Understanding Sexual Prejudice among Midwestern Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers:
Framing the intersectionality of Midwestern prejudice and internationalization

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Friday, October 10, 2014
LGBT Leadership Conference
Introduction—The Problem

- Between February 2008 and June 2013, at least according to national media
  - Twenty-seven young men
  - Two young women
    - Committed suicide based on their perceived or actual gender or sexual variance
    - In the United States
    - Ranging in ages from 11 to 19
    - Included in this count was one young man from Ottawa, Canada
Introduction—The Problem (cont)

- Sexual minority youth are bullied more frequently than heterosexual youth, resulting in
  - Lower grade point averages
  - Higher absenteeism
  - Less likely to continue on to post-secondary education
  - Economic and mental health consequences for communities and society as a whole

- Teachers have more face-to-face time with children than parents (~2X)
Questions to be considered:

• How many deaths globally?
• What are the consequences in school environments for gender or sexually variant students?
• As a result, how many individuals who are gender or sexually variant look to the U.S. for refuge? Or as an alternative?
Purpose of my Research

• To explore K-12 pre-service and in-service teachers’ beliefs and attitudes toward students with non-heterosexual orientations
• To investigate whether the degree of sexual prejudice among pre-service and in-service teachers differed by demographic, educational, or personal characteristics
• To improve teacher preparation
Perspectives

- Brameld
  - social educational reconstruction
    - That education can change society
    - That education can change the lives of individuals

- Bronfenbrenner
  - ecological systems theory
    - That all living things, including humans, are interrelated
    - That all living things, including humans, are interconnected
Diversity for Global Citizenship

Multiple dimensions of diversity (adapted from Banks, Banks, Cortés, Hahn, Merryfield, Moodley, Murphy-Shigematsu, Osler, Park & Parker, 2005, p. 17; with permission from J.A. Banks)
Definition of Terms

- heteronormativity
  - belief that everyone is born one of only two genders (cisgender), male or female
  - belief that everyone will be attracted to someone of the opposite gender or sex
Definition of Terms

- sexual minority
  - gender creative, gender variant, or gender non-conforming
    - transgender or genderqueer or ???
  - non-heterosexual or sexually variant
    - asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual
  - intersex
  - questioning
Definition of Terms

- sexual prejudice (Herek, 2000)
  - all negative attitudes based on sexual orientation; preferred over homophobia
    - an attitude (evaluation or judgment)
    - directed at a social group and its members
    - negative, involving hostility or dislike
(adapted by Sam Killermann, 2013, from original materials attributed to Cristina Gonzalez, Vanessa Prell, Jack Rivas, and Jarrod Schwartz)
Questions to be considered

• What does diversity mean in other countries?
• What does global citizenship mean to an international student?
• How would our understanding of heteronormativity, sexual minority, and sexual prejudice change?
Theoretical Framework

- **Foucault**
  - regimes of truth; power relations
    - reproduction of heteronormativity by the military, the monastery, the school, and the manufactory
    - capitalism, nuclear family, steady supply of workers

- **Poststructuralism**
  - grand narratives like heteronormativity are rejected

- **Kumashiro**
  - education critical of privileging & othering; education that changes students & society
Research Questions

How can pre-service and in-service teachers’ preparation be improved to provide equal and equitable experiences for sexual minority youth in a multicultural society?

1) What are the beliefs and attitudes of K-12 pre-service and in-service teachers regarding sexual minorities?

2) What experiences do K-12 pre-service and in-service teachers have with sexual minorities?

3) What can teacher education programs do to raise awareness about sexual minorities in K-12 education?
Methodology

- sequential-explanatory (Creswell, 2003)
  - quantitative – The Modern Homophobia Scale; The Subtle & Overt Prejudice Toward Homosexuals Scale; personal information
  - qualitative – semi-structured, open-ended Qs
- issues to address w/sequential-explanatory
  - sampling, participant selection, contradictory findings

(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2008)
Quantitative Phase

• RQ#1: Beliefs and Attitudes
  ◦ A survey was developed from 9 items of The Modern Homophobia Scale and 15 items of The Subtle & Overt Prejudice Toward Homosexuals Scale
  ◦ Dependent variable: PREJUDICE
  ◦ Independent variables:
    • Demographic: gender, race/ethnicity, age, geography
    • Educational: teacher edu status, license sought, content area, previous multicultural edu
    • Personal: political, religious, sexual orientation, non-heterosexual friends, coworkers, family members, finished
Important Findings from the Quantitative Phase

• Demographic variables were not statistically significantly associated with PREJUDICE
  ◦ Trends (n.s.)
    • Rural > Suburban/Urban
    • pre-service Males < Females but in-service Males > Females (age-related?)
    • Older pre-service (46-55yo) > youngest (<=25yo)
    • Youngest in-service (<=25yo) > all other groups
Important Findings from the Quantitative Phase

- Educational variables were not statistically significantly associated with PREJUDICE
  - Pre-service completing THREE multicultural education courses > none, $p = .038$, $\eta^2 = .091$ (medium)
  - Trends (n.s.)
    - Elementary Education > Secondary, Other for license sought and for teaching content area
    - Sexual Orientation coursework content:
      - One, two, three completed courses > none
Important Findings from the Quantitative Phase

- Personal variables were statistically significantly associated with PREJUDICE
  - Approach One: Testing of overall group means
    - 74% of Total Variance in PREJUDICE accounted for
  - Approach Two: Hypothesis testing
    - Pre-Service:
      - Conservative > moderate, somewhat liberal, liberal
      - Christian > non-Christian or non-affiliated
      - Heterosexual > non-heterosexual
      - None > Non-heterosexual friends, coworkers, family
    - In-Service:
      - Christian > non-Christian or non-affiliated
Important Findings from the Quantitative Phase

Total Variance in PREJUDICE accounted for by Personal characteristics

- political (38%)
- friends (18%)
- religious (9%)
- sexual orientation (8%)
- finished (6%)
- family members (5%)
- other (16%)
Qualitative Phase

- **RQ#1**: Beliefs and attitudes
- **RQ#2**: Experiences with sexual minorities
- **RQ#3**: Improving teacher preparation
  - These topics were addressed with semi-structured, open-ended interview questions.
  - Twenty-four survey participants volunteered to be interviewed; only seventeen actually made an apt
  - Transcribed interviews were entered in NVivo 10
  - Analysis of qualitative data was conducted
Important Findings from the Qualitative Phase

- Some pre-service and in-service teachers stepped outside their conservative and/or Christian socialization.
- Having non-heterosexual friends and family members appeared to sensitize qualitative participants to social justice issues.
- Teachers learned about gender and sexual variance through life experiences, not from formal educational interventions.
- More than half of qualitative participants were in an ally development process.
Questions to be considered

• How does religion influence sexual prejudice in other countries?
• What does multiculturalism mean to an international student?
• How would a political viewpoint toward multiculturalism be interpreted by an international student?
• What is the influence of non-heterosexual friends, coworkers, and family members in other countries?
References


