that existing world views can be challenged and reshaped (Bakhtin, 1981; Erickson, 1968). When interactions or experiences do not fit within a person’s present world view it forces the individual to either reconcile the new interaction with existing ideas and beliefs or change that world view in order to accommodate the new information (Bowman, 2010). “I am not special, I am not unique. It just dawned on me one day that enough was enough,” wrote Dan as he shared how his experiences changed his values and outlook on life, “My life is not defined through having the newest cell phone, or $6.00 coffees, or buying names on clothes. My life is defined by those I help and the lives I change.”

Part of Schlossberg’s (1989) theory of mattering includes the individual’s sense of contribution. The ability to contribute socially in a way that matters and adds something of value to the social interaction instills a sense of pride and can profoundly enhance self-confidence. Yuliana, an undergraduate and new mother, wrote:

I may only be one person but my experiences and my knowledge will help me go out into my community and help others, it may be small changes but those small changes will eventually have the domino effect and lead to one big change in the end.

In this study a broad range of individuals reflected on their experiences of the campus climate as members of this community. There was no uniform perception of the climate but each individual’s perceptions were moderated by how they connected to the campus and to the community as well as the social interactions that resulted from these connections. Jill answered the prompt about an individual’s power to change the world by writing “as a community citizen I feel that if I want to create change, I have to get involved.” For many, the way to connect and
contribute in meaningful ways was through service work. “Service Work makes me feel connected. Working towards a more positive environment and having a place to make a positive contribution is the only thing that makes me feel connected.” Jill’s sentiment was a common theme throughout the narratives and I think, in part, that was due to the nature of the project. As a community based project, the individuals who chose to participate would be more likely to be individuals who valued community and ways in which to contribute to, or be engaged with, that community. The Power of One Portrait Project very clearly focused on individual roles and perceptions in creating campus climate change which may have impacted the results in that those who chose to participate were probably more likely to be interested in creating change and, also, the questions in the writing prompts encouraged the participants to think about their part in creating change. Since the project was sponsored in large part by GIESORC and all of the information seeking participants was distributed through GIESORC it would also stand to reason that many individuals would assume that the project had something to do with the LGBTQ community and/or social justice.

Another aspect of connectivity that was prominent throughout the participants’ narratives was that of the importance of relationships and social interactions. Attending speakers and programs, participating in student organizations, connecting with colleagues and even just attending classes were some of the many ways that participants explained the things that helped them feel connected on campus. Aaron, a graduate student, shared this example in his writings:

> Being able to meet in the CUB and be social over a Starbucks, grabbing a quick bite to eat, or even just going to class really draws me in and [makes me] want to be a part of the various activities happening around campus. By participating in
these activities, volunteering, and being active in other organizations on campus, it creates a strong sense of connectivity.

Others shared even more personal examples of the types of relationships that helped them feel connected. Frequently participants listed out many specific relationships and roles they held. Melanie, a graduate student in counseling psychology, is one example of this:

I am a mother, a student, a wife, a daughter, a granddaughter, an aunt, a niece, an advisor, a therapist, a writer, a reader, a listener, a friend, a cousin, a sister, an ally, a teacher, a dreamer.

As a research study that is based on an arts-based community project, the Power of One Portrait Project records and reflects the campus climate and offers an alternative to positivist ways of knowing by listening to and learning from the participants’ own portrayal of their experiences and perceptions. I think this construct is represented well in Stephanie’s reflection:

Listening has the power to do a lot for someone. As they carry on the conversation and state any opinions they may have, I listen patiently. By doing this, the other person gets to think about what they have just said and come up with their own solution to an issue they may have had. I love listening.

Wang (2000) discusses how utilizing arts-based research methods promote personal and community action by drawing upon Freire's principals of collective consciousness. She suggests that “Freire’s educational praxis stresses the importance of people’s sharing and speaking from their own experience, seeing connections among their individual situations, creating an analytical perspective from which to relate their situations to root causes, and developing solutions and strategies for change” (p. 82). The Power of One Portrait Project was implemented as a response to a campus climate issue and makes explicit the facilitator’s and participants’ focus on
improving the wellbeing and safety of the campus community by offering a different way to be
seen and heard. As Eleanor so simply asks:

Talk with me, listen to me, and seek to understand so that we can celebrate our
commonalities and respectfully learn from each other’s differences. Don’t judge
who or how I love. I will welcome the gift of your friendship and do my best to
give my best in return.

**Summary**

When considering the themes of self, it is important to recognize how each and every
individual has an inherent value and something to contribute to society. The Power of One
Portrait Project was about creating change, or providing an opportunity to change, through the
sharing of narratives and portraits of individuals from the campus community. Rappaport (1995)
suggested that “people who seek either personal or community changes often find that it is very
difficult to sustain change without support of a collectivity that provides a new communal
narrative around which they can sustain changes in their own personal story” (p. 796).

The excerpts from each participant’s narrative handwritten in the white space of his or
her individual portrait is a striking image that invites the viewer to come closer and learn more
about the people represented in this project. Each participant shared a piece of themselves in the
sharing of their stories and provided insight into the understanding of self in the context of
values/beliefs, mattering/visibility, resiliency, authenticity, and connectivity. Sociocultural
propriocception helped to provide context for these stories and the complex issues and ideas
expressed within the narratives. This contextualization provided a macroperspective that enabled
me to make sense of the data and find the interwoven themes for analysis. Critical discourse
analysis offered a way to get closer to the nuances of the words used to tell the stories and to
discover how voice, presence and agency were expressed or eluded to by the participants. In the following chapter of this dissertation I discuss the insight I gained in my examination of voice, presence, and agency. I also discuss how sociocultural proprioception, critical discourse analysis, and arts-based research influenced my own process of inquiry. Additionally, I describe my role as an administrator, community member, participant, and researcher and discuss how my involvement impacted the direction of this project and this study.
I cannot see without understanding
that my privilege, my White privilege
sets me apart without my permission
without my consideration
I cannot walk without acknowledging
that I am free to move unquestioned
through spaces and places unhindered
though I sometimes fear the world
because of those who would hurt me for who I am
I cannot walk without recognizing
that my ability may be temporary
but I am abled while some are not
I cannot speak without hearing
the sound of culture in my voice
the breadth and depth of the words I know
or even the silence
of those who have been silenced
I cannot know without appreciating
that what I know is mine alone
seen through my eyes
experienced through my position
singularly through my own biases and perceptions
where all the world is “Other”
and where I am also “Othered.”

Chapter Six
Our Story Now Told: Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction
Throughout this dissertation, the three main drivers of my study have been voice, presence, and agency; I have learned a great deal about each of them. In this chapter I reflect on how this study and the analysis of the narratives collected from the Power of One Portrait Project participants offer insight into these three areas of interest. I facilitate this through a shared understanding of the participants’ written perceptions of their experiences and how the words they used also reflect how our campus climate influences and shapes the voices that get heard,
the presences that are seen, and how agency is assigned or accepted. I describe my use of sociocultural proprioception as a way to organize and make sense of my literature and data, thereby driving the selection of themes used for my analysis. I also offer my thoughts on how the use of Critical Discourse Analysis assisted in providing a framework for the deeper understanding of voice, presence and agency. Additionally, I discuss how arts-based research influenced and added to the depth and breadth of this study even though this study was not analyzed using an arts-based research methodology. Finally, as the researcher, a participant in the project, and as a university administrator who worked closely with the reported assaults that served as the initial impetus for my particular study I also discuss how my different roles impacted the study.

The Driving Forces of this Study

Overview

There are twenty-eight participants in this study, including myself. Each individual participants shares his, or her, own story about what it is like to be them and to exist within this particular campus or community climate at this point in time. Our participation in this project was a venue for self-expression and a way of making our stories known. “Stories are not a scarce resource, but often the stories of people who are outsiders are an ignored or devalued resource. Much of the work of social change, organizational and community development in the direction of greater personal and collective empowerment, may be about understanding and creating settings where people participate in the discovery, creation, and enhancement of their own community narratives and personal stories” (Rappaport, 1995, p. 805). The Power of One Portrait Project uses the portraits of the participants as a way to invite the community to shape and reshape how the viewers see themselves, define and relate to the world, and consider what
they perceive as significant or different (Wang, 1999). But just creating and exhibiting these images is not enough to create change, the change requires discourse and the ability to give meaning to, or interpret, the images. The photographic imagery of this portrait project provides the landscape for the texts of the participants’ narratives in a way that makes them visible and real (Vygotsky, 1962).

**Voice**

The added narrative element of the Power of One Portrait Project recognizes that this community, this campus, and the individual participants each have a story and that there is a process of shared influence between these community, campus, and individual stories. A sense of empowerment is gained when individuals discover, or create and give voice to, a collective narrative that sustains their own personal life story in positive ways. This process is reciprocal, such that many individuals in turn create, change, and sustain the group narrative (Rappaport, 1995). Through their narratives, the participants spoke of the importance of self-expression. Matt stated, “It is my belief that everyone has an inherent right – God given if you will – to be themselves and to express who they are.” Additionally, voice for many of the participants also included a desire and commitment to educating others about acceptance. For many of the participants it was also important to claim their identities and to describe how intolerance, loss, and hatred have impacted their lives.

The voices reflected in this study were those of undergraduates, administrators, graduate students, staff, and community members who were each in some way connected to the campus community of Washington State University. What each individual said, the words each used to tell that particular story and how those words were interpreted are all reflections of the particular campus climate in which they occurred and shape the “knowing” of this social institution.
“Knowledge is not a substance mined from the experiences of others but rather a co-constructed text, the representation of which is not just a matter of epistemology or method, but a matter of power” (Galman, 2009, p. 198). In the knowing of these stories and these experiences comes the power of hearing the voices of some individuals who may have previously been silenced or unheard and it can open opportunities for other voices and the telling of other stories. Tierney’s (1995) hope was to change ineffective academic structures to help the development of voices of resistance in LGBT individuals so as to shed the cloak of invisibility and let people see them as they saw themselves.

**Presence**

The essence of Rankin’s (1998) campus climate work is to challenge the social climate that maintains and privileges the dominant culture by rendering the marginalized populations as invisible. “The unique cultural identities and traditions through which academic institutions maintain these paradigms must be challenged, uprooted, and transformed to build and sustain communities of difference” (Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 8). hooks (1989) described a view from below that can be offered by marginalized groups when they share stories of exclusion. Diversity should not be touted as a way to exclusively categorize different cultures but as a way to create a culture of acceptance that fosters a sense of belonging among all persons for recognizing and respecting difference, and in so doing, promoting a sense of loyalty to the organization (Brown, 2004).

The Power of One Portrait Project was a community based art project intended to offer an opportunity for visibility after the unintended erasure highlighted by the university President’s statement following the reported assaults against the LGBTQ community. Presence, in terms of the Power of One Portrait Project, refers to the visibility and a sense of mattering as expressed in
the participants’ narratives. According to Schlossberg (1989), mattering refers to an individual’s belief, right or wrong, that they matter to someone else. The consequence of erasure, or not feeling as if one matters, can detrimentally impact self-esteem and potential for growth. As a participant, I described my own sense of invisibility by writing, “There was a storm inside of me. Swallowing me from the inside out.”

A sense of mattering keeps individuals connected and engaged in the community. Participants frequently expressed this in their narratives by writing about how their commitment to the community through service and involvement helped them to feel connected and include others in being a part of the community as well. For some, participating in this project and writing part of their story on their portraits, was a way of making visible a part of their identity that did not otherwise show. Individuals often feel powerless to access or influence those who make decisions affecting their lives (Goodhart et al., 2006). This project was a way of giving to the community and taking action to make a difference all while finding a way to show society who they really are, making themselves visible in the process.

Agency

The ability to tell one’s story, and to have access to and influence over collective stories, is a powerful resource (Rappaport, 1995, p. 802). Agency in learning is the idea that an individual does not just passively absorb knowledge but takes responsibility for that knowledge by self-directing and self-assessing their individual learning process. This sense of agency also instills the ability within that individual to institute change within society (Ligorio, 2010). The very title of The Power of One Portrait Project centers on the construct of individual empowerment. The participants were asked to reflect on how they perceived their power in terms
of changing the world. In her narrative, Jill asked herself,

How do we consistently and solidly change the structure? How to change the world myself in ways that have lasting and meaningful positive consequences for all people. Can I do this from my little corner of the world on the Palouse? Can my desire to alter the perception of ‘difference’ to recognition of our sameness really come to fruition?

The Power of One Portrait Project offered a different opportunity for agency in the way in which it invites the participants to have voice and to establish presence. The project did not bind people into one particular identity but serves as a space for all different kinds of people and all different voices and ways of being present. When different identity positions are possible then understanding of those identities becomes possible and something that can be considered even from outside those identities.

In viewing the exhibit, the audience could engage in dialogue and compared the personal perceptions of the participants and their portraits to how that participant expresses their identity in the shared narratives. In articulating vision about others, individuals began to make sense of what it means to exist in a particular identity position. The exhibit itself then became an environment for mediating the role discourse and dialogue are able to play in supporting the relationship between voice, presence and agency.

Sociocultural Proprioception as a Valuable Tool in this Study

The field of sociocultural proprioception is a body of knowledge examining how individuals make sense of sensorimotor processes and higher-level cognitive processes in order to signal to the brain where the physical body is located in space and time (Frank, 2007). For the purposes of this study, sociocultural proprioception specifically refers to the ways in which
individual minds and cognitive processes are shaped by the interaction with sociocultural structures and practices and, most important for the purposes of this project, with language itself (Goldhaber, 2000). Drawing on contextual cues from personal and social history, the rules and laws of social order, social climate, and individual identity processes a person utilizes this information to make sense of how they fit into society and the world. For the Power of One Project, participants were given several writing prompts in two different workshops. These prompts served to establish the sociocultural proprioception of each individual by grounding their narratives within the contexts of their personal histories, their perceptions of campus climate, their understandings of laws and policies, social responsibility, and sense of self.

This theoretical framework provided the general organizing structure for my study. In reading through the collected narratives, I utilized my understanding of sociocultural proprioception as a way to connect the data to the literature and to draw out two overarching categories of environment and self. These two constructs and their underlying themes were then analyzed through use of CDA to examine the ways in which language was used to express voice, presence, and agency.

What is Added by Using Critical Discourse Analysis?

St. Pierre (2006) voices concern the perceived value of educational research, “Scientific based research has become ‘truth’ in education, and that truth is being maintained and perpetuated by a whole network of discursive formations and materials practices that are increasingly elaborated by a knowledge/power system that may not be in the best interests of education” (p. 243). Looking at methodology without accounting for the human variable and the social context does not provide a complete or accurate picture of what really happened between point A and point B. One size does not fit all. A simple content analysis of the texts of the
narratives would only serve to give a picture of the frequency of different words or concepts without really putting them into context which would limit the depth of understanding.

Using Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the narratives for what the participants said and how they experienced being present in this community offers the reader the opportunity to see the participants as agents in their own presence in ways that might not otherwise be available. In a basic sense, language consists of the words used to communicate between one or more individuals. Language, however, is an abstract system in which words only have meaning if they are shared and mutually understood by another. Language sets up subjective boundaries and forms the rules that govern society. In the Aggressively Recommended Action Items the Coalition Against Hate attempted to borrow legalese words in order to make their demands sound more credible and legitimate. But because their attempts to replicate the tone of the words used in policies did not have the soundness of authentic legalese, their demands were instead easier to dismiss or give less credence to because they missed their mark. So it is very interesting to me that language is such a valuable tool for the oppressor. In a language system of abstract and specialized meanings, words can be used to differentiate those who have power and pit them against those who do not and those words and the associated meanings behind those words set up invisible dividers and chains that are more binding than any physical restraints.

When dominant culture creates a way of looking at the world and understanding that world according to the values and experiences of that dominant culture, any other interpretation or understanding is held in comparison and can be found lacking. By the standards of dominant culture, society establishes a set of criteria by which to determine which individuals are more worthy of having voice, being present, and having agency in the educational system and the community culture of society (Britzman, 1995). These standards are used to determine what
information is considered valuable and worth knowing and also serves to discount alternative knowledge.

**Arts-based Perspective as Value Added to this Study**

My research stands at the intersection of several different crossroads, it is a qualitative study of an arts-based community project analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis. This research project is not a traditional study with static data; it is drawn from a community generated art installation with a compilation of narratives describing the campus climate and lived experiences of the participants. This project began within a particular context and culture that was shaped by the history of the institution, the socially sanctioned erasure of LGBTQ individuals, and the identities of the participants who are themselves also part of the context and culture. The portraits of the participants were used to reflect the faces of the community and also used as a medium upon which the participants could share part of their stories. Community art projects such as The Power of One Portrait Project engage individuals in representing their collective identities, histories, and aspirations in a visual form of expression.

The concept of the Power of One Portrait Project photo exhibit shares many similarities with Wang’s (2000) Photovoice method of promoting personal and community action through a arts-based community project. According to Wang, (1999), images can influence how social and cultural conditions define and affect community situations. The images from the Power of One Portrait Project contributed to how the WSU campus was viewed and how the community members viewed themselves. “The image can take on a life of its own, reflecting the relationship of the image to the dialectics of human perception and sense-making, helping to frame the concept more as a dynamic product of our interaction with the world than as an immutable and independent object in the world,” (Weber, 2008, p. 43). This contribution can influence campus
policy as well as the broader campus climate of which they are a part. A community arts-based research process is built on a way of knowing that challenges the relationship between knowledge and power. The portraits educate and inform us about ourselves and our community by drawing out the stories and faces of individuals who are a part of our day-to-day campus. The visual nature of this project offered a way for the participants to tell their stories and to present their identities and their experiences in a way that might differ from how they are seen every day, it invites viewers to see the participants as the participants view themselves and in the ways in which they wish to be seen in this world. These stories can inspire and mobilize as well as nurture and heal by making social issues and contradictions more visible and visceral. Using these images as the basis of this study I am hoping to foster a better understanding of the experiences of those individuals within the margins of the campus community.

The Impact of my Dual Role as Participant and Researcher

I am an artist and a student affairs practitioner not solely a theoretical scholar or a scientist. I undertook this project because I am passionate about the LGBTQ students I serve and when I first learned of those assaults against transgender students it struck me to my core. I am an out lesbian and the Director of GIESORC and the students who reported the assaults were not just any students, they were my students and I felt responsible for doing something to make the situation better. As the Director of GIESORC and then Interim Assistant Dean of Students, I served on the Campus Climate Response teams and was part of the group of administrators who met in order to discuss how to address the “Aggressively Recommended Action Items” presented by the Coalition Against Hate. I also became the liaison between the administration and the coalition. The way to address a situation that works best for me is to do something, and as an artist that act of doing something usually involves creativity and the Power of One Portrait
Project became part of my way of seeking out a solution to the issue at hand. I am an artist and the paintings I create come from the deepest part of my soul. Nothing calls to me like a blank canvas with its promise of discovery, challenge, and a story to tell. I used to paint very meticulous paintings with carefully defined edges and traditional color schemes but now I just paint to express myself in ways that words fall short. Not unlike all of the participants in this study, I want to be heard and to be seen. I need time to articulate each thought and place every word. It is for this reason that my artwork became so enmeshed with the writing of this dissertation. Throughout this process there were many times I felt that my words were not able to adequately convey the ideas and concepts I wanted to express. It was the use of my art that allowed me to find the words to explain the stories of the participants. My painting, entitled Kyrridwyn, depicts my interpretation of the Celtic goddess of rebirth, transformation, and inspiration (Figure 10).

As those events of October 2008 played out there seemed to remain a clear division between “Them” and “Us.” According to the students, “Us” included students, Women’s Studies/CES faculty and staff, and the LGBTQ community. Also according to the students, “They” referred to Administration or The University. In this structure, there was a disempowerment of anyone who was not administration. But, where did I fit in as an out lesbian who is the Director for the Gender Identity/Expression and Sexual Orientation Resource Center and who, at that time, also served as the Assistant Dean of Students? I was somehow not in the “them” category but neither was I part of the “us.” Consequently, this structure also disempowered me. As the researcher it was important for me to navigate my own otherness as well as my identity within the LGBTQ community as a university administrator. So, although the original impetus for this project was from campus climate concerns that were specific to
Figure 10

*Kyrridwyn.*

Figure 10: My soul has things to say but sometimes cannot find the words to say them. It whispers like the softest breeze or gurgles deep and swift like a river. Sometimes it paints in the brightest and most vibrant colors just to say “I am here.” Sometimes it is filled with the magic of simply being alive, the wonderment and sheer beauty and amazement of it all. Sometimes it is shy and hesitant, afraid of not being understood.
LGBTQ students the ultimate goal is to try to shape campus climate for all. Working through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis meant placing myself in my research, all of my writing and analysis stemming from who I am as the author, the researcher and participant in this project. This consciousness resisted the passive, disinterested voice of the researcher who Others his or her subject in the name of science. But there was also another layer of depth to my role as researcher because I was also a participant in the Power of One Portrait Project. I took part in the writing exercises and posed for my portrait along with the other participants. As I wrote my story I reflected on what it meant to participate in this study as opposed to acting only as the researcher. Recognizing how individual experiences, perceptions and biases shape and influence observations is an essential component to creating change for a more socially just world (Fine, 1994; Giroux, 2004). As a participant I wrote freely about my experiences and my perceptions but as I stepped into my role as researcher and began to critically look at my words and analyze my thoughts I recognized that only through self-knowledge can there be a true understanding of how personal biases, experiences, values, and education provide the lens through which we see Others and the world around us.

It is important to remember that all social science, including life stories, consists of only partial selections of realities. McLaren (1991) wrote that “It is important that field researchers act with the oppressed, not over them or on behalf of them” (p. 162). He did not want to give a voice to her subjects; he wanted to allow for the voices to be heard without influence from him as the researcher. It is my responsibility as the researcher to allow for the power of the research to come from the power of the participants’ stories and to not draw too many conclusions but instead, to offer observations along the way.
Call to Attention

The central component of this study, the Power of One Portrait Project, was commissioned for this campus in response to the reported assaults directed toward members of the LGBTQ community in October 2008. This project took place on the Washington State University campus just a few short months before the 2010 Power of One conference was hosted on our campus in conjunction with the University of Idaho, bringing almost 300 visiting LGBTQ individuals to our community. The photo exhibit was displayed in a prominent location throughout the duration of the conference and in the unabashed honesty of the participants’ narratives and visages came a message of hope and inspiration. Though the visitors may not have known anything about the assaults that been reported within our community seeing a highly visible art exhibit that embraced all identities offered a message of acceptance, inclusion, and mattering. Seeing an exhibit such as this conveys a strong message about our campus climate by demonstrating that there is space for all different kinds of identities and that those identities are celebrated. The Power of One Portrait Project was a community arts-based project that engaged the participants as a way to express their identity, reclaim their history, and articulate their vision for this campus. This project was more than just a photo exhibit; it was about standing up in the face of adversity and perceived oppression and reclaiming voice, presence, and agency. This project helped to bring together a community in a time when many were unsure if their voices mattered, their presence counted or if they had any power to make a difference.

This project also served as an exploration, or discovery, of the challenges that remain. There is still more work to be done to understand and conceptualize the problems identified in the findings of this study. The climate in the classrooms on campus, the obstacles preventing true dialogue between university administrators and the students, and the inaccessibility of campus
policy and law are all embedded in an interlocking framework complicated by financial resources, institutional practice, and competency with dialogue and conflict resolution. The employment of this project helped to create a critical awareness of the value of inviting the campus community members to have voice, presence and agency by communicating their experiences associated with differences, diversity, community, and accountability. To further advance this awareness and understanding, I recommend campus dialogue initiatives that engage the administration in conversation with the campus community. Continued opportunities for collaborative, community based projects can invite ongoing dialogue and coalition building that would afford the possibilities for shifting the campus climate from one that can be perceived as marginalizing to one that is experienced as inclusive and respectful.

I believe that this institution is committed to transformation but such change does not happen overnight because even understanding the complexities of the issues at hand are mitigated by the cognitive and social development processes of the students who seek change from the administration. A true culture of dialogue would be a dramatic shift from the current practice of the structure of the existing forums conducted by the university president and other senior level administrators. Currently, administrators present a status report of a particular issue and the audience responds with questions, or with challenges and demands for immediate changes. To cultivate a culture of dialogue means listening and communicating to work together to find solutions or foster ideas for change. Dialogue requires a certain tolerance for ambiguity in that there are often no concrete solutions at the end of a discussion, but there is the hope that both sides leave the exchange feeling heard, valued, and invested.
Future Research

Throughout this dissertation I have reiterated that this study was not an arts-based research project although it was based upon an arts-based community project which greatly influenced my research process and presentation. In this study I use art to represent and communicate how I make sense of the data but in a true arts-based research project, art would not just represent the data but transform it into something completely different. A next step for looking at the data collected from this project would be to initiate a true arts-based examination of the data. Arts informed research is unlike quantitative research or even qualitative research in that the study does not start with narrow questions and arrive at an even narrower answer (P. Sameshima, personal communication, April 18, 2011). With arts informed research, the study begins with a broad sense of what it is that the researcher wants to know and as the study progresses it generates even more questions than were present in the beginning.

This arts-based research would be a form of parallactic praxis, a way of making knowledge through personal meanings. A future research project of this nature could take all of the data of all of the narratives from the Power of One Portrait Project participants and make it into something else entirely. The data could be exploded in such a way to generate more questions and transformed into an installation art piece that could be exhibited so that the research has a different depth of meaning and is accessible to more people. This art piece could be something that many more people might be able to appreciate and offers a way to understand the research done for this project in a way that this written dissertation cannot.

Conclusion

“Inevitably, education has moral implications. The choice for researchers is whether they will give voice to those implications or remain silent about them” (Hostetler, 2005, p. 18). If bias
and erasures are inevitable, how can we as researchers ever grasp the truth of what we want to learn from our subjects? My thought on this would be to never accept things at face value, never back away from questioning the bigger picture. Even though the social science may only ever give us partial truths, those partial truths are still valid and it is up to us to allow the context in which these truths exist to be provided. Arts-based projects like the Power of One Portrait Project allow for the continual construction and interpretations of truth in a way that can empower individuals to tell their stories and to use those stories as a way of engaging the community in creating change.

Sociocultural proprioception framed the concepts of this study from the topics researched in the literature review to the themes that emerged from the data. This theoretical framework served as the anchor to my study and facilitated the implementation of the methodological use of critical discourse analysis. Sociocultural proprioception broadened views of history, climate, laws and policy, and identity. This framework also served to disrupt the linear models for looking at identity through developmental stages in that the Power of One Portrait Project provided a visible and tangible landscape that instead served to contextualize the fluidity of the identities and truths of the participants as they shared their perceptions based on their experiences and understandings at a particular point in time. Just like the poems that open each chapter and the figures illustrating my art contributed to the way in which I make sense of the meanings of the existing body of literature and the data of this project, the portraits themselves contribute to the way in which the participants give meaning to their stories. The integrated theories of sociocultural proprioception, critical discourse analysis and arts-based research in my study offer a way for individual expressions of voice, presence, and agency to be articulated in a manner that is accessible to both the participant and the viewer (Figure 11).
Figure 11

Arts-Based Examination of Sociocultural Proprioception and Critical Discourse Analysis.

Figure 11. Voice, presence, and agency are the driving forces of this study. As a researcher and as an individual I use art to enhance my understandings and interpretations creatively. This figure, based on a phrenology model, illustrates an arts-based look at how I have conceptualized the organizational framework of sociocultural proprioception and how that framework connects the literature to the themes of analysis. The critical discourse analysis is depicted in the tag cloud that was generated from my analysis of my data.
It can be easy to get caught up in the romanticism of the words of the participants’ narratives while reading their stories and hearing the depth of their experiences. It can also be tempting to read the narratives through a veil of idealism or attribute notions of bravery to the writers. It is important, however, not to get caught up in each of the individual stories but, rather, to consider the stories as a collective whole. These individuals who participated in this project were no more remarkable than any other individual who might have participated. The salient point of this study is not about the singular story of one individual or another, the point of this project is that it invites people to consider the possibilities.
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Good Morning everyone,

Thank you for your interest in participating in this project. I think it will be a rewarding project for all and I am very excited to get started. I am still looking for a few more participants so please encourage a friend or colleague to contact me if they are interested in participating.

I am attaching the list of questions to this email and I am also pasting them into the body of this email. Please let me know if you have any trouble accessing them or are unclear as to what to do.

If you could get back to me with your answers by Monday that would be most appreciated.

Thank you,

Heidi Adielia Stanton, Director

Gender Identity/Expression and Sexual Orientation Resource Center
APPENDIX B
MEMORANDUM
TO: Kelly Ward and Heidi Stanton,
FROM: Patrick Conner, Office of Research Assurances (3005)
DATE: 6/10/2010
SUBJECT: Certification of Exemption, IRB Number 11441

Based on the Exemption Determination Application submitted for the study titled "Writing in the Margins: How Life Experiences Influence Individual Differences in Perceptions of Responsibility Toward Changing Campus Climate," and assigned IRB # 11441, the WSU Office of Research Assurances has determined that the study satisfies the criteria for Exempt Research at 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4).

This study may be conducted according to the protocol described in the Application without further review by the IRB.

It is important to note that certification of exemption is NOT approval by the IRB. You may not include the statement that the WSU IRB has reviewed and approved the study for human subject participation. Remove all statements of IRB Approval and IRB contact information from study materials that will be disseminated to participants.

This certification is valid only for the study protocol as it was submitted to the ORA. Studies certified as Exempt are not subject to continuing review (this Certification does not expire). If any changes are made to the study protocol, you must submit the changes to the ORA for determination that the study remains Exempt before implementing the changes (The Request for Amendment form is available online at http://www.irb.wsu.edu/documents/forms/rtf/Amendment_Request.rtf).

Exempt certification does NOT relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to protection of human subjects participating in the study and adherence to ethical standards for research involving human participants.

In accordance with WSU Business Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM), this Certification of Exemption, a copy of the Exemption Determination Application identified by this certification and all materials related to data collection, analysis or reporting must be retained by the Principal Investigator for THREE (3) years following completion of the project (BPPM 90.01).

Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP).

Review Type: New
Review Category: Exempt
Date Received: 6/7/2010
Exemption Category: 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(4)
OGRD No.: N/A
Funding Agency: N/A

You have received this notification as you are referenced on a document within the MyResearch.wsu.edu system. You can change how you receive notifications by visiting https://MyResearch.wsu.edu/MyPreferences.aspx

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APPENDIX C
The Power of One Questions:

Directions:

Please take your time and read the following directions carefully. Answer honestly, in your own words. Use 150 words or less for each question. Please include the question in your answer.

1. What kind of help and support do you need at school from your teachers, peers or friends?
2. Do you feel safe to be yourself? (at school, at home, or in your community?)
3. Please express your views about your right (and or everyone’s right) to be and express who they are.
   a. What responsibilities do you have to make the campus safe and inclusive?
   b. In what ways do you think the administrators, faculty and staff are responsible for making the campus safe and inclusive?
4. What responsibilities do you have to make your community safe and inclusive?
5. How well do you feel that federal and state laws regarding hate crimes and bias acts protect you? How do you feel that campus policies and reporting procedures regarding hate crimes and bias acts protect you?
6. How does it feel to be you on campus? (Talk about how your race, class, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/gender expression impact your experiences)
7. What, if anything, makes you feel connected to this campus and to this community?
8. Please outline the essential experiences that make up your life story. Focus on the development of your identity as an LGBTQ person, a person of color, or as a person who identifies as an ally.

9. Describe a day in your life, from the perspective of being as an LGBTQ person, a person of color, or as a person who identifies as an ally.

10. What is your vision for the future? How do you want it to look in the next five or ten years?

11. Is there someone who is or was a mentor or role model for you? (Living/in literature/a hero/someone who inspires you. Write about that person and how they've made a difference in your life.

12. What’s essential for your heterosexual peers, teachers, family members and friends to know about you?
APPENDIX D
Power of One Portrait Project Writing Workshop Prompts

10 minute writing exercise with the prompt:

This is my sacred story.

10 minute writing exercise with the prompt:

I have the power to change the world.

2 minute writing exercise with the prompt:

I have a superpower and it is.

2 minute writing exercise with the prompt:

I am.