EXPLORING THE ROLE OF LGBTQ ISSUES IN THE CLASSROOMS OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS

BY

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A Thesis Submitted to The Honors College
In Partial Fulfillment of the Bachelors degree
With Honors in Psychology
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

May 2010

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Abstract

The harassment of sexual minority students in school has recently become a topic of interest to researchers interested in issues of school safety. The Preventing School Harassment (PSH) survey, which specifically addresses harassment based on sexual orientation, is an important part of this line of inquiry. The present analysis is based on a free-response question included in the 2008 version of the PSH survey, which addressed students’ experiences with the inclusion of sexual minority issues in the classroom.

Students’ responses were analyzed to identify the major themes in both the content and context of what students learned in school about these issues. Whereas one-quarter of respondents indicated they learned nothing about sexual minority issues in school, the majority of students who learned about these issues reported learning about ideals of acceptance and equality. Respondents reported learning about LGBTQ issues most often outside of the classroom, and most commonly from personal experiences or from members of student clubs. These results provide insight into how students learn about these issues in school, and may inform future research into methods of increasing students’ feelings of safety at school.
Introduction

“There’s nothing wrong with being LGBTQ, it's just the way you are. They're people and equal too... Although that also feels obvious.”

“People are just uninformed about the GLBT community. I strongly believe that ignorance is the basis of unacceptance and that if people knew what we were and that we are normal, they would not be afraid of us, because that is what they are.”

—Student respondents to the 2008 Preventing School Harassment survey

As the quotes above demonstrate, today’s high school students have strong opinions about discrimination against people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer/questioning (LGBTQ). However, the experiences of sexual minority students in schools have only very recently become a topic of research, through the use of both widespread surveys and smaller studies. The findings of the research on this issue are disheartening: harassment based on anti-LGBTQ bias is both intense and pervasive, and sexual minority students often feel unsafe in school (Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008; O’Shaughnessy, Russell, Heck, Calhoun, & Laub, 2004).

One of the most significant findings of these studies is that anti-LGBTQ harassment is qualitatively different from other types of harassment. In particular, anti-LGBTQ slurs are damaging both to sexual minority and heterosexual students. For example, male respondents to a survey of middle- and high-schoolers have reported that homophobic slurs are significantly more threatening to a student’s reputation than other types of slurs (Thurlow, 2001). Additionally, respondents in a study of 107 New Zealand high schools revealed pervasive anti-LGBTQ sentiment: only 5% of students and 8% of staff believed that LGBTQ students would feel safe at their school. Content analysis of the participants’ responses revealed two main themes: descriptions of harassment
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(predominantly verbal) and perceived invisibility (for example, “I don’t know any lesbian/gay/bisexual students”) (Nairn & Smith, 2003).

The significance of homophobic slurs in sexual harassment is further highlighted in a study performed by the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Equal numbers (approximately 75%) of respondents to a national survey of American high school students reported that they would be “very upset” if someone “pulled off or down their clothing” or called them gay or lesbian (American Association of University Women [AAUW] Educational Foundation, 2001). The fact that being called gay or lesbian is as upsetting as being the victim of physical sexual harassment is astounding. Additionally, this particular example of harassment (being called gay or lesbian) was the only example rated by both boys and girls to be of equal significance: 74% of boys and 73% of girls reported that they would be “very upset” by such an incident (AAUW, 2001).

Anti-LGBTQ harassment is both powerful and pervasive. The latest version of the National School Climate Survey (NSCS), distributed by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), was released in 2007 and reached approximately 6200 sexual minority students across the United States. Of the survey respondents, 86.2% had been verbally harassed and nearly half (44%) physically harassed because of their sexual orientation. Nearly a third of respondents had missed school at least once because they had felt unsafe (Kosciw et al., 2008). In comparison, under 10% of respondents to the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), a survey representative of all California high school students, reported ever missing school because they felt unsafe (California Safe and Healthy Kids Program Office, 2008).
Repeated harassment based on sexual orientation affects students’ mental health, performance in school, and future educational and social development. Eight percent of all respondents (both heterosexual and sexual minority students) to the 2001-2002 CHKS had been the victims of harassment based upon their “actual or perceived sexual orientation.” The students harassed on the basis of anti-LGBTQ bias were over twice as likely as non-harassed students to report depressive symptoms (55% compared to 23%), and three times as likely to have seriously considered suicide (45% compared to 14%). In addition, victims of this type of harassment were more likely than non-harassed students to report having engaged in substance abuse, including tobacco and marijuana use, binge drinking, and use of other illegal drugs (O’Shaughnessy et al., 2004).

Victims of anti-LGBTQ harassment report lower grades than non-harassed students: 24% of harassed students earned Cs or lower, compared to 17% of students who were not harassed (O’Shaughnessy et al., 2004). Twelve percent of sexual minority students had no plans for future education beyond high school, nearly twice the percentage of the national student body (Kosciw et al., 2008). One might go so far as to say that students who experience these effects as a direct result of harassment at school are being denied an education.

These are serious and complicated problems, but multiple studies have identified several key actions that schools can make that produce strong, pervasive improvements. These changes include adopting an anti-harassment policy that explicitly includes sexual minority students; active involvement of teachers in stopping acts of harassment; the presence of a Gay-Straight alliance on campus; and inclusion of LGBTQ-related issues in regular classroom curricula (O’Shaughnessy et al., 2004).
The first two actions are important in that they provide a direct and obvious signal to the student body that staff and administration are committed to preventing harassment on their campus. A school’s responsibility to protect all students is included in district, state and national policies. Including sexual minorities in an anti-harassment policy does not increase a school’s liability, but simply emphasizes its pre-existing responsibility to prevent harassment based on sexual orientation. Including sexual minority students in the anti-harassment policy is a first step towards ending harassment in a school: “A comprehensive policy that is publicized and implemented will clarify for all staff that such behavior is unacceptable and must be responded to” (GLSEN, 2002). Once such a policy is implemented, teachers must take an active role in changing their school climate by addressing slurs and other forms of harassment whenever they occur. Inclusive anti-harassment policies provide incentive but not instruction, and so teachers should be trained in ways to address teasing, name-calling, and more serious forms of harassment. When teachers are prepared to handle situations of harassment, these situations can be used as “teachable moments” for the students involved.

The formation of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) as student-run clubs has also been related with improvements in school environment. The CHKS showed that 75% of students with a GSA on their campus reported feeling safe at school, compared to 61% of students without a GSA at their school. The presence of a GSA was also correlated with decreased anti-LGBTQ harassment and an increase in students’ perceived support from both school staff and other adults (O’Shaughnessy et al., 2004). Respondents to the NSCS reported similar effects: students at schools with GSAs heard fewer homophobic
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remarks, felt more a part of their school community, and reported acts of harassment to school administrators more often (Kosciw et al., 2008).

These positive effects are most likely due to a combination of factors, rather than the simple fact of the club’s formation. Gay-Straight Alliances may be more likely to form in schools that have already established more positive environments; indeed, the formation of GSAs is often a difficult process in schools with pervasive anti-LGBTQ bias. Opposition to GSAs can often be traced to a misunderstanding of their purpose. However, the Gay-Straight Alliance Network provides a description of the true goals of high school GSAs: “[to] create safe environments in schools for students to support each other and learn about homophobia and other oppressions, educate the school community about homophobia, gender identity, and sexual orientation issues, and fight discrimination, harassment, and violence in schools” (GSA Network). The positive effects of GSAs, as described above, are the strongest possible testament to these goals.

Finally, schools that present LGBTQ issues as part of their curriculum evidence the greatest increase in the percentage of students who report feeling safe in school. According to the 2003-2005 Preventing School Harassment survey, 78% of students who learned about sexual minority issues in class reported feeling safe at school, compared to only 67% of students with non-inclusive curricula (Russell, Kostroski, McGuire, Laub, & Manke, 2006). This effect is observed even when responses from only heterosexual students are considered (83% and 77%, respectively). The greatest effect is observed in sexual minority students, who also show dramatically lower levels of baseline school safety (73% and 58%). The entire student body also reports lower levels of teasing,
spreading of rumors, and LGBT bullying when sexual minority issues are presented in class (Russell et al., 2006).

The presentation of LGBTQ-related issues in the classroom may be an effective way to fight the misconceptions surrounding people who identify as LGBTQ. In the case of heterosexuals’ attitudes towards sexual minorities, “interpersonal contact and prejudice are reciprocally related” (Herek, 2000). It has been demonstrated that heterosexual individuals who have close contact with friends or family members who are LGBTQ report more positive attitudes towards LGBTQ people in general (Herek, 2000). It may be that including information about LGBTQ people in the classroom serves a similar purpose, in helping heterosexual students to become more familiar with sexual minority people and issues.

The correlations between presentation of LGBTQ issues and perceived school safety are significant, but they do not imply direct causation: suddenly adding a lesson on LGBTQ history will not magically make students feel safer. However, the inclusion of these issues may reflect many other aspects of a school’s environment, particularly whether the school has taken the other steps mentioned above. In this way, inclusion of LGBTQ issues in the classroom may be seen as the culmination of all these steps, and as a goal that should be strived for by all schools.

Large-scale surveys such as the National School Climate Survey and California Healthy Kids Survey are necessary to evaluate broad trends in school environments and students’ experiences. The Preventing School Harassment (PSH) survey is an important part of this research, as it specifically addresses anti-LGBTQ discrimination in schools. However, the PSH survey differs from the CHKS and the NSCS in that it offers
participants several options for free responses. In this way, it gives a more nuanced picture of the LGBTQ student experience and can indicate new directions for investigation. This paper will use answers to one free-response question from the PSH to further explore what happens when students learn about LGBTQ issues in their schools.

Method

Participants

One thousand four hundred seven middle- and high-school students in California participated in the 2008 Preventing School Harassment (PSH) survey. The survey was distributed in both paper (reaching 80% of respondents) and online (20% of respondents) formats; the order of questions differed slightly between the two versions, but no questions were added or deleted. Approximately 500 students outside of California also completed the survey; these responses were excluded in the final analysis.

Paper copies of the survey were distributed through the Gay-Straight Alliance network to schools around California. Individual GSAs and community support centers were also notified about the online edition of the survey. The survey was designed to target sexual minority populations, who comprised twenty-seven percent of participants. Of these sexual minority respondents, approximately equal numbers identified as bisexual (11.4%) or gay or lesbian (10.7%); the remaining five percent identified as either queer, questioning, or included multiple or write-in responses. Female participants were slightly over-represented in the sample, comprising 62% of the respondents. Thirty-six percent of respondents identified as male, and the remaining 2% identified themselves as transgender, questioning, or included a write-in response.
Thirty-five percent of respondents identified as white or Caucasian, and 25% identified as Hispanic or Latino/Latina. Thirteen percent of students described themselves as Asian or Pacific Islander, 10% as black or African-American, and seventeen percent of students marked multiple ethnicities or included a write-in response.

Three hundred eighty-six students provided a response to the measure of interest; these students’ demographic statistics were similar to those of the larger survey sample.

**Measure**

This study is primarily based on responses to an open-ended question presented at the end of the survey that asked students: “Tell us what you have learned about LGBTQ issues in school.”

**Analysis**

The responses to this question were examined with a content analysis technique. Content analysis is the process of identifying recurring themes in disparate pieces of data, and in written material is usually based on common words or phrases (Neuendorf, 2002). The responses were reviewed several times in order to identify possible main themes. These themes were used to develop a provisionary manual, which was refined after initial testing with subsets of the students’ responses. Responses were coded based on the presence or absence of each of the main categories. With one exception (an Irrelevant class), categories were not mutually exclusive; one response could be classified under more than one category. However, a response could only be included once in any category, even if a main theme was present multiple times.

Using the final codebook, all responses were coded by both the primary researcher and a second undergraduate student familiar with the coding scheme. This
method of double-coding was used to evaluate inter-coder reliability. The ratings of the
two coders were adequate: percent agreement was measured to be 94%, and $\kappa=.74$. The
coding categories were organized into two large classes: those describing the context in
which students learned about LGBTQ issues, and those describing the actual content of
what students learned.

The context class included measures of where students learned about these issues:
in class, during other school activities or presentations, in a school club, or at home. Also
identified was who students reported learning from: their own personal experiences,
family members, friends, peers, teachers, or other school staff. An additional category
was created to indicate whether a student mentioned that they, their friends or family
members identified as LGBTQ. Several categories were created to describe students’
general school environments: whether the overall environment of the school was positive
or negative, and whether a GSA existed on their campus.

The content class included both broad and narrow subjects. A large general
category was created to describe how much students felt they had learned about LGBTQ
issues (nothing, very little, or a lot.) Categories were created for students who reported
learning about acceptance and tolerance of sexual minority students or prejudice and
harassment based on sexual orientation. Several categories were also developed to
include responses mentioning learning about specific topics related to LGBTQ issues
(political events and personages; basic descriptions of sexual minorities; literary figures;
and sex education.)

As the survey question asked explicitly about what students learned about in
school, responses describing a student’s personal opinions or beliefs were coded in a
separate category for attitudes. Two other categories were also created: an “Other” category, which could be marked if a response did not match any of the above categories but was still related to the topic of the survey, and an “Irrelevant” category, which included all responses not related to the survey question.

Results

Context

Although previous research has centered on the effects of inclusive classroom curricula on feelings of school safety, far more respondents reported learning about these issues outside of the classroom. Thirteen percent of respondents learned about these issues outside of class (whether in school but out of class, in a school club, or out of school); only 4% reported learning about them in class. The most common context in which students reported learning about LGBTQ issues was in a school club (approximately 6%). Responses included in this category specifically mentioned having learned about LGBTQ issues in a club setting, as does this freshman from southern California: “I only know what I know from the GSA and youth council.” Students report learning about both facts and their own attitudes: “I learned about LGBTQ rights in Peer Counsel,” and “When I joined my school's GSA, I realized that LGBTQQI people should be treated with respect.”

Additionally, eight percent of respondents reported knowing about or being involved in a GSA at their school. These students did not necessarily mention learning in the GSA, and included such brief responses such as, “there is a GSA at my school” as well as more involved responses, as from a San Mateo student: “Our GSA does a good job of holding discussions, but doesn't affect the greater part of the school.” Several of
these responses also described finding strong interpersonal support from a school GSA, such as this response from a student in Moreno Valley: “GSA is not just a club. It’s a foundation where people can be themselves.”

Approximately equal numbers of respondents reported experiencing a negative or positive school environment (4% and 3%, respectively.) These responses included descriptions of specific incidents, such as “I still hear a bunch of people yell out in biology ‘No Homo!’ whenever a word with homo in it is mentioned. A while ago, after GSA put up their signs, our GSA was interrupted by the Freshmen football team” and “every year we have to support the LGBTQs by a day called the day of silences.” Also included were descriptions of more pervasive school attitudes, such as “I have learned nothing, my school hates LGBTQ” and “My school is very hush hush about LGBT people and issues. We have been having more and more harassment notices at our GSA meetings but nothing has been done about it.” In contrast, some students reported that “people [at school] don’t make fun of them,” and “My school is extremely open about these issues. In fact, just under half our faculty is LGBTQ (estimate).”

These results match those concerning who students learned about LGBTQ issues from. While the numbers were too low to make strong conclusions, students most often reported learning from personal experience and club members (6% and 3% of all respondents, respectively.) Students who described learning about LGBTQ issues from personal experience often reported that their schools did not address these issues: “I could not really have learned anything about LGBTQ people or issues if I had not taken the initiative to learn about it…I have learned to judge a person by their personality or values and not by their sexual orientation or identification.”
Four percent of students reported identifying as or having a close relationship with someone (a family member or friend) who identifies as LGBTQ. This number is much lower than the percentage of students who identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual in the demographics section of the survey; many students answered the measure of interest without referring to their own or others’ sexual orientations.

*Content*

Approximately 25% of respondents reported learning “nothing” or “very little” about LGBTQ issues in school; only 3% reported learning “a lot.” These responses were unelaborated, although some students provided an explanation of how they learned about these issues outside of school, or expressed a desire to see them more fully addressed in school.

The most common content-related theme was that of acceptance and tolerance, and included 33% of all responses. Students reported learning “to treat everyone with the same respect”; “not to judge people and to accept them for what they are”; and to “accept others with differences as well as treat them the same way as I would treat anyone else.” Responses seemed to follow a general trend of espousing either attitudes of acceptance and tolerance for LGBTQ people by heterosexuals, or for equal rights and consideration regardless of sexual orientation.

Eighteen percent of students also learned about the harassment faced by people who identify as LGBTQ. Many expressed an understanding of both the pervasiveness and the severity of the harassment faced by LGBTQ students. A high school senior and GSA president states, “What I've learned is that LGBTQ people are always judged. People are very prejudiced and stereotypical.” A high school junior from central
California reports that she learned, “That many hate crimes are related to LGBTQ people and they are discriminated on a daily basis.” Others expressed pessimism that prejudice against sexual minority students could be reduced: “…when they told me their problems I actually came to think that this discrimination will never stop.”

Eleven percent of respondents reported learning about historical or literary aspects of LGBTQ issues, often in English or drama classes. These included such mentions as, “my tenth grade English teacher told us that Oscar Wilde was gay”; and “In English we discuss the sexualities of characters like possibly if Gatsby was bisexual and what that would mean”, as well as information about the Matthew Shepard story and the Gay Rights movement.

Ten percent of students learned about political topics related to LGBTQ issues. Many students reported learning about same-sex marriage laws and “gay adoption and other civil rights”; one student summed up the responses of many in “marriage for gay couples is a big issue.” Four percent of students reported learning specifically about the purpose of Proposition 8 to “make it so gays cannot legally marry or be labeled as married,” as well as “how it discriminates.”

Nine percent of students received basic information about sexual minority people and issues. This information included “what their orientation is, and the scientific phrases for each of those,” and “what LGBTQ means and what it stands for.” Also included in this category were explanations of how individuals come to identify as LGBTQ. These explanations varied widely, from “it’s their decision, don’t try to force them out of it” and “people get confused” to, “they were just born that way” and “it’s genetic, so it’s not a choice.” A different approach was described by a student in a
Catholic school, who reported that, “In my psychology course we briefly looked at the differences between homosexual brains and heterosexual brains.”

One of our more significant findings stands out through its absence: despite California’s state policy of comprehensive sex education, only 2% of students reported that sexual minority issues were discussed in health or sex education classes.

Discussion

The correlation between inclusive school curricula and students’ increased feelings of safety has been well documented in other studies (O’Shaughnessy et. al, 2004), but the student feedback given in this survey provides some additional insights. Although one quarter of student respondents reported learning nothing about LGBTQ issues in school, the students whose schools did address these issues gave some encouraging input. The majority of students who learned about LGBTQ issues learned about acceptance, tolerance, and equality for people of all sexual orientations. Students also reported learning about political events, writers, and actors linked to LGBTQ issues. These discussions may represent the beginnings of inclusive curricula.

Our results support the findings of earlier studies that the presence of a Gay-Straight Alliance on a high school campus may produce improvements in the experiences of sexual minority students. The majority of students who described where they learned about LGBTQ issues mentioned learning in a school club. Many students also mentioned that their high school GSAs held discussions about LGBTQ issues, and worked to reduce harassment at school. These responses provide some indication into the mechanism by which presence of a GSA can improve a school environment. A GSA may provide both
a place in which students can learn about these issues individually, and spread awareness of LGBTQ prejudice to the larger student body.

A troubling aspect of our findings is the fact that only a handful of students reported learning about LGBTQ issues in a health class. This is disquieting, particularly in California, where comprehensive sex education programs are mandated in public high schools. A comprehensive program that leaves out sexual minority health issues is a form of discrimination, and sexual minority students are not benefiting fully, if at all, from state sexual education programs.

The PSH survey was distributed in the fall of 2008, during the politically volatile build-up to the national presidential race and California state elections. During this time, Proposition 8 was placed on the California ballot, and demonstrations both in favor and in opposition to the measure were a regular occurrence. In light of the political climate of the time, it may seem slightly surprising that only four percent of respondents reported learning about Proposition 8 at school (although some students mentioned learning about “same-sex marriage laws” without specifically mentioning the measure.) However, this may represent an attempt by teachers and schools to keep classroom discussions politically neutral, rather than an attempt to ignore the issue.

This study provides important information about what and how students are learning about LGBTQ issues in school. However, there are some additional research questions that it cannot answer. One question that must be delegated to future research is, which way of addressing these issues in school is most effective in improving the experience of sexual minority students? Are discussions about moral issues such as prejudice, acceptance, and equality most effective, or is it enough to simply include
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sexual minority figures in history, English, and political science lessons? What happens when sexual minority issues are raised in a health or sex education class? In order to make the correlation between inclusive curricula and feelings of safety useful to schools, we need better descriptions about which parts of the curricula are most effective.

Additionally, interpreting our results in this study becomes difficult in that the number of responses in each coding category was often very small. Finding a balance between general categories with many responses and more informative, specific categories was not easy. This difficulty could perhaps be addressed in a shorter survey consisting of several free-response questions delving deeper into some of the issues addressed in the PSH survey; this could also produce a higher response rate.

This study represents an important step forward, but there are still many other steps to go. The insights and experiences shared by the students who participated in this survey give us important information about what is and is not working in California schools today. The knowledge gained from this study may someday be used to improve the school experiences of all students, regardless of sexual orientation.
References


Appendix

Coding Manual

Context

WHERE & WHERE SPEC
This category was intended to identify where students learned about LGBTQ issues. Possible subcategories under WHERE included “in the classroom,” “in school,” “in a school club,” “out of school or at home,” and multiple or other. Responses that were coded in these last two subcategories were elaborated under Where Spec, using either text explanations or a list of all subcategories mentioned, separated by commas (i.e., 2,4.)

WHO & WHO SPEC
This category was designed to describe the specific people mentioned by respondents, and included multiple subcategories. The first, “self,” referred to the student’s own research into LGBTQ issues or personal experiences. “Friends” was coded if the respondent specifically mentioned a friend, as opposed to “peers,” which referred to other students at school or the larger student body whom the student did not consider to be friends. The subcategory “club members” was coded if the student specifically mentioned learning about LGBTQ issues in a GSA or similar club. The “school as a whole” subcategory included general attitudes or actions of the school as well as learning experiences from other school staff. Similarly to Where Spec, Who Spec was used to explain any responses that were coded as “multiple” or “other.”

GSA
This category was marked whenever a student mentioned a GSA at school, regardless of whether the student was a member or simply aware of the club’s existence. The student did not have to mention having learned anything about LGBTQ people or issues from the club.

NSE
This category was created to code descriptions of negative experiences or culture at the student’s school. Included in this category were descriptions of harassment from other students or school staff, or feeling unsafe or uncomfortable in school. This category was not mutually exclusive with the following PSE.

PSE
This category is the opposite of NSE; it included descriptions of generally or specific positive experiences at the student’s school, such as the presence of supportive staff or students, or school activities meant to increase awareness of LGBTQ issues, such as a school-sponsored Day of Silence.
**Content**

**HOWMUCH**
This category was created to quantify how much the student felt they had learned about LGBTQ people or issues. Three subcategories were included: Nothing, Very little/some, and A lot. Many responses included in this category were very concise, although some more elaborated responses were coded under this and other categories.

**ACCEPT**
This category includes all responses in which the student indicated they learned about general positive viewpoints of LGBTQ people or issues. The central themes of these responses included acceptance and tolerance for sexual minorities by the heterosexual majority, as well as an ideal of equal rights for people of all sexual orientations.

**DISCRIM**
This category included mention of discrimination based on sexual bias. Students reported learning about discrimination on many levels, from incidents of harassment observed in school to political questions of civil rights. Many responses also mentioned the difficulties associated with “coming out” to friends and family members.

**BASIC**
This category included incidences in which students reported learning basic information about LGBTQ people, such as definitions of different sexualities or the meaning of the acronym LGBTQ. Also included in this category were descriptions of the reasons a person may identify as LGBTQ, which varied widely between respondents.

**HEALTH**
This category was marked whenever a student mentioned learning about LGBTQ people or issues in a health or sex education class.

**HIST**
This common category included any mention of a school lesson on LGBTQ history or historical figures, as well as LGBTQ authors, playwrights, or artists.

**RIGHTS**
This category included descriptions of political rights that sexual minorities should or do have at the school, state, or national level, as well as mentions of specific laws, statutes, political entities related to LGBTQ issues. Also included in this category were descriptions of activism, such as attempts to improve the status of LGBTQ people by students or larger organizations. References to Proposition 8 were coded under RIGHTS as well as in a separate category.

**PROP8**
This category included any mention (in support or opposition) of Proposition 8.
Additional categories

**ATTITUDE**
This category was created to identify all personal attitudes that respondents specified did not come from the school or other sources. These responses were characterized by phrases such as, “I think,” “I believe,” “I feel”, and the like.

**IRREL**
This category was exclusive with all others, and included comments that were unintelligible or unrelated to the survey. Also included were unfinished sentences that could not be at least partially interpreted, and any “I don’t knows.”

**OTHER**
This category included responses that were not classifiable in any of the above categories, but still related to the topic and purpose of the survey.

**MISC**
This category included explanations of anything unusual, as well as notes by either coder if unsure of chosen coding.