DRAMATIC CONFLICT: EXPLORING INTERACTIVE THEATRE AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES OF HETEROSEXISM IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Professor Peggy Placier
To Vince,
For giving me the support (and occasional push) that I needed to finish.
You are – and will always be – my inspiration.
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The purpose of this grounded theory study was to determine the impact of interactive theatre on college students in regard to heterosexism and/or homonegativity. Students experienced the presentation of an interactive scene utilizing Forum Theatre techniques and exploring heterosexist/homonegative issues. The research question was considered in terms of both positive and negative influences on audience members and performers. Fifty-seven students participated. These students were comprised of three cohorts: heterosexual audience members, LGB audience members, and the actors who had performed in the scene. Methods of data collection included group interviews, survey responses, and observation. The data demonstrated that when students engaged with the performance, the presentation impacted one or more of the participants’ multicultural competencies. These competencies consisted of an expanded knowledge about the consequences of various intervention strategies; an increased awareness of oneself, one’s surroundings, others, or oppression in general; the acquisition of tools that were found to be helpful in facilitating dialogues about oppression; and/or an increased willingness to take action against oppression.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

What is the impact of interactive theatre on college students in regard to heterosexism and/or homonegativity?

The Stonewall Riots of 1969 marked the first major attempt by members of the LGB (Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual) community to stand up to heterosexist oppression.\(^1\) Since that time, although the LGB community has made some legal progress (i.e., the repeal of “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” and the right to marry in some states), a rather large segment of society remains disapproving.\(^2\) Despite the fact that heterosexist values and beliefs are learned behavior, however, America’s educational system has been reticent to enter the fray.\(^3\) This reluctance seems particularly discouraging in light of the momentum gained by multicultural education in the nation’s university systems recently – the goals of which are to “foster human rights and respect for difference, acknowledge the value of cultural diversity, promote an understanding of alternative life choices, establish social

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\(^1\) In this study, I use the term “LGBT” only when referenced as such within the literature. While transgendered individuals and members of the LGB community share many of the same obstacles to inclusion, there are distinct differences between the issues of gender identity and sexual orientation.


justice and equal opportunity, and facilitate equitable power distribution among individuals and groups."  

The inclusion of gays and lesbians into the dominant culture depends, in many ways, upon the willingness of our educational system to engage in a truly “inclusive education.” An inclusive education “is an attitude – a value and belief system – not an action or set of actions. . . . The word *include* implies being a part of something, being embraced into the whole. *Exclude*, the antonym of *include*, means to keep out, to bar, or to expel.”  

An inclusive school is one that “cherishes and honors all kinds of diversity as an opportunity for learning about what makes us human.” This notion of inclusion does not require the individual to relinquish his/her identity but rather accepts, values, and respects individual difference. The ultimate goal of our educational system must be the full and equal participation of all members without fear of oppression.

Over a period of four years I worked with the University of Missouri’s (MU) interactive theatre troupe both as an actor/facilitator and the troupe’s assistant director. Our goal was the development of multicultural awareness and skills among faculty and students both on and off the MU campus. Consequently, my research question for this dissertation has evolved out of both my interest in LGB issues and my involvement with the university’s interactive troupe. Very broadly stated, I seek to understand the impact of

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6 Ibid., 8.
interactive theatre on college students in regard to heterosexism and/or homonegativity. I consider this query in terms of positive and negative influences on both audience members and performers. In order to answer this question, I will bring together research from both the fields of education and theatre. I have employed the qualitative methodology of grounded dimensional analysis, a form of grounded theory, in order to present and explicate this study’s theory as it emerged.

**Definitions**

Both ideological (societal) and psychological (individual) perspectives help to garner a fuller understanding of this phenomenon. In “The Psychology of Social Prejudice,” Gregory M. Herek asserts that the term “heterosexism” describes societal-levels of ideologies and patterns of institutionalized oppression against non-heterosexuals. Wall and Evans define homophobia as “an irrational fear of homosexuality in others and/or homosexual feelings and behaviors in oneself.” These fears, in turn, often reinforce heterosexist attitudes and can ultimately lead to oppressive actions against members of the LGB community. Homophobia refers primarily to an emotionally negative response based upon fear. When referring to an intellectually


negative response, many scholars consider the term homonegativity to be a more accurate descriptor. The most common usage of homonegativity, however, denotes both emotional and intellectual responses. Homophobia, therefore, is merely a specific type of homonegativity.

Heterosexism exists on three basic levels: cultural, individual, and/or institutional. On the cultural level, research shows that both heterosexism and homonegativity are serious problems on college campuses and throughout the nation. On the individual level, people who are homonegative tend to fall into certain, identifiable categories. They have generally had little or no contact with gays or lesbians and tend to be older, white males (although antigay violence is most frequently seen in white males who are in their late teens or early twenties). These individuals are also “more likely to attend church regularly and subscribe to a more conservative political ideology, more likely to support traditional and restrictive gender roles, and more likely to manifest high levels of authoritarianism and related personality characteristics (dogmatism, rigidity, intolerance of ambiguity).” Institutional-level heterosexism refers to “governments, the legal system, health care systems, religious organizations, the media, and educational systems.”


11 I have cited specific statistics in the section entitled “Justification for the Study.”

12 Obear, 45-48.

13 Ibid., 41.
The last of these levels is of particular importance to this inquiry. By denying the issues and concerns of LGB students, colleges and universities give sanction to the dominant, heterosexist culture. In “Addressing Gay and Lesbian Issues in Residence Hall Environments,” Bourassa and Shipton state that “the current climate on college and university campuses reflects widespread negative attitudes toward lesbians and gays in every setting studied. Campus climates tend to mirror the values and patterns of acceptance that exist in the larger society.” The ramifications of our failure to address these issues on the institutional level are quite serious and yet, as a result of LGB students’ marginalized status, society (in general) often either ignores or overlooks these shortcomings. The implications for LGB students include:

1. An inaccurate understanding of human nature
2. Discriminatory practices
3. Self-loathing
4. Violence
5. Sexual Promiscuity
6. Academic problems
7. Substance abuse
8. Suicide

In this study, I examine the issues of heterosexism and homonegativity through a form of interactive theatre created by Augusto Boal and known as “Forum Theatre.” As both a theatre educator and activist, Boal saw theatre as an art form that silenced

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14 Obear, 44-45.


16 Lipkin, 3.
members of its intended audience and relegated them to the role of passive spectator.\textsuperscript{17} Drawing upon Paulo Freire’s conception of a “problem-posing model of education” (as described in \textit{Pedagogy of the Oppressed}), Boal sought to give theatre back to the audience and turn the experience into an exercise in active learning. According to Freire’s problem-posing model, “People develop their power to perceive critically \textit{the way they exist} in the world \textit{with which} and \textit{in which} they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation.”\textsuperscript{18} Freire achieved this goal through the application of what he called a “thematic investigation.” In these investigations, he drew co-investigators from the community being studied. These co-investigators then created coded themes using personal and observed knowledge of the culture. Investigators then presented these themes as a situational problem to be decoded and solved by the community through dialogue.\textsuperscript{19}

In an attempt to explicate this notion of “dialogue,” Freire offers the following: “[Dialogue] is an act of creation; it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another. The domination implicit in dialogue is that of the world by the dialoguers; it is conquest of the world for the liberation of humankind.”\textsuperscript{20} Accordingly, the purpose of dialogue is not the indoctrination of the other but rather a conjoined effort to surmount the hegemonic patterns of oppression manifested through

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\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 102-24.
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\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 89.
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societal relations. Robert Nash provides further clarification in his work entitled *Faith, Hype, and Clarity: Teaching about Religion in American Schools and Colleges* in which he articulates the need to avoid a “prophetic mood.” He states:

> The prophetic mood . . . is one of absolute moral certainty. It gives automatic moral preference to those whom it designates as oppressed. It bestows unchallengeable moral authority on those whose political pronouncements are somewhat left-of-center, preferably leaning toward a humanistically rejuvenated type of Marxism. . . . And it insists that those who dissent from the doctrine that social justice entails perfect equality be immediately cast out of the community and declared heretics.\(^\text{21}\)

True dialogue, in the sense that Freire intended, does not silence *any* voice in favor of another. Likewise, the theatre of Boal treats every individual as a valuable asset and completely necessary for praxis to occur.

In Forum Theatre, actors (drawn from the community being studied) become the co-investigators, and present their coded themes as theatrical scenes. Initially, audience members (termed “spect-actors” by Boal due to their dual role as both spectator and actor) view short scenes that the actors have coded to present a particular problem/issue within the community. After watching the performance, the spect-actors intervene in the action and attempt to break the cycle of oppression.\(^\text{22}\) “This stimulates audience members to imagine change, practice change, reflect on action, and thus become empowered to

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\(^{22}\) For a more thorough description of Forum Theatre see Boal’s *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, pp 17-29.
generate change in their communities.” At its most basic level, the theatre of Boal seeks not only to interpret reality, but to transform it.

Justification for the Study

I. Assessment of Need

The college years can be a particularly trying time for gay and lesbian youth. Research looking at the identity development process of these young adults “suggests that many developmental issues occur during the traditional undergraduate years [and that this is a] key time for identity development in general.” One of the biggest issues for these students is the realization of their permanent exclusion from the dominant culture and entrance into a highly stigmatized subculture. As a result, gays and lesbians often become an “invisible minority.” Upon entering the LGB subculture, the individual ceases to exist in many ways as he/she can never again escape being defined on the basis of his/her social grouping by the dominant class.

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play a vital role in the maintenance of this marginalization through either active or passive acceptance of the dominant hegemony.  

“Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Students: Perceived Social Support in the High School System,” examines the high school experiences of LGBT students, providing some understanding of where these pupils stand upon their entrance into the ranks of higher education. The authors detail the lack of fundamental LGBT support systems which are commonly available to heterosexual students. As a result, these teenagers tend to experience a much higher risk of suicide, substance abuse, prostitution, homelessness, and declining school performance than do their heterosexual peers.

A growing body of ethnographic research has also underlined the fact that participant members of the college LGB community have been “physically assaulted and harassed in residence halls, and marginalized in their classes.” A 2003 study conducted by Rankin on 14 campuses found that of 1,000 LGBT students, more than one third of the participants had been victimized in some manner or other. Of these incidents, eighty-nine percent consisted of “derogatory remarks – seventy-nine percent of which were perpetrated by other students.”

Current research suggests that as many as ninety-four percent of all students (straight and/or gay) have, at the very least, heard some type of

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28 Adams, Bell, and Griffin, 11-12.


homonegative remark on campus.\textsuperscript{31} Another study outlines the even more disconcerting fact that only thirty-three percent of students would intervene if they were to witness an instance of harassment directed at an LGBT student.\textsuperscript{32}

Tragically, derogatory remarks are probably the least of a gay student’s worries. The theme of physical violence directed toward LGB students recurs in numerous studies conducted throughout the nation. In one Californian study of lesbian and gay adults, researchers Herek, Gillis, Cogan, and Glunt “found that 20 percent of their respondents reported antigay/anti-lesbian crime against their person or property. They also found that 21 percent of their sample had these experiences from the age of sixteen.”\textsuperscript{33} Additionally, these same researchers found that more than one-fifth of those surveyed had been the victim of a bias-related crime.\textsuperscript{34} Perhaps most problematic is the knowledge that the attitudes leading to these types of behavior stem from the dominant culture’s heterosexist ideology. In 1997, 1,102 hate crimes were reported to law enforcement officials. According to the American Psychology Association, less than 5 percent of all perpetrators of hate crimes actually belong to any sort of organized hate group. Most often, those responsible for these assaults’ commission believe that they have societal permission to engage in violence against LGB individuals. In fact, these offences are the

\textsuperscript{31} Sharon Horne, N. Dewaine Rice, and Tania Israel, “Heterosexual Student Leader Attitudes Regarding Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Students,” \textit{NASPA Journal} 41, no. 4 (Summer 2004): 761.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 761.

\textsuperscript{33} Liang and Alimo, 238.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
most socially acceptable and widespread form of hate crime. Hate crimes seem to be committed due to one or more of the following beliefs:

1. Perpetrators’ negative beliefs and attitudes are thought to be shared by the community. They see themselves as enforcers of social morals.
2. Perpetrators are thrill seekers
3. Perpetrators are trying to prove their heterosexuality
4. Perpetrators believe that homosexuals are sexual predators and they are just responding to a sexual proposition

Furthermore, In fact, almost 30 percent of first year undergraduates nationwide indicated that they would prefer to attend college with only heterosexual students and “nearly half [of that number] considered gay men disgusting and believed that homosexual activity is wrong.”

My research was conducted at a large, Midwestern university where the student body is primarily white, Christian, and heterosexual. Worthington, Clouse, and others recently conducted a campus climate study at this university. Thirty-four bisexual

35 American Psychological Association, “Hate Crimes Today.”

36 Liang and Alimo, 239.

37 Although the university only gathers demographic information related to race, the current enrollment of minorities at MU is approximately 8% (http://www.missouri.edu/about/mufacts.php accessed on 23 March 2011). In the most recent campus climate survey, however, 10% of the participants identified as non-heterosexual. While this number is not necessarily predictive of the entire university, the other demographic variables gathered by the survey were consistent with those of the total enrollment (R. L. Worthington and J. Hart, “Campus Climate for Students at MU: What every Faculty, Staff, Student and Administrator Needs to Know,” presentation for the Mizzou Diversity Summit, University of Missouri (October 2010).

38 I would like to point out that the university has since approved the inclusion of sexual orientation in its nondiscriminatory policy.
persons, eighteen gay men, seventeen lesbians, four transgendered individuals, and 1,252 heterosexuals took part in this study.\textsuperscript{39} Participants revealed the following:

a) “More than one-third of LGBT undergraduate students . . . reported experiences of harassment during the previous one-year period.”\textsuperscript{40}

b) “A large proportion of respondents felt that the overall campus climate was homophobic (43%), and similar numbers felt that their institution was not addressing issues related to sexual orientation/gender identity (41%), and that the curriculum did not represent the contributions of LGBT people (43%).”\textsuperscript{41}

c) Five hate crimes and thirty-seven hate incidents based on the victim’s sexual orientation were reported.\textsuperscript{42}

d) Forty-four participants reported witnessing a hate crime based on sexual orientation.\textsuperscript{43}

Additionally, more than one-fifth of the participants had experienced harassment due to either their sexual orientation or gender identity. The type and frequency of harassment is as follows: derogatory remarks – 85 percent, verbal threats – 40 percent, graffiti – 38 percent.\textsuperscript{44} Finally, the study showed that LGBT individuals experienced a greater fear for their physical safety than did other minorities.\textsuperscript{45} Unfortunately, despite demonstrated need, there is currently a dearth of co-curricular programs in existence at MU with the

\textsuperscript{39} Roger Worthington and others, “MU Campus Climate Study,” 125, accessed on 1 December 2005, <http://facultycouncil.missouri.edu/news/campusclimates.pdf>.\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 15-16.\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 8.\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 135.\textsuperscript{44} Some participants reported more than one type of harassment.\textsuperscript{45} Worthington and others, “MU Campus Climate,” 20-21.
specific purpose of facilitating a dialogue on this subject among students.\(^{46}\) The specific program under investigation in this study, however, is one example that is intended to provide opportunities for critical discussion about LGB issues and campus climate.

Although changing cultural values and beliefs is never easy, it is possible. According to Gust A. Yep, “People are not born homophobic or heterosexist. . . . Homophobic and heterosexist attitudes are, therefore, learned, shaped, and maintained through communication. It is also through communication that such attitudes can be eradicated.”\(^{47}\) One way to eradicate these is by exposing the dominant hegemony and allowing for the possibility of alternate ideologies.\(^{48}\) Engaging members of both the privileged and the oppressed groups together in dialogue can serve a dual purpose. First, this approach creates contact between the two sides. Exposure to members of the LGB community often diminishes heterosexist attitudes. Members of each group begin to realize that the “other” is, generally speaking, more similar than different.\(^{49}\) Second, it creates allies within the heterosexual community. In “Becoming an Ally,” Jaimie Washington and Nancy J. Evans define an ally as a “person who is a member of the ‘dominant’ or ‘majority’ group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate with and for, the oppressed

\(^{46}\) Two notable exceptions to this lack of programming are the existence of an LGB TQA Resource Center and the implementation of a “Safe Space” program. The outreach of these programs to the general student population, however, is extremely limited.


\(^{48}\) Lipkin, 233.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., 235-37.
population.” The opinion of an ally who is a member of the dominant culture carries more weight than would an outsider’s. 50

Lipkin cautions, however, that in facilitating this dialogue educators should seek to create a “transformative interactive education.” 51 Although several scholars have broached the subject of using theatre to achieve this type of education, none have attempted to assess or theorize the impact of interactive theatre on heterosexist/homonegative attitudes. Paula Ressler provides, perhaps, what is the best rationale for the use of theatre in discussions of this sort. Turning to Howard Gardner’s “theory of multiple intelligences,” she espouses the view that drama capitalizes on more types of “intelligences” than any other approach. Among these intelligences are the following: verbal-linguistic, logical, bodily-kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. 52 As a practitioner, Ressler has made frequent use of various forms of theatre (role-play, scripted drama, and Boalian techniques) in addressing the issue of heterosexism/homonegativity and provides compelling anecdotal evidence that these approaches lead to the participants’ sharing of both stories and experiences that they do not share in other classes. Like Ressler, I believe that the use of theatre as a methodological tool to facilitate discussions on heterosexism/homonegativity holds promise for a variety of fields. The benefits of this research could prove invaluable to individuals working in student services, education, theatre, and virtually all disciplines.


51 Lipkin, 231-32.

Additionally, I hope that the theories uncovered by such research will prove efficacious both in terms of other multicultural issues and other audiences.

II. Dimensional Analysis of Literature

A. Description

In the following sections, I present a dimensional analysis of the current scholarship on the subject in order to clarify the potential benefits of a grounded dimensional approach to the research question of this study. As conceived by both Schatzman and Kools and others, a dimensional analysis of the literature differs significantly from a traditional humanities’ literature review. According to Kilarski, “Rather than presenting the known ‘facts’ of a specific area of interest, it [dimensional analysis] serves to acknowledge the different conceptualizations of the phenomena in question, helping to identify the main issues, questions, assumptions and interpretations.”53 Taken in this context, the analysis does not need to be all-encompassing, but instead serves to familiarize both the reader and research team with the manner in which the various dimensions of the phenomenon under examination have been previously conceptualized.54


B. Review of Existing Scholarship

As of this writing, the literature examining the impact of forum theatre in regard to LGB issues from the student’s perspective is non-existent. Consequently, I use this analysis to focus on the questions and interpretations surrounding the phenomenon’s various dimensions. The literature demonstrates the following:

1. The bulk of current scholarship examining theatre as a pedagogical tool in addressing moral education focuses on the transmission of skills.

   Although a considerable amount of literature examines the theatrical arts as an educational methodology for addressing a variety of issues, the goal of this type of pedagogy is the transmission of skills as opposed to the dialogic discovery of knowledge described by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. According to Freire, “Since dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person’s ‘depositing’ ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be ‘consumed’ by the discussants.”

   Texts in which ideas are “deposited” directly into audience members (encouraging neither reflection nor action) fall roughly into two categories: those that do not seek to change the social world and those that do.

   In regard to those that do not seek to spark any social change, texts attempting to theorize how theatre influences cognition and learning abound. Sharon Bailin’s “Critical

   55 Freire, 88-89.
Thinking and Drama Education,” James S. Catterall and Jaye T. Darby’s “Cognition, Community, and Assessment: Toward Integrated Inquiry on Drama in Education,” Claire Cohen’s “Using Narrative Fiction within Management Education,” Richard Courtney’s *Drama and Intelligence: A Cognitive Theory*, and Anthony Jackson’s “Researching Drama and Theatre in Education: Notes and Queries” are all examples of this approach. There is also a considerable amount of scholarship attempting either to theorize pedagogical approaches to implementing change and social responsibility or to study existing approaches. John Basourakos’s “Moral Voices and Moral Choices: Canadian Drama and Moral Pedagogy,” Brian Edmiston’s “Drama as Ethical Education,” J. Levy’s “Theatre and Moral Education,” David Swanger’s “The Arts, Empathy, and Aristotle,” and Joe Winston’s “Theorising Drama as Moral Education” have each articulated (in one way or another) the need for a general moral education in school and the ability of drama to provide this type of education. Others have illustrated the appropriateness of

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58 Laura Day provides the definition of moral education used by this study in “’Putting Yourself in Other People’s Shoes’: The Use of Forum Theatre to Explore Refugee and Homeless Issues in Schools.” In this article, Day defines this term as “developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people.”
theatre (although not interactive) in addressing specific moral issues such as sexual
assault, child protection, and racial prejudice. These studies include Beverly Black and
others’ “Evaluating a Psychoeducational Sexual Assault Prevention Program
Incorporating Theatrical Presentation, Peer Education, and Social Work”; Anne Bury,
Keith Popple, and John Barker’s “You’ve Got to Think Really Hard: Children Making
Sense of the Aims and Content of Theatre in Health Education”; and Beverly J.
Gimmestad and Edith Dechiara’s “Dramatic Plays: A Vehicle for Prejudice Reduction in
the Elementary School.”59 In all of the above mentioned studies the focus is on the
transmission of knowledge as opposed to the facilitation of dialogue (the majority of
these studies also tend to focus on elementary students as opposed to those in college).

2. Many studies devoted to interactive theatre are primarily descriptive and do not
attempt to theorize how interactive theatre impacts participants.

To date, the majority of the published work is devoted solely to the description of
specific projects such as Britain’s Theatre in Education (TIE), Drama in Education (DIE),
and Theatre in Health Education (TIHE) or the United States’ Hope is Vital project.
Examples include Burton Bollag’s “Classroom Drama”; Jennifer Chauhan’s “Dramatic
Approach”; Stan Houston and others’ “Developing Creative Solutions to the Problems of

59 Beverly Black and others, “Evaluating a Psychoeducational Sexual Assault Prevention Program
Practices 10 (2000): 589-606; Anne Bury, Keith Popple, and John Barker, “You’ve Got to Think Really
Hard: Children Making Sense of the Aims and Content of Theatre in Health Education,” Research in
for Prejudice Reduction in the Elementary School,” Journal of Education Research 76, no. 1 (Sept/Oct

3. Other studies devoted to interactive theatre do not attempt to effect any sort of social change.

In recent years, scholars have also moved to incorporate interactive methods into organizational and managerial courses. William P. Ferris’s “Theatre Tools for Team Building”; Stefan Meisiek, “Which Catharsis Do They Mean? Aristotle, Moreno, Boal

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and Organization Theatre”; Dan Moshavi’s “‘Yes and…’ Introducing Improvisational Theatre Techniques to the Management Classroom”; and Nick Nissley, Steven S. Taylor, and Linda Houden’s exploration of Boalian techniques as a means of changing workplace behaviors in “The Politics of Performance in Organizational Theatre-Based Training and Interventions” all fall under this heading.  

Another study in this category is Creel, Kuhne, and Riggle’s application of Boalian methods to an English classroom in “See the Boal, Be the Boal: Theatre of the Oppressed and Composition Courses.” While these works are concerned with generating theory, they are not particularly concerned with the betterment of society.

4. Remaining studies devoted to interactive theatre do not attempt to build theory from the students’ perspective.

Despite the growing body of research that addresses interactive theatre in regard to social change, these studies either do not generate theory from the student’s perspective or do not study the impact on students. Garth Allen, Isobell Allen, and Lynn Dalrymple’s “Ideology, Practice and Evaluation: Developing the Effectiveness of Theatre in Education”; Kate H. Brown and Diane Gillespie’s “Responding to Moral Distress in..."
the University: Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed”; Lindsay Crowshoe and others’ “Interactive Drama: Teaching Aboriginal Health Medical Education”; Laura Day’s “Putting Yourself in Other People’s Shoes: The Use of Forum Theatre to Explore Refugee and Homeless Issues in Schools”; Trevor Spratt, Stan Houston, and Tom Magill’s “Imaging the Future: Theatre and Change within the Child Protection System”; and F. Starkey and J. Orme’s “Evaluation of a Primary School Drug Project: Methodological Issues and Key Findings” all build theory from the researchers’ perspective.63 More recently, yet also providing theory from the researcher’s perspective, are the following studies: Suzanne Burgoyne and others’ “Interactive Theatre and Self-Efficacy”; Matthew Kaplan, Constance E. Cook, and Jeffrey Steiger’s “Using Theatre to Stage Instructional and Organizational Transformation”; and Peggy Placier and others “Preservice Teachers Portray and Respond to Classroom Problems through Theatre of the Oppressed.”64 To date, the only study of interactive theatre that generates theory according to the precepts of grounded theory (albeit from the teachers’ perspective) that I


could locate is Suzanne Burgoyne and others’ “Investigating Interactive Theatre as Faculty Development for Diversity.”

5. Studies addressing the issue of LGB identity development do not suggest practical pedagogical methods for facilitating growth.


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Washington’s “Understanding Gay and Lesbian Students of Color.” Although these works occasionally address the reasons an individual moves from one stage to the next, pedagogical approaches to facilitating this progression are never suggested.

6. Studies addressing the issue of heterosexism/homonegativity for heterosexual individuals do not suggest practical pedagogical methods for facilitating movement toward a more enlightened attitude.

There are a fair number of texts examining heterosexual students’ attitudes in regard to the specific issues of heterosexism/homonegativity. The ADVANCE Program Institute for Research on Women and Gender’s “Assessing the Climate for Sexual Minority Doctoral Students at the University of Michigan”; Arthur Lipkin’s Understanding Homosexuality, Changing Schools: A Text for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators; Kathy Obear’s “Homophobia”; Roger L. Worthington, Frank R. Dillon, and Ann M. Becker-Schutte’s “Development, Reliability and Validity of the LGB Knowledge and Attitudes Scale for Heterosexuals”; and Gust A. Yep’s “Changing Homophobic and Heterosexist Attitudes: An Overview of Persuasive Communication

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Approaches” all define and examine the causes of heterosexism/homonegativity to some degree (at times even going so far as to suggest ways of addressing this issue ranging from student affairs to policy development).\(^6^7\) None, however, offer practical, pedagogical methods of facilitating identity growth for heterosexual students.

7) Studies that do suggest practical pedagogical methods in regard to heterosexism/homonegativity do not address the impact of interactive theatre on these attitudes.

There are also a few studies that attempt to subvert heterosexism/homonegativity through a variety of methods (none of which include interactive theatre) with varying degrees of success. These include David F. Duncan’s “Effect on Homophobia of Viewing a Gay-Themed Film”; and Kirk W. Fuoss, Cindy J. Kirstenberg, and Lawrence B. Rosenfeld’s “‘Out Art’: Reducing Homophobia on College Campuses through Artistic Intervention.”\(^6^8\) Both studies address the implementation of artistic methodologies as pedagogical tools – in the former a movie and in the latter an art exhibit. Also included in this category is Christopher T. H. Liang and Craig Alimo’s examination of the impact of extended contact with LGB individuals on heterosexist/homonegative attitudes in their study entitled “The Impact of White Heterosexual Students’ Interactions on Attitudes


toward Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People: A Longitudinal Study.” Additionally, there are a growing number of texts that explore the effects of speaker panels on heterosexism/homonegativity. These include J. Croteau and M. Kusek’s “Gay and Lesbian Speaker Panels: Implementation and Research”; M. Geasler and others “A Qualitative Study of Students’ Expression of Change After Attending Panel Presentations by Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Speakers”; S. Green, P. Dixon, and V. Gold-Neil’s “The Effects of a Gay/Lesbian Panel Discussion on College Student Attitudes Toward Gay Men, Lesbians, and Persons with AIDS (PWAs)”; Sharon Horne, N. Dewaine Rice, and Tania Israel’s “Heterosexual Student Leader Attitudes Regarding Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Students”; Arthur Lipkin’s Understanding Homosexuality, Changing Schools: A Text for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators; and E. Nelson and S. Krieger’s “Changes in Attitudes Toward Homosexuality in College Students: Implementation of Gay Men and Lesbian Peer Panel.”

There are also a number of texts devoted to administrators, student services, and student organizations. Examples of these include Donna Bourassa and Bill Shipton’s “Addressing Lesbian and Gay Issues in Residence Halls,” Cheryl Hetherton’s “Life Planning and Career Counseling with Gay and Lesbian Students,” Michael J. Hughes’s


“Addressing Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Issues in Fraternities and Sororities,” and Dick Scott’s “Working with Gay and Lesbian Student Organizations.” Finally, other scholars have focused on the stages that one passes through in order to become an ally to the oppressed group. These studies can be divided into two groups. The first group tends to define “ally” very broadly, choosing not to consider the topic in terms of any specific group (i.e., sexual identity, race, etc.). These include Ellen M. Broido and Robert D. Reason’s “The Development of Social Justice Attitudes and Actions: An Overview of Current Understandings” and “Issues and Strategies for Social Justice Allies (and the Student Affairs Professionals Who Hope to Encourage Them).” The second group (although it does focus on Sexual Identity and provides pedagogical suggestions) does not provide any empirical support for the effectiveness of their proposed guidelines. Examples of this type include Nancy J. Evans and Ellen M. Broido’s “Encouraging the Development of Social Justice Attitudes and Actions in Heterosexual Students” and Jaimie Washington and Nancy J. Evans’s “Becoming an Ally.”


8. Studies addressing the issue of sexual identity development for heterosexual students do not suggest practical pedagogical methods for facilitating growth in the individual.

The severe dearth of texts examining the more general topic of identity development for members of the heterosexual majority makes these works more difficult to locate. Frank R. Dillon and others’ “On Becoming Allies: A Qualitative Study of LGB Affirmative Counselor Training” examines researchers’ self-reflections in order to identify dimensions of development in regard to sexual identity and attitudes toward sexual minorities. Other studies build upon previous research in order to theorize models of heterosexual student development. The most notable work in this category is Roger L. Worthington and others’ “Heterosexual Identity Development: A Multidimensional Model of Individual and Group Identity.” Neither of these works suggest the reasons an individual progresses from one stage to the next nor do they suggest how this movement may be facilitated.

Justification for the Methodology

Because this study’s research question aims to understand interactive theatre’s impact on students, it seems logical to me that any generated theory should be derived from the students’ perspective. Consequently, my chosen methodology is a specific form of grounded theory known as grounded dimensional analysis. Grounded theory methods

“are a logically consistent set of data collection and analytic procedures aimed to develop theory” through a process of induction.\textsuperscript{75} Simply stated, this method is a qualitative approach to studying psychosocial phenomena that seeks to create theory from the participants’ perspective.

The goal of grounded dimensional analysis is not to seek proof of a hypothesis, but rather to generate theory from the participants’ perspective. The emergent theory is “grounded” in the data because it is based upon the participants’ perceptions of the phenomena. The manner in which the theory is organized around a core category is, in many ways, like a story – or, more precisely, a group of stories told by the study’s participants. The term “story” (as used by grounded theorists) refers to “a descriptive narrative about the central phenomenon of the study.”\textsuperscript{76} In turn, this narrative addresses all aspects of the grounded theory paradigm – conditions, context, strategies and consequences. Using the “story” as a guideline, researchers arrange and rearrange dimensions in order to provide an analytic version of the central phenomenon’s narrative.\textsuperscript{77} This goal (generating theory from the participants’ perspective) is not inconsistent with the primary objective of forum theatre: restoring voice and agency to the oppressed. The methodology of grounded theory does not privilege the investigator’s


\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 125.
position over that of the participant. Instead, it allows researchers to “discover what the world is like, how it is constructed and experienced” from the participants’ perspective. 78

Both Boal and Freire maintain that oppressed individuals possess an inherent knowledge and do not need to be “told” how to overcome oppression. Freire asserts: “For us, however, the requirement is seen not in terms of explaining to, but rather dialoguing with the people about their actions.” 79 He concludes this train of reasoning with the following statement: “Political action on the side of the oppressed must be pedagogical action in the authentic sense of the word, and, therefore, action with the oppressed.” 80

Grounded theory is generated in just this manner – through the interactions of researcher and participant. Researchers acknowledge their subjectivities: they remain “fully aware of themselves as instruments for developing grounded theory.” 81 Furthermore, grounded theory is particularly well suited to studying human interaction and the “subjective meanings that people use when interacting with others in specific settings.” 82 The many and varied meanings that are attached to certain cultural symbols would be infinitely more difficult to study in isolation. Symbolic interactionism (the basis of grounded theory) is founded on the process of interaction between and among individuals.


79 Freire, 53.

80 Ibid., 66.


Consequently, the interactive design of this study (i.e., forum theatre and group interviews) is particularly well-suited to the precepts of grounded theory.

**Organization of the Study**

In Chapter Two, I engage in a more thorough discussion of grounded theory both from a theoretical and a practical stance. I also address the manner in which this dissertation upholds the tenets of grounded theory and dimensional analysis. In so doing, I touch upon each of the following: the process of data collection and constant comparison, the nature of each interview, and the manner in which the data analysis proceeds. Finally, I also present a statement of the study’s credibility.

I have devoted each of Chapters Three, Four and Five to a separate and distinct category of participant (respectively these groups include the heterosexual student population, members of the campus LGB community, and the performers). In these chapters I discuss the grounded theory paradigm as it relates to the category of participant under examination: What strategies are employed? Under what conditions and for whom? With what consequences? I neither assume that the analysis of each cohort will result in the same core category as the other groups nor that the resulting core category will differ.

In Chapter Six, I examine the emergent theories of the prior chapters in light of existing literature, comparing these theories with current scholarship concerning campus heterosexism/homonegativity and the efficacy of artistic endeavors in relation to these
types of issues. I also include a discussion of the implications this approach holds for the fields of theatre and education.

Conclusion

In looking at urban classrooms, Fine, Weiss, and Powell contend that equality is not a naturally occurring phenomenon in diverse situations:

If schools are to produce engaged, critical citizens who are willing to imagine and build multiracial and multiethnic communities, then we presume schools must take as their task the fostering of group life that ensures equal status, but within a context that takes community-building as its task. The process of sustaining a community must include a critical interrogation of difference as the rich substance of community life and an invitation for engagement that is relentlessly democratic, diverse, participatory, and always attentive to equity and parity.83

We must find new and inventive ways to teach to today’s youth. Democracy does not occur without intervention. As I have stated, the proposed goal of this study is to examine the impact of interactive theatre as a pedagogical tool for addressing issues of heterosexism and homonegativity in the classroom. Based on my own experiences and research, I believe this approach seems well-suited to address a number of issues and to engage students at a critical level that may ultimately lead to a more advanced stage of development.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Perspective

Grounded theory began with the work of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, most notably in their work entitled *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (published in 1967). Founding their approach upon the doctrine of “symbolic interactionism” (a methodological reaction to functionalism), Glaser and Strauss sought to place the individual at the forefront. Whereas functionalism focuses on an entire social system (viewing the individual as merely a facilitator of the whole system’s operation), symbolic interactionism “is theoretically focused on the acting individual rather than on the social system of which he/she is a part.” According to the principles of symbolic interactionism, humans construct their unique version of “reality” based on their interactions with and within the social system itself. As these interactions vary greatly from one person to another, each individual envisions and maintains a different understanding of “reality.” In concordance with this view, people speak from multiple perspectives and communicate through the use of symbols (i.e., language, etc.). Thus,

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84 Denscombe, 109.


symbolic interaction “refers to the process of social interaction by which individuals are continually designating symbols to each other and to the self.” These symbols are in a constant state of flux, and the meaning that one individual ascribes to a particular symbol may or may not correspond with another’s comprehension of the same symbol.

In keeping with the tenets of symbolic interactionism, this study takes a constructivist approach to grounded theory:

The constructivist approach places priority on the phenomena of study and sees both data and analysis as created from the shared experiences of researcher and participants . . . In this view, any method is always a means, rather than an end in itself. Methods do not ensure knowing; they may only provide more or less useful tools for learning. Constructivists study how participants construct meanings and actions, and they do so from as close to the inside of the experience as they can get. Constructivists also view data analysis as a construction that not only locates the data in time, place, culture, and context, but also reflects the researcher’s thinking.

Consequently, the theories that are reached herein are a construction of the confluences that occur between both researcher and participants, as well as between researcher and data. The goal of this study is not to “know” the impact of interactive theatre on college students in relation to heterosexism/homonegativity, but rather to “learn” about the impact. Furthermore, what is learned through this process, rather than existing within the data itself, resides within the researcher’s interaction with the data.

Grounded dimensional analysis (a form of grounded theory) is a methodological approach that’s goal is to generate theory about an experience from the participant’s point

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of view. This particular approach to grounded theory includes the clarifications conveyed by Schatzman in “Dimensional Analysis: Notes on an Alternative Approach to the Grounding of Theory in Qualitative Research” and Kools and others in “Dimensional Analysis: Broadening the Conception of Grounded Theory.” In grounded dimensional analysis, researchers begin by recording their assumptions about the phenomena being studied in order to avoid imposing those assumptions on the data. After the researchers conduct and transcribe interviews, they begin a process of coding and matrixing the various aspects (or dimensions) of the data. Charmaz defines the term “coding” in the following manner: “Coding, the initial phase of the analytic method, is simply the process of categorization and sorting data. Codes then serve as shorthand devices to label, separate, compile, and organize data.” Grounded dimensional analysis utilizes two distinctive methods of coding the interviews: open coding and axial coding.

Through the processes of open and axial coding, the data are first fractured and then brought back together into a cohesive whole. Open coding refers to the investigators’ initial pass through the data. During this phase researchers do not search for any specific dimensions or impose any particular criteria, but rather remain open to the various horizons of meaning that exist within the interview. Through open coding, they categorize the transcript into codes on a word-by-word and line-by-line basis in

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order to identify the dimensions. Researchers begin a rigorous process of “breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing the data” so that no variable will be overlooked. Consequently, during axial coding (the second phase of this process) researchers begin to look for specific aspects (sub-dimensions) within each previously uncovered dimension. Axial coding brings the data back together after being fractured through open coding by making connections among the data. Throughout both data collection and analysis, a technique commonly referred to as “constant comparison” (a repeated questioning of how dimensions, data, and working hypotheses are both similar and/or different) further informs the process. Researchers continue coding until a core category (central phenomenon around which all the other categories are centered) is discovered.

Schatzman and Strauss use the grounded theory paradigm in order to explicate and understand the manner in which people construct meaning as they tell stories. The guiding paradigm that provides the emergent theory’s organizational pattern in a dimensional analysis is as follows: “What strategies occur? Under what conditions and

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91 Strauss and Corbett, 61.
94 Charmaz, Constructing Grounded Theory, 187.
95 Strauss and Corbett, 116.
96 Schatzman, 308.
for whom? What are the consequences?\textsuperscript{97} While occupied with the task of coding, researchers constantly memo the ideas that occur to them as they strive to understand the research project in relation to the grounded theory paradigm. Examples of these memos may include an elaboration of codes, an explanatory statement about how various dimensions connect with one another, potential statements of theory, etc. Many theorists view memo writing as an intermediate step between coding and writing the first draft of an analysis.\textsuperscript{98}

When beginning research, grounded theorists do not identify specific groups of individuals as potential participants. Instead, these researchers practice a selective sampling that relies heavily on situational context. It “is shaped by the time the researcher has available to him, by his framework, by his starting and developing interests, and by any restrictions placed upon” his research.\textsuperscript{99} It is, for all intents and purposes, a sample of convenience. As the researcher’s theory (based upon initial interviews) begins to emerge, he or she utilizes the inductive technique of “theoretical sampling” in order “to fill out, saturate, and exhaust” the theoretical categories.\textsuperscript{100} Theoretical sampling (as articulated by Glaser in \textit{Emergence vs. Forcing: Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis}) refers to the researchers’ practice of selecting certain groups or individuals for further data collection in an attempt to understand a dimension or category more fully. The process of sampling

\textsuperscript{97} Burgoyne, Poulin, and Rearden, 158.


\textsuperscript{100} Charmaz, “The Grounded Theory Method,” 125.
ceases only after the researchers have fully explored all dimensions and arrived at a thorough understanding of each category’s scope and depth.\textsuperscript{101} Collection and analysis of data, however, are not mutually exclusive. “The analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is \textit{controlled} by the emerging theory.”\textsuperscript{102} In many ways, this process is cyclical – just as the collected data shape the emerging theory, the emerging theory shapes future data collection. For these reasons, the grounded theorist often develops procedure throughout the course of data collection by necessity.\textsuperscript{103} The theory that develops as a result of these strategies and procedures (coding, matrixing, sampling, etc.) is thoroughly “grounded” in the descriptions of the phenomenon as relayed through the collected interviews.\textsuperscript{104}

\textbf{Research Design}

In an attempt to understand the impact of interactive theatre on college students’ attitudes regarding heterosexism/homonegativity, this study comments on the presentation of a particular interactive scene utilizing Forum Theatre techniques and exploring heterosexist/homonegative issues for a variety of audiences.\textsuperscript{105} A group of six

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{101} Charmaz, “The Grounded Theory Method,” 124-25.
\item \textsuperscript{102} Bowers, “Grounded Theory,” 45.
\item \textsuperscript{103} Schatzman and Strauss, \textit{Field Research}, vii.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Charmaz, “Grounded Theory,” 30-31.
\item \textsuperscript{105} The scene is included in its entirety in Appendix A.
\end{itemize}
co-investigators drawn from the MU community (myself included) created this scene. The primary criteria for their selection were as follows:

1. All were enrolled as students at MU
2. All had some experience with Forum Theatre techniques
3. All were interested in finding an effective method of combating heterosexist/homonegative attitudes on campus.\footnote{This study revolves around a scene which was initially created and presented as a class assignment for a Theatre of the Oppressed course in which all participants were enrolled.}

We then scripted the scene through a process of improvisation using personal and observed knowledge of the issue. It was important to the research team that multiple perspectives were presented. Consequently, the characters were balanced in terms of their acceptance of LGB students.

As created, the scene depicts a group of four students (Deb, Christa, Kathae, and Margaret) seated at a table and working on a group project. A fifth student (David) enters late and begins making derogatory remarks about the sexual orientation of a woman who stole his parking space. Deb begins arguing with David, and the scene escalates to the point that she accidentally “outs” her friend Christa. Christa runs out of the room in a state of shock and is followed by an apologetic Deb. Following the precepts of Forum Theatre, our team constructed the performance described above in such a manner that none of the five characters depicted was either entirely “good” or entirely “bad.” Additionally, we designed each character in the scene to represent a different type of student reaction to the topic of heterosexism/homonegativity. The characters and the type of reaction we meant them to represent are listed below:
MARGARET – Feels uncomfortable with the topic. She seeks to avoid the discussion by urging the other students to get back to work.

KATHAE – Makes jokes about the situation. It is unclear if he is homophobic or just insensitive.

DEB – Stands up for personal beliefs and against oppression. She doesn’t always think before she speaks.

CHRISTA – Remains silent about both her sexuality and the prejudice that she experiences as a lesbian. She typically avoids confrontation about these issues.

DAVID – Bases his homophobia on religious beliefs. He is insensitive to the feelings of others.

Due to the wide range of reactions depicted, we hoped that audience members would identify with at least one of the characters.

Two selective samples of the general undergraduate student body (groups one and two) experienced the scene. Each of the twenty-five participants was enrolled in one of two undergraduate theatre courses. Although not necessary for a qualitative study of this nature, I hoped to achieve a measure of randomization due to the fact that I had selected general education courses comprised of students from major fields outside the theatre department. The instructors of these two classes fully incorporated the scene’s performance into their courses. Consequently, although students were not required to participate in the study, recruitment did not pose a serious problem.

During the selective sampling phase, after presenting the scene, we invited audience members to take on the role of Margaret within the sketch (I chose Margaret because she is the only character who does not express a position on the issue) and attempt to deal with the oppression. The intervening audience member and the actors actively performed each potential solution. As each spect-actor attempted to avert the
scene’s oppressive acts, the actors responded to the intervention in character. A focused
group discussion (hereafter simply referred to as a “discussion”) of both the scene’s
issues and the proposed solutions followed each intervention. We conducted these
discussions in the manner of a traditional focus group. Due to the number of students
involved, however, the term “focus group” is an inaccurate descriptor.

According to Gubrium and Holstein, “The interview is being reconceptualized as
an occasion for purposefully animated participants to construct versions of reality
interactionally rather than merely purvey data [as had been previously expected].”
In keeping with Gubrium and Holstein’s approach, I designed the discussion groups to
allow participants to construct the event in whatever fashion they so choose.
Consequently, the facilitator sought to empower the participants in a manner also
consistent with the advice of Eliot Mishler, who suggests that empowerment may be
achieved by allowing participants to “raise questions related to the topics under
consideration” and to tell their stories “on their own terms.”
Mishler continues his
discussion of participant empowerment by suggesting that the facilitator should guide
participants to realize that “answers are not meant to be conclusive but instead serve to
further the agenda for discussion.”

During selective sampling, I provided the facilitator with a focus group protocol
to guide the group discussions; however, after the initial question asking participants to
respond to what did and/or did not work in the interventions they had just witnessed, the

107 Gubrium and Holstein, 14.
108 Ibid., 19-20.
109 Ibid., 19-20.
facilitator did not interrupt the participants’ conversation except to probe or restart the conversation. In order to create a more conducive environment for fruitful dialogue, actors (as their characters) partook in the conversation once the discussions had begun (i.e., asking questions from the character’s perspective or providing the audience with insight into what the character was thinking and feeling). Consequently, the characters tended to offer any perspective that might be missing from the audience demographic. The initial question was intentionally general enough to allow the participants to construct their own understanding of the performance in whatever manner they should choose.

In the event that either the discussion should die out or further probing be necessary, the facilitator relied on the following topics as a guide:

1. Beliefs about sexual orientation
2. Personal experiences
3. Previous preparation
4. Attitudes concerning the interaction of students from disparate backgrounds
5. Reactions to interactive theatre interventions
6. Beliefs/theories about interactive theatre and student attitudes/competencies

Each presentation lasted approximately one hour and was recorded for later transcription. Additionally, we asked all participants to complete a questionnaire collecting demographic data and opinions of the presentation. We gathered the demographic data before the performance began. At various intervals throughout the presentation, we also asked participants to complete other questions on the survey.

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110 The complete protocol is located in Appendix 4.

111 The Survey may be found in Appendix 6. Actors were not be asked to complete questions 8-11, although they were asked these questions verbally during the session when relevant.
Finally, I applied the methodological rigors of grounded theory to the transcriptions taken from both the interventions and subsequent discussions, as well as the written surveys.\textsuperscript{112} The Institutional Review Board approved all aspects of this study (including modifications) prior to implementation.

**Procedural Modifications**

Upon completion of the selective sampling phase (groups one and two), I coded and matrixed the transcripts in order to arrive at a set of categories relevant to the phenomenon under study. Once I discovered these categories, I began the process of theoretical sampling. To better facilitate participant empowerment, I divided additional participants into three distinctive groupings of participants: a general sample of the undergraduate student body (groups three and four), members of the campus LGB community (group five), and the actors who performed within the scene (group six).\textsuperscript{113} For the first two groups (the general sample), I drew participants from students enrolled in two undergraduate theatre courses. They were primarily a purposively selected sample. Each class was a general education course, and the majority of participants were from major fields outside of the theatre department. I included only LGB students in the second group of participants. Although also a purposively selected sample, this cohort was considerably smaller than the previous group (only two LGB individuals consented

\textsuperscript{112} The complete matrices for each cohort are located in Appendices 7-9.

\textsuperscript{113} The number of students who participated in each group was as follows: twelve in Group 1, thirteen in Group 2, twelve in Group 3, fourteen in Group 4, two in Group 5, and four in Group 6.
I recruited these participants through existing campus LGB communities. I invited four student actors who had performed in the scene over the last two years to take part in the final grouping. In addition to the group discussions, I also offered individual interviews to all participants – although none chose to exercise this option.

After I had carefully reviewed the transcripts taken from the selective samples, I deemed a number of procedural changes necessary prior to theoretical sampling. These included the following: modified participant interventions, increased survey/participant linkages, and the utilization of more focused interview methods.

I. Participant Interventions

During selective sampling, I had asked the participants to step in for the character of Margaret and attempt to deal with the oppressions presented within the scene. As scripted, Margaret’s primary objective is to avoid these types of uncomfortable conversations and, instead, focus on getting the study group back to work. Due to the number of participants who stepped into the scene and continued with this objective, however, I could not determine whether these individuals felt unduly pressured into “acting” the role of Margaret or if they in fact believed that this approach was the best way to deal with the situation. In an attempt to eliminate this potential constraint, I chose to invite participants to intervene as themselves during theoretical sampling. To further stress that participants were themselves and not a character, the actors within the scene addressed the intervening participants by their given name. This approach allowed the

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114 The protocol that was used to guide the actors’ interview may be found in Appendix 5.
participants to "author" the intervention more fully, not only empowering the individual, but also engendering a sense in the participant that he/she had a stake in the process. The ultimate result of such an approach (as suggested by the available literature) was that participants were more willing to participate and tell their stories with little hesitation.115

II. Survey/Participant Linkages

Initially, the grounded theory analysis suffered from an inability to link survey responses with recorded oral data. Although the questionnaires collected demographic information from each of the participants, I was only able to use this information for the coding and matrixing of other survey responses. Consequently, I could not apply this data to the entire paradigm. During theoretical sampling, I began a process of coding participants and surveys with a corresponding number with which I later linked the demographic data to the information gathered from the transcribed interviews. I instituted this procedural change in an effort to clarify the conditional element of the paradigm ("For whom?"). This, in turn, significantly diminished the need to ask each participant to provide such demographic statements within the group discussions.

To ensure continued participant confidentiality, I implemented the aforementioned modification in the following manner. Participants were seated in a row prior to the performance. I then passed out numbered surveys to the seated participants in order from left to right. In this way, I knew what number survey each participant had completed without asking. As each participant spoke, I took note of his/her number so

115 Gubrium and Holstein, 19-20
that oral and written responses could be matched during transcription. I ensured that all participants were made aware of this procedure prior to participating in the study.

III. Interview Methods

Post-modern theory demands that we pay due attention to the many and varied voices that inhabit the world in which we live. This task can be particularly daunting when conducting focus group research on controversial topics. Group discussions of this nature can often be problematic in terms of participant empowerment when one or more of the participants express a position that stands in opposition to the opinions held by the majority. Additionally, this issue may be further compounded when participants are allowed to determine the direction of the interview and the subtopics to be explored.

Even when participants share similar views on a topic, the possibility remains that the individuals within a group will express distinct horizons of meaning. Holstein and Gubrium define these "horizons of meaning" as patterns of narrative linkages through which "coherent, meaningful configurations emerge." The authors continue to state, "These horizons provide narrative contexts that suggest other linkages. Horizons and linkages are mutually constitutive, reflexively relating patterns to their constituent parts and connections."\(^{116}\) These horizons become of further issue in the sense that marginalized voices may not be heard within a heterogeneous group of participants due

either to self-censorship or to intense peer-pressure. In "Queering the Interview," the authors point out the need to hear these voices:

The missing voice of "authentic"... gays and lesbians under the sign of compulsory heterosexuality in the sex/gender regime of society can become a key to new forms of local knowledge. The heterosexual/homosexual binary is recognized as a master rhetoric, not an essential framework, for constructing the self, sexual knowledge, and social institutions. This binary sex system, or power/knowledge regime, is critically assessed for how it creates rigid psychological and social boundaries that inevitably give rise to systems of dominance and hierarchy.¹¹⁷

The inherent implication in this passage is that new ways of imagining the interview process are imperative if one wishes to overcome these individuals’ systemic marginalization. Furthermore, we must also seek to empower all voices from across the spectrum – not just LGB – in order to achieve a true multi-vocality.

The need for innovative interview methodologies is not an unfamiliar notion. The most noteworthy proponents (not to mention the most enduring) of "heightened self-awareness and reflexivity" have traditionally been feminist scholars.¹¹⁸ In seeking an unequivocal approach to this question, we must realize that the form of the interview will doubtlessly shape the content of data provided by the participants. The interview, as seen through a post-modern sensibility, is a locus of experiential meaning-making.¹¹⁹ Consequently, an ill-conceived approach may result in an unwelcome rejoinder. In accord with this view, "the respondent both construes and calls on what is considered relevant in

¹¹⁷ Travis S. K. Kong, Dan Mahoney, and Ken Plummer, "Queering the Interview," in Handbook of Interview Research, eds. Gubrium and Holstein, 246.

¹¹⁸ Kong, Mahoney, and Plummer, 239.

¹¹⁹ Holstein and Gubrium, 16.
relation to the matters under consideration in the interview, assembling the information so that it makes sense as a response, that it coalesces into a circumstantially sensible and relevant story. In this case, the respondent acts as the narrator of experiential knowledge. Consequently, a marginalized individual will often formulate only responses that are acceptable to both the moderator and to the other participants within the context of a hostile environment. The exigent concern in the face of such a stricture requires an approach that will facilitate a willful multi-vocality.

The efficacy of a focus group, as articulated by David Morgan in *Focus Group as Qualitative Research*, lies within "the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group," In terms of a homogenous grouping, this type of interaction leads to a relatively "high level of participant involvement." Conversely, an identical situation - when applied to a group of heterogeneous individuals - can have a stifling effect. Generally speaking, focus groups generate data in the form of discourse and are particularly adept at effectuating interaction among participants on topics which exist outside the purview of daily interaction. When the subject matter is of a highly controversial nature, however, individuals who hold an opinion outside the majority are all too frequently silenced.

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120 Holstein and Gubrium, 55.


122 Ibid.

123 Ibid., 21; Holstein and Gubrium, 21.
When dealing with homogenous groups, the literature seems to recommend a low level of interviewer/moderator involvement. This technique’s greatest benefit lies within the fact that interaction among participants "replaces their interaction with the interviewer, leading to a greater emphasis on participants' points of view." Additionally, due to the fact that there are less likely to be opposing views within a homogenous grouping than within a heterogeneous one, participants can more easily engage in controversial topics without the need for intervention on the part of the interviewer to maintain a civil environment. In this approach, the moderator should generally adhere to an extremely limited number of broadly stated topics (the authors of *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research* suggest just two ensure thorough coverage of all possible dimensions.

A high level of interviewer/moderator involvement with heterogeneous groups is, in many cases, preferable for a variety of reasons. First, a skilled moderator can put individuals with very different views on a controversial subject at ease by preventing hostility from breaking out between various factions. It is important, in these situations, for the moderator to stress the desire to hear about experiences rather than opinions. According to Morgan, "not everyone is willing to state or defend an opinion,

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124 Morgan, 18.
125 Ibid., 50.
126 Ibid., 56-58.
127 Ibid., 50.
but most people are willing to tell their stories.”128 Additionally, the interviewer should state that he/she is particularly interested in hearing from individuals who have had experiences that differ from those of the majority - that all experiences are important to the goals of the project.129 The primary function of the moderator in groups of individuals with differing opinions is to ensure that everyone is heard - that no voice is silenced. As the possibility of encountering increasingly heterogeneous groupings within the general student population became clear, I came to realize that there was an urgent need for more focused questions to explore the phenomenon.

These new questions served the added purpose of keeping the discussions more tightly focused on the research question. As categories and concepts began to emerge from the initial round of sampling, I came to realize that there was an increased need for questions to explore these dimensions more directly. During selective sampling, I had freely allowed the participants to address virtually any topic that they chose. Although this approach encouraged discussion, participants tended to avoid topics related to what – if any – impact the presentation had on them personally. Consequently, I developed a set of scripted questions out of necessity, not only in order to maintain civility between participants, but also to keep the participants focused on topics that might potentially aid in my understanding of the ways that the scene had influenced them.

I utilized Kathy Charmaz’s “Examples of Grounded Theory Interview Questions” to shape the intermediate queries posed to the participants in order to help prevent

128 Morgan, 52.
129 Ibid.
“forcing” the data into preconceived categories (a process that allows the categories already discovered to grow and/or change). They were patterned after Charmaz due to her constructivist approach to grounded theory in which she – like other constructivists and myself – studies “how participants construct meanings and actions.”  

A sample of the questions used in this process follows:

1. What are the most significant ways of dealing with these types of issues? How did you discover them? How has your experience before viewing the scene affected how you handled the issues?
2. Have your views, thoughts, and/or feelings changed since viewing the presentation? If so, how? Why do you think that is?
3. Have you grown because of this experience? How?
4. After seeing the presentation, has the advice you might give others in this situation changed? If so, how?
5. Is there anything that you might not have thought about before this experience?
6. What, if anything, did you learn from this process? If learning occurred, what lessons were most important?
7. What individual or part of this experience has been most helpful?

After a period of between one and two months, I revisited the heterosexual student population and members of the campus LGB community in order to gather additional data through a second group discussion. In this second meeting I asked the students (1) what they remembered from the earlier presentation, (2) whether any of their opinions had changed since the performance, and (3) whether they have had the occasion to use anything learned in the prior session. Because the performers had been involved with the

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130 Charmaz, “Qualitative Interviewing,” 677.

131 This list is neither exhaustive nor was every question asked of each group. A question was not asked if, for instance, the topic had already been discussed by the group without prompting (as was often the case for the more homogenous LGB and actor groupings). I also deemed additional questions necessary at times in order to probe vague or incomplete responses.

132 A participant’s inclusion into a particular cohort was determined by his/her survey responses rather than by the group with which he/she had viewed the performance.
scene for a considerable length of time, I did not revisit them since I was able to ask these questions during the initial interview.

IV. Disclosure and Interviewer Bias

When conducting interviews within a post-modem frame, scholars agree that full and complete disclosure is necessary to gain the confidence of the individual and to negate the effects of any potential interviewer bias. In "Queering the Interview," the authors question whether or not researchers should belong to the same group as the project’s participants.\(^{133}\) In answer to this question, Holstein and Gubrium raise the idea of "creative interviewing:"

Creative interviewing is a set of techniques for moving past the mere words and sentences exchanged in the interview process. To achieve this, the interviewer must establish a climate for mutual disclosure. The interview should be an occasion that displays the interviewer's willingness to share his or her own feelings and deepest thoughts. This is done to assure respondents that they can, in turn, share their own thoughts and feelings. The interviewers' deep disclosure both occasions and legitimizes the respondent's reciprocal revelations.\(^{134}\)

Agreeing, “Queering the Interview” notes that this approach is especially important when interviewing members of the gay community. According to these authors, many LGB individuals will only share their personal experiences if they feel safe in doing so.\(^{135}\) It has been my experience that this maxim also holds true for those who hold opinions on

\(^{133}\) Kong, Mahoney, and Plummer, 245.

\(^{134}\) Holstein and Gubrium, 12.

\(^{135}\) Kong, Mahoney, and Plummer, 251.
the opposite end of the spectrum. One might even be justified in extrapolating this assertion to anyone who runs the risk of marginalization within a group dynamic.

According to Singleton and Straits, "Several studies have shown, for example that the race of the interviewer affects racially relevant responses . . . . Less is known about whether other variables, such as age, gender, and class, have the same effect as race, although this seems likely when a specific interviewer trait is particularly relevant."136 In the spirit of this statement, it would also seem likely that sexuality and the surrounding traits (i.e., heterosexism/homonegativity) would also prove to be relevant in a focus group aimed at exploring these issues.

Although I agree with the need for mutual disclosure in general (and in principal), there are exigencies under which self-revelation may prove detrimental to the research project. Chief among these conditions is a heterogeneous group. In these types of situations, participants with views that differ from the researcher’s might easily construe the interviewer’s self-disclosure as a hostile act, particularly when these participants are in the minority. In these instances, restraint is often far more conducive to the overall environment. At times such as this, it may be better to simply follow the traditional admonishment:

The interviewer communicates a neutral, nonjudgmental stance with respect to the substance of the answers. The interviewer should not provide any personal information that might imply any particular values or preference with respect to topics covered in the interview, nor should the

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interviewer provide any feedback to respondents, positive or negative, with respect to the specific content of the answers they provide.\textsuperscript{137}

Of course no rule can be followed blindly, and one must consider all of the potential ramifications of any approach before embarking on a course of action. In the context of the research project outlined in this study, however, it is more likely that a moderator will hold a positive attitude toward members of the LGB community than that he/she will not. Disclosing this information without knowing the attitudes of all participants is apt to silence the voices of those who would otherwise express heterosexist/homonegative attitudes.

Numerous scholars have addressed this type of interviewer bias over the years. Gubrium and Holstein point to studies as early as 1929 that illustrate "interviewer effects" and ultimately led to widespread attempts at standardization.\textsuperscript{138} When Robert Weiss stated that "the interview is a virtual window on that experience, a kind of universal panopticon," however, he did not fully realize the implication that his words held for those outside the norm.\textsuperscript{139} The panopticon of which he spoke also forces the individual to police him/herself. An individual who holds views that are inconsistent with those held by the majority will be reticent to express those views when he/she senses that he/she is in the minority. Traditional attempts to mediate interviewer bias have little effect in these types of situations.

\textsuperscript{137} Holstein and Gubrium, 38.

\textsuperscript{138} Singleton and Straits, 60.

\textsuperscript{139} Gubrium and Holstein, 20.
Another possible approach, suggested as early as 1947 by Cantril, posits the notion that interviewers with opposing opinions may cancel out any potential interviewer bias. During selective sampling, I hoped that this approach would also cancel out any subsequent "interviewer effects" as well. In order to achieve this goal, I allowed actors to interact with the participants during the discussion while "in character." The actress/interviewer portraying the lesbian offers one example of this practice below:

CHRISTA: What if I dropped out of the group and did it last minute and then it hurt my grade and I got an "F" in the course, and I did really bad in some of my other classes because today David did this, but this evening somebody else is going to say something like this, and tomorrow morning when I drive into campus someone else is going say something, and then eventually I drop out of school? I move back home to my hometown . . . . I don't know any other lesbians there, you know, and you can take it to the end, sort of worst case scenario?

Although this method is unorthodox, it achieved the desired effects. Students with varying perspectives felt comfortable enough to share their views with the group at large. This comfort level is evident in the following statement (prior to this exchange, the facilitator – taking the more traditional, neutral position – had asked if any of the participants identified with any of the characters in the scene. In this particular instance, the individual had identified with David, the character who expressed extremely homonegative views): “Since we were all brought up (or most of us brought up) to think that gay was wrong. I was. I was brought up that way. I was David in this play.” By providing participants with characters/interviewers who share the same beliefs and flaws, the research design encourages participant identification. When this approach is

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facilitated by a neutral, non-threatening interviewer, it empowers participants who might otherwise feel marginalized to tell their own stories.

During selective sampling, I severely underestimated the heterogeneous nature of the audience (fortunately, however, the discussions were civil). In these early performances, I elected to play the role of David – as much out of necessity as the assumption that the facilitator’s role would be a fairly simple one. During theoretical sampling, however, I chose to make some minor modifications. Although I continued to play David, I did so with greater forethought than before and based upon my prior experience with groups one and two. In the earlier discussions, I thought the voices that were in the greatest danger of being marginalized were those who agreed with the views expressed by the character of David. During theoretical sampling, I took over from the facilitator after the performance to administer the more focused questions discussed in the previous section (prior to this, the facilitator had conducted the group discussions without my assistance). I hoped that my earlier performance would provide an environment that these participants might perceive as less hostile. The notable exception to this approach is that prior to beginning the discussion with the LGB group, I disclosed my sexual orientation as gay – in an attempt to ensure that my earlier performance as the character of David did not become a liability.
Credibility

Credibility standards for qualitative research vary greatly among various disciplines and methodological approaches. Morrow, however, outlines four distinct “criteria for trustworthiness across research paradigms and designs.” These standards include the following: social validity, subjectivity and reflexivity, adequacy of data, and adequacy of interpretation. In this section, I describe how this study meets each of these criteria.

I. Social Validity

While I have previously addressed the importance of this study’s topic in the justification for the study, I have yet to touch upon its transferability. Due to the methodological nature of qualitative research, the theory that I hope to generate through this analysis is not intended to be indicative of any group other than those participating in this particular study at the point in which data were collected and analyzed. I mean only to represent the experiences of the study’s participants when faced with the specific phenomenon of the scene previously described with this emergent theory. Although I certainly hope that these results will be relatable to a larger student population, due to the fact that the data were collected in an institutional context, those in other contexts may not find the results to be entirely applicable to their situations. Having provided a detailed

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description of both the campus climate and the performance context under which this study was conducted, I leave the determination of transferability to the reader.

II. Subjectivity and Reflexivity

Having taken the constructivist approach to this study, I acknowledge the fact that my biases and assumptions have played a role in the interpretation of the data (although I have also made every effort to minimize their influence). Consequently, I would like to make these biases and assumptions overt to the reader. Although my race, sex, religious beliefs (white, male, and atheist) as well as other factors have likely played some role in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data; my inclusion in the LGB community is the aspect of my personality that is most likely to have shaped and informed this study. I can say with certainty that it is responsible for my asking of the research question. I admit that the process of self-reflection has greatly influenced my beliefs. When I began this study, I was keenly aware of the heterosexist/homonegative culture in which I found myself – the state in which I lived had just passed an amendment to ban gay marriage. Freire suggests that the oppressed individual, seeing his/her situation only in terms of the oppressed/oppressor binary, may initially take on characteristics of the oppressor in his/her quest for liberation.¹⁴² For these individuals it is an “either/or” proposition – to not be oppressed is to be an oppressor. This was, in many ways, how I saw my situation. I wanted to do something about the situation in which I found myself. I wanted nothing more than to silence my oppressors – to take their voice as they had taken

¹⁴² Freire, 43-70.
mine. Fortunately, by fate or by design, I elected to portray my oppressor in the scene and allow another who held a more neutral stance to facilitate the performance during the selective sampling phase (minimizing the influence of my biases). In my quest to fully embrace the character to which I had been assigned, I came to understand his perspective – to see his humanity and to see oppressive tendencies in myself. I do not mean to imply that this transformation was immediate, however. The sketch described in this document was chosen to become part of the repertoire of the university’s interactive theatre troupe during the time between this study’s selective and theoretical sampling phases, and I had the opportunity to play the role on numerous occasions. As a result, I entered the theoretical sampling phase with a much more compassionate view of my oppressors. I did not want to change them so much as I wanted to change the culture in which we both lived. Because of my personal experiences, I also began this phase firm in the belief of the overall positive influence of Forum Theatre. To ensure credibility, my dissertation advisor periodically reviewed my research. The final product was also reviewed by a dissertation committee.

Ponterotto and Grieger describe the process of “bracketing” as one of “setting aside assumptions and suspending judgment on the experience or phenomena to be studied.”\footnote{Joseph G. Ponterotto and Ingrid Grieger, “Effectively Communicating Qualitative Research,” \textit{The Counseling Psychologist} 32, no. 3 (May 2007): 414.} In an attempt to minimize the imposition of my biases on the data, I recorded the following assumptions prior to selective sampling. I have considered these assumptions in terms of the prior experiences and current practices of students at MU, as
well as the potential benefits of Forum Theatre. These assumptions do not vary according to the sexual identity of the participants except where noted.

A. Prior Experience

I assume that the prior experiences of students will greatly influence the manner in which they receive this project. Current scholarship demonstrates that those holding heterosexist views are most likely white, Republican, Christian, and male. Therefore, I anticipate that these individuals will be least likely to engage in the process. Furthermore, I assume that a reasonably large percentage of MU students have never met a member of the LGB community. Despite these potential drawbacks, however, I expect both gay and straight students (audience members and actors) to benefit from this experience.

B. Current Practices

In terms of current practices, I assume that students do not discuss this subject with a critical eye trained on exploring solutions among themselves. As a result, these same students have never really thought about what they would do in a situation where someone was facing discriminatory behavior. I also assume that some students are unaware of the issue of sexual prejudice on campus or even that their behavior might constitute sexual prejudice. When given the opportunity for discussion, however, I expect that students have opinions on the subject (either pro or con) and are capable of expressing those opinions.

144 Obear, 45-48.
C. Potential Benefit

The primary assumption guiding this research is that prejudice results from ignorance. Consequently, I expect that student discussion of these issues can have a positive effect, and that experience with this interactive theatre piece will leave all participating students better prepared to face discriminatory behavior.

III. Adequacy of Data

Morrow suggest five criteria to achieve adequacy of data. These include “(a) adequate amounts of evidence, (b) adequate variety in kinds of evidence, (c) interpretive status of evidence, (d) adequate disconfirming evidence, and (e) adequate discrepant case analysis.”¹⁴⁵ In order to ensure an adequacy of data, I continued theoretical sampling until saturation (or redundancy) occurred. Although the number of participants required varies considerably according to the literature, I conducted a sufficient number of interviews to ensure an adequate amount of data.¹⁴⁶ While a total of 57 students were enrolled in this study, there were no fewer than four participants in any particular cohort. Furthermore, I used multiple sources of data to achieve an adequate variety in kinds of evidence. I also utilized data triangulation (number of participants) or methodological triangulation (intervention observation, group discussions, and survey responses) to corroborate the conclusions of this study and check for consistency. Additionally, I became thoroughly immersed into the research setting in order to enhance the interpretive status of the

¹⁴⁵ Morrow, 255.
¹⁴⁶ Ibid.
evidence. Prior to the conclusion of this study, I had spent four years with the MU interactive theatre troupe performing in various contexts on campus. Finally, I conducted a detailed search for disconfirming evidence within the collected data. While these instances are few, Chapter Six discusses the topic at length. Finally, I also conducted an exhaustive search of the literature to ensure adequate discrepant case analysis in both the review of the literature and the conclusion of this study.

IV. Adequacy of Interpretation

I have discussed both the theoretical framework (grounded dimensional analysis) and the particular research design of this study at length prior to this section. In order to further the adequacy of my interpretation, however, I have made every effort to ensure a balance between the various parts of my emerging theory and the supporting participant quotations. I have sought to present the reader with a balanced view of all the possible participant perspectives reflected in the data. I have also attempted to provide thick description whenever possible. Furthermore, I have included detailed participant demographics and purposefully designed visual representations of the explanatory paradigm to aid the reader in their understanding of both the context surrounding the data collection and the emerging theory.
Conclusion

Conducting focus group research on controversial issues is never simple, and the use of grounded theory demands a flexible methodology. One thing is certain, however – approaching homogeneous and heterogeneous groups in the same manner is seldom a productive practice in the pursuit of multi-vocality. I developed and explored the strategies described in this chapter in an effort to ensure that every voice was heard. This study empowered its participants through a variety of techniques: modified participant interventions, increased survey/participant linkages, and the utilization of more focused interview methods. This study also allowed its participants to "author" the interview and tell their stories on their own terms to the greatest extent possible. The ultimate goal of these techniques was the creation of an environment in which all of the participants (including those who have traditionally been marginalized by the majority or held views inconsistent with the majority) felt the support and encouragement necessary to tell their own stories.
CHAPTER 3
HETEROSEXUAL STUDENT POPULATION

Introduction

Although all three groups of participants indicated the same core strategy and core consequence, there were subtle differences in the explanatory paradigm (What strategies are employed? Under what conditions and for whom? With what consequences?) for each cohort. This chapter represents my understanding of the paradigm as it emerged from the responses of the heterosexual student cohort after they had observed a performance of the heterosexism sketch. My intent is solely to begin to provide an understanding of the response to this study’s research question (What is the impact of interactive theatre on college students in regard to heterosexism and/or homonegativity?) from the perspective of the heterosexual audience member. This cohort was comprised of forty-eight participants. Half partook in the selective sampling phase. The remaining twenty-four participated during theoretical sampling. Seventeen of this latter sample also took part in the follow-up interview. Specific demographics for this group are provided on the next two pages (Tables 1 and 2).
### DEMOGRAPHICS: HETEROSEXUAL AUDIENCE COHORT

<table>
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<th>17 – 19 year olds</th>
<th>22 – 20 year olds</th>
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<td>5 – Agnostic</td>
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<td>16 – Conservative / Republican</td>
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<td>16 – No</td>
<td>1 – No Answer</td>
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Table 1: Aggregate demographic data for the heterosexual audience cohort

### Explanatory Paradigm

In all three of the participant groupings (Heterosexual, LGB, and Actors), two core categories emerged – a core strategy (**Engaging with the Performance**) and a core consequence (**Multicultural Competencies**). The term Multicultural Competencies, refers to any “skill, knowledge or ability” that concerns the “practice of giving equal attention or representation to the cultural needs and contributions of all the groups in a

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147 For easier identification of the various dimensions of this study, I have used bold print to indicate all major dimensions (i.e., conditions, strategies, and consequences). The use of bolding does not apply to the “for whom?” portion of the explanatory paradigm due to the fact that I have divided the chapters according to this criteria.
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<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Individual participant demographics for members of the heterosexual audience who are quoted in this chapter (when available). All participants have been given code names to protect their anonymity.

society." The core consequence for this group consisted of several dimensions:

Knowledge about the consequences of various intervention strategies, an increased

Awareness of oneself and one’s surroundings, and a Willingness to Act when faced with

oppression. Heterosexual students indicated that two types of conditions influenced their

engagement: Performance Characteristics and Audience Member Characteristics. A

visual representation of the dimensions (as well as their sub-dimensions is depicted in

Figure 1 (p.68).

148 This description of “Multicultural Competencies” is a combination of the definitions of

“multiculturalism” offered by Webster’s New World College Dictionary and “competence” from The

American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (<http://www.yourdictionary.com> accessed on 16

February 2011).
I. CONDITIONS FOR THE CORE STRATEGY
   A. Performance Characteristics
   B. Audience Member Characteristics

II. CORE STRATEGY: ENGAGING WITH THE PERFORMANCE
   A. Analysis
   B. Imagined Solutions
   C. Interventions
   D. Dialogue with One’s Peers

III. CORE CONSEQUENCE: MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES
   A. Knowledge
      1. Avoidance
      2. Confrontation
      3. Effectiveness
   B. Awareness
      1. Self
      2. Surroundings
   C. Willingness to Act
      1. Speak Out
      2. Self-Censor
      3. Acknowledge Differing Views

Figure 1: Visual representation of the heterosexual audience’s explanatory paradigm
I. Core Strategy: Engaging with the Performance

The students’ engagement with the performance directly impacted their multicultural competencies. Daniel (who did not engage with the presentation) stated, “I didn’t learn much because I try not to look at things like that.” Heterosexual audience members who participated fully in the performance, however, utilized the following types of engagement: **Analysis** of the performance, **Imagined Solutions** for the oppression, **Interventions** of the depicted oppression, and/or **Dialogue** with their peers. Additionally, although I have described these sub-dimensions separately, there was a strong conditional link among the first three – analysis was necessary in order for solutions to be imagined, and solutions needed to be imagined for interventions to occur.

A. Analysis

Ursula described analysis of the performance as consisting primarily of trying to understand what did or did not work in the performance in order to arrive at the most effective intervention strategy. She observed, “Once you see what happened, then you . . . think about it. And then you’re like, ‘Okay, this may have been okay, but that may have not been okay.’ Just kind of . . . analyzing the situation to see what was right and what was wrong to you. And imagine what you would have done different.”

B. Imagined Solutions

In addition to the condition of analysis, a second condition further complicated some participants’ ability to imagine possible solutions to the oppression. These students
found it very difficult to think of solutions due to a lack of familiarity with the issues. (Although the condition of “familiarity” is closely linked to the condition of “previous experience” that I will discuss later in this chapter, the two conditions are separated by degree. Participants who spoke of “familiarity” could not identify any personal experience with the issue of heterosexism/homonegativity. Those students who discussed “prior experience” referred to extensive personal experience with the issue.) Participants who described their process for imagining solutions tended to use real-life experiences (indicating a familiarity with the topic through vicarious experience). Cathy pointed out, “I kind of drew it [her intervention] from my friends that are a different orientation. . . . So it wasn’t my experience, I guess, but it was my experience observing that [her friends].” On the other hand, participants like John who had no familiarity with the scene’s issues (vicarious or otherwise), had a much more difficult time thinking of possible interventions:

JOHN: I’m generally one of those people that’ll jump in there and, you know, a lot of times I’ll bite someone’s head off. But other times, I should just try to settle the dust. But a situation like this is a lot different because when you’re expected to try to, want to get involved with something it’s harder to think something up. I was trying to think something up to get in there, but I was like, “This is more difficult when . . . it’s not actually you that’s in the situation. It’s somebody else.” It’s hard to make up a way to screw it up.

RESEARCHER: So, do you think if you had experienced something in your real life it might have made it easier, is that what you’re saying?

JOHN: Yeah.

RESEARCHER: because . . . it’s not like anything you’ve experienced.

JOHN: Right.
C. Interventions

Interventions were the participants’ most direct method of engagement and (as previously mentioned) depended on the conditions of analyzing the scene and imagining solutions. The condition of personal discomfort, however, also influenced one’s ability to intervene in the scene or practice various scenarios. Most often, students who felt discomfort tended to identify with the character of Margaret. In fact, twenty of the forty-eight participants (42 percent) identified with this character. Students like Grace identified with this character because Margaret is “neutral” and is generally “too shy to speak up.” Grace’s discomfort stemmed from public speaking rather than from the issues being discussed. Conversely, students such as Penny found that their unease arose directly from the presentation’s topic. When asked with which character she most closely identified and why, Penny wrote: “Margaret, because these types of situations make me uncomfortable and I would try to change the subject.” When asked how she would respond in the situation she wrote, “I probably would have been the person trying to get everyone focused on the project and not on each other. Otherwise I would have just sat there because it was none of my business.” Further probing at the end of the session revealed that she had learned “that this topic still makes [her] extremely uncomfortable.”

Participants only discussed personal discomfort as a limiting condition, one which prevented them from intervening. None of the participants specifically addressed whether or not being comfortable with the scene’s issues had an impact on their willingness to engage with the performance.
D. Dialogue

For some participants, knowledge gained through discussion was just as effective as that gained through other methods of engagement. In defining dialogue (outside the context of this performance) Ursula said that she and her friends “talk about how it [diversity] affects what we’re doing and how it doesn’t affect. And also how what we may be doing may affect somebody else…just to think about what’s going on and how we can better ourselves.” This same student deemed discussion stemming from a structured setting such as the performance more effective than other, more casual, discussions of the issues: “I think it’s more positive than . . . sometimes than talking to them [fellow classmates] outside of a classroom setting because people are more respectful and more considerate of other people’s feelings when it’s in a structured setting.”

II. Conditions for the Core Strategy

The heterosexual participants described two types of conditions that influenced their ability to engage with the presentation: Performance Characteristics and Audience Member Characteristics. Although this group mentioned only one performance characteristic (the perceived Realism of the scene), the remaining two cohorts added other characteristics to this dimension. Audience member characteristics discussed by heterosexual participants included the level of Prior Experience that the participant possessed, the participant’s Age, and the participant’s Background.
A. Performance Characteristics

In terms of performance characteristics, the heterosexual audience members only discussed the perceived Realism of the presentation. For participants like Ryan, the scene’s lack of verisimilitude was an issue:

I think the scenario was fairly atypical. . . . I don’t think it would necessarily happen like this . . . like maybe at a party where . . . thoughts and ideas are just flowing like water. . . . I think that’s whenever people start running their mouth, and somebody might get offended. It’s whenever . . . one person, like your character [David], is highly opinionated and stuck in their own ways . . . and another person is highly opinionated and stuck in their ways . . . you butt heads. . . . You’re going to have that situation, but I don’t necessarily think it would happen like this.

Ryan went on to state that because he perceived a lack of realism in the scene, he experienced no impact – either positive or negative. Although this dimension could not be verified through triangulation, I did find it to be prevalent in a great deal of the literature. Consequently, I believe that it is an important issue for some audience members that warrants further discussion. The reasons I have chosen to include this subdimension are discussed in greater detail in the observation section of this chapter and in the implications section of Chapter Six.

B. Audience Member Characteristics

The participant’s Prior Experience most directly influenced engagement with the performance. Participants who had extensive experience intervening in real-life instances of heterosexism/homonegativity did not feel compelled to intervene in the scene. The prior experiences of these participants mirrored those offered by the performance and,
consequently, provided the same types of competencies I discuss in this chapter (i.e., knowledge about the consequences of various intervention strategies, an increased awareness of self and surroundings, and changes in their willingness to act against oppression). Furthermore, participants who possessed these competencies prior to the performance were already prone to take action against oppression.

In terms of engaging with the performance, Martha offered the following explanation for why she did not intervene in the scene:

I don’t feel like there was much impact because this kind of situation is . . . a normal thing that could happen. So, I think if you wanted to get a big response out of people it would have to be something more over-the-top than rather just a conversation of opposing views. . . . Personally, I had a boyfriend that was just like your character [David]. So . . . this is a normal conversation that I would have had . . . six months ago…so it wasn’t anything that was like, “Well, I’ve never seen that before,” and I wanted to jump in and go, “No, that’s wrong.”

During the follow-up interview, Allison observed that her long-term behavior had not changed for the same reason: “If I have been in that situation it’s not something that would really stand out to me because I would defend somebody for what I believed would be right. So, that wouldn’t necessarily stand out because it’s something I would do anyway.” Janice (a member of the same discussion group) concurred:

Yeah, I agree with that. . . . I’ve had opportunities…or not opportunities…I’ve had . . . things come up where . . . we had a bunch of people in our apartment, and some guy that we didn’t even know came over and was making fun of one of our gay friends so we kicked him out. But that’s something we would have done no matter what.

Although the participants mainly discussed prior experience as a limiting condition, Albert did speculate how the performance might impact others. When asked, “What, if anything, did you learn from this experience?,” he replied: “I didn’t really learn anything
because I unfortunately live with a lot of republicans, so I realize how people are. For those that don’t live around it, I think it is helpful to show how people (some not all) really are.” This comment seems to suggest that those without extensive prior experience benefit from learning about others.

The participants’ Age also influenced the degree to which they were able to intervene. Students thought the performance would be more effective for younger than for older students. Speaking of the presentation, Ethan discussed the difficulty that older individuals experience in overcoming heterosexism/homonegativity:

The whole thing with education, I mean even if you’re going out and educating people in this way, there’s completely counter education where it’s abstinence only education, where everyone’s taught . . . all sex is bad. You shouldn’t do anything until you’re married. And . . . when you have kids that are learning that, that are saying, “Oh, yeah, you can’t have sex until you’re married.” And then you have these people who can’t get married and that are taking their own initiative. . . . It’s going against years of what they’ve been taught. . . . It’s hard to do for people.

Although Ethan’s comments were highly speculative, they were based upon observations of friends and family members. Anne, explaining her father’s difficulty coming to terms with his own heterosexism, offered another example of this type of anecdotal evidence:

When my dad . . . was in high school and college, he was the typical . . . frat guy . . . really homophobic. You know, like, ‘Straight guys rock!’ . . . But it was really hard for my dad at first to . . . get that. . . . My brother is straight, but . . . one of his best friends, who he hangs out with all the time, is gay . . . and that was very hard for him, you know? He’s like, ‘My teenage son . . . is hanging out this boy who likes other boys . . . What are people going to think?’ But . . . slowly . . . he knows Eric my brother’s friend, and really . . . really likes him, and slowly . . . he’s come to accept that. And it really doesn’t bother him anymore. And my dad gets . . . defensive when people talk about it negatively and stuff. And it can make me really proud of my dad because I know how he used to be . . . how hard that was for him.
Although the participants never fully explicated the role that an individual’s 
**Background** plays in his/her ability to engage with the performance, several mentioned 
it's influence. Lisa pointed out in her survey responses, “People have different beliefs, and 
I think it depends on how you were raised. But opinions can change. We all have 
different opinions on all different types of people.” Referring to his own experiences, 
Paul offered the following:

I’m not making a point with this. It’s just food for thought, but we’re 
throwing around that from the time everybody . . . since we were all 
brought up (or most of us brought up) to think that gay was wrong. I was. I 
was brought up that way. I was David in this play, but whether we did a 
complete 180 and . . . everybody in America believed that being gay was 
great. Who’s to say that that’s more right than the way we’re bringing 
them up now? I mean, it’s just…I don’t know. I don’t know the answer. 
It’s just food for thought.

It was clear from the context of these and other responses that how the individual was 
raised shaped the performance’s impact. However, participants never clearly articulated 
what types of backgrounds facilitate impact and what types do not.

**III. Core Consequence: Multicultural Competencies**

Members of this group consistently stated that engagement with the performance 
influenced multicultural competencies. These competencies included: **Knowledge** about 
the consequences of various intervention strategies, an increased **Awareness** of self and 
surroundings, and a **Willingness to Act** against oppression. In the following paragraphs, I 
describe these sub-dimensions’ properties in detail.
A. Knowledge

Through the performance process, students learned that not all intervention strategies were equal. Linda articulated: “I learned that there are several approaches [to dealing with oppression], but not every one will work.” As this assertion suggests, the participants frequently categorized these interventions in terms of their Effectiveness. Whereas participants always viewed Avoidance of the oppression as ineffective, they saw Confrontation of the oppression as both effective and ineffective (depending upon certain conditions). The three conditions that influenced the effectiveness of confrontation were Diatribe, Rationality, Time, and Age.

1. Avoidance

Heterosexual audience members listed three types of avoidance. Some of these students described avoidance as maintaining Silence in the Face of the Oppression. Janice (addressing the character of Christa, the lesbian, during the discussion period) stated:

Well, at first I was . . . really frustrated when you weren’t . . . sticking up for yourself. Because . . . if it was something that offended me I would be the first one to be . . . I wouldn’t need somebody else to stick up for me . . . adjust the problem that was affecting me. So at first I was really, like, ‘Why doesn’t she say something?’ . . . and it bothered me.

Other participants described avoidance as a Change of Subject (in this instance, rather than attempting to have a dialogue with the oppressor, participants most often chose to focus the group on their assigned class work). Rachel, who had attempted just this sort of intervention within the scene, explained herself in the following way:
But my point when I tried to do it, even though I knew what was going to happen, was actually what she had said [referring to an earlier comment that sometimes one just needs to ‘quiet the situation down’] . . . it doesn’t matter. You focus on . . . because you really can’t argue with them [oppressors], that’s just going to stir the . . . problem and you need to figure out and think. You just need to keep focused on what you’re trying to do.

Rachel’s comment led to a heated discussion among the group’s participants. Following this discussion a second student intervened with the same strategy: a change of subject. After watching these interventions back-to-back, two other spect-actors (Wilma and Greg) commented on the method’s ineffectiveness:

WILMA: But does this [approach] really fix the problem?

GREG: No.

WILMA: No. No, because…

GREG: Because…it still covers up…it still doesn’t fix the problem.

Participants described the final type of avoidance as simply an Exit from the Situation. Acknowledging the ineffectiveness of this approach, Billy said, “Usually [when] this kind of stuff happens there’s no way to be civil . . . Sometimes you want to leave, but that doesn’t solve the problem.”

Although the participants expressed dissatisfaction with avoidance, they suggested several conditions that might explain why an individual would choose this strategy (although the participants did not discuss any of these factors in depth). The first condition consisted of the issue’s Perceived Importance. Betty explained how this condition influenced her decision to either avoid or confront the scene’s oppression:
At this point in time there’s something more important which is this topic [the group project], which determines our grade, which can help us get the “A” or . . . whatever. . . . If you start having people harassing . . . gay people walking down the street . . . holding hands, and these people are harassing them and saying the “F” word to them and stuff. . . . That’s when stuff becomes malicious. . . . In the end . . . everyone’s allowed to have their own opinion. . . . You may not accept it, but there’s a fine line between what you can accept and what you can’t, and if it [another’s opinion] starts to make your life more difficult . . . then that’s when it becomes a big problem. At this point in time, it is very unfortunate that you [David] have to be a loud mouth, but you [the study group] have bigger things to worry about, and that’s what you should talk about. That’s why you’re here. Not to talk about the gay prejudices you have, but to get the thing [the project] done.

Gretchen agreed with this assessment in her survey response, writing, “It’s hard to fight fire with fire. If trying to accomplish a common goal [the scene’s group project], it’s best to hush everyone.” Although neither Betty nor Gretchen denied the importance of confronting the oppression, both viewed the project’s completion as more important. Consequently, the participants’ perception of a more pressing issue often leads to the issue’s avoidance through a change of subject. In this instance, the discussion about oppression could wait but finishing the project could not. I would like to point out that these students did not indicate that they would not confront the issue at a later time. Consequently, avoidance based upon the perceived importance of other factors would seem to be contingent upon the presence of more pressing issues. Once these issues are resolved, however, it is unclear what course of action the participants might pursue.

The second condition concerns whether or not one’s views on an issue are consistent with the Majority (clarification has been provided where needed due to the fact that her meaning is unclear when taken out of context). The participants had just been asked if they had ever experienced a real-life situation like the one depicted in the
Laura replied, “When that [an instance of homonegativity] happens, there’s more people who are okay with . . . gay rights. And if there’s one or two other people there . . . who aren’t cool with it . . . the majority of the people are, so they [the majority] . . . don’t speak out as much. That is what happens here [in the scene].” For this participant, when the majority of people present already agree with one’s perspective it is easier to resort to avoidance of the oppression. Participants in this particular discussion group had repeatedly expressed the view that confronting an oppressor within a situation like that portrayed in the scene was ineffective since the oppressor’s beliefs were left unchanged (I explore this topic in depth in the next section). Consequently, this condition only seems to apply if the individual seeks to influence the confrontation’s bystanders. Therefore, if the majority of the bystanders already agree with one’s position, there is no need to confront the oppressor since his/her views cannot be changed in a single encounter.

Participants also discussed internalized Psychological Factors as a condition for avoidance. Larry offered the opinion that, for whatever psychological reason, one might be prone to accept the role of oppressed:

I think that that person then . . . has a responsibility to themselves . . . to buck up and to do something. And I know that there’s always a lot of issues with that . . . you can’t control . . . but I think eventually when forced just to watch yourself . . . and say I’m looking out for myself and taking care of responsibility. It’s just like if you were in grade school and somebody was picking on you in the hallway, calling you names, I bet you when they called you that you wouldn’t take it lying down. I think that eventually . . . a person has to make a conscious decision to be a victim.

For Larry, the key to changing the oppressor/oppressed dynamic seems to reside within the oppressed – power is given to (rather than taken by) the oppressor. Sarah further
suggested that one’s shyness, or lack of the innate ability to speak out in public, might also potentially lead to avoidance. She suggests, “Not everybody’s as open and as verbal as people like Brian [a participant who had conducted an extremely confrontational intervention]. So it’s harder for other people just to be like, well, suck up, you know?” For both of these participants, one’s decision whether to avoid or to confront an oppressor was more closely related to one’s state of mind than to any external factor. Consequently, these students seem to be suggesting that oppressed individuals need to feel a sense of empowerment in order to choose confrontation over avoidance.

Finally, Janice propounds the idea of potential Negative Impact – if an individual believes speaking out might further complicate the situation he/she may instead choose avoidance: “even though I know that I usually am the first one to step up for myself . . . I have been in situations where, ‘Oh, my gosh! . . . I really can’t say anything, and I can make the situation worse if I do.’” Here, the participant compares her past behavior with the actions of the scene’s lesbian character. Janice’s past experiences had helped her come to the realization that confrontation can sometimes intensify the efforts of the oppressor, as it does in the performance. Although this particular spect-actor did not elaborate on why confrontation might further aggravate the situation, others did explore these reasons. I examine their comments in the following section.

2. Confrontation

When participants confronted the oppression through the use of a Diatribe, one or more of the following two consequences occurred: the intervention allowed the
confronter to **Express Him/Herself** and/or it forced the oppressor to **Hide His/Her Behavior**. For both outcomes, participants considered this approach ineffective due to the fact that – although his/her behavior might be altered – the oppressor’s belief system was left unchanged. Despite his acknowledgement of the strategy’s ineffectiveness, Brian described the satisfaction that he would derive from simply being able to **Express Himself**:

“I’d have a knock-down-drag-out. I would have. I know it wouldn’t solve anything, but . . . I wish they would have had a knock-down-drag-out. . . . I mean it’s like totally taking it on. Even though you maybe couldn’t solve anything . . . At least you can get it off your chest and everything because I think that makes you feel just a little bit better because you make yourself aware that it’s not ok . . . people don’t agree with people. I know that doesn’t solve anything and that it’s supposed to, but I’d rather have a knock-down-drag-out.

For Brian, the confrontation would provide a sort of catharsis, or purging, of pent up emotion. The need to stand up for himself outweighed any potentially negative impact that this approach might have on the situation. Brian’s decision to confront the issue hinged less on the impact that it might have on the oppressor and more on the impact that it would have on the confronter.

Heidi, on the other hand, discussed how confrontation can force the oppressor to change – although this change may merely force the individual to **Hide His/Her Behavior**:

I was just thinking . . . it’s really weird because I think that guys are . . . more worried about homosexuality than girls are. Most girls I talk to are like, ‘Well, why would anyone care? It’s their personal . . . choice.’ And it seems like the only people that make comments are guys, and every time I hear something I’ll say something . . . People will be like, ‘Oh, that’s so gay.’ I’ll be like, ‘why do you say that?’ . . . And they just kind of act like they don’t care. And we’ll just move on . . . But, I usually try to say
something, but . . . I don’t think it makes a difference in the person’s . . . head. So . . . they’re going to think that. Maybe they won’t say it around me.

Despite the fact that employing confrontation through diatribe provided a short-term solution to the problem, participants repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with this intervention’s long-term impact. For the majority of the participants, merely silencing the oppressor within the context of a specific occurrence was not an effective outcome. Instead, these students sought ways to change the core beliefs of the oppressor.

Although the participants did not view any of the intervention strategies as completely effective, several students did allow for the possibility that confrontation could result in a more satisfactory conclusion. Inez pointed out, “Voicing your opinion is a good thing because, even though some of the characters are close-minded, they still might take something away with them and realize how foolish they are being.”

Other participants fleshed out this sub-dimension more fully with the revelation of three additional conditions that influenced the efficacy of confrontation. The first condition was **Rationality**. As detailed by Nina, this condition referred to the ability to be ruled neither by emotions nor by prejudices. In response to a survey question (what, if anything, did you learn from this experience?), she wrote, “I learned that these kind of situations are difficult to deal with. It takes a calm, open-mind to solve these issues. This is not always available.” Unfortunately, Nina was not available to comment further on her statement. Based upon observation, however, I noted that participants who did not rationally approach interventions within the scene tended to resort to diatribe – a type of confrontation that the spect-actors identified as ineffective.
The second condition was **Time** – participants believed that the short amount of time allotted for each intervention was insufficient for *any* approach to be effective.

According to Harold there are no quick or easy solutions to the issue of heterosexism/homonegativity: “I was going to say earlier that if anybody could step in and fix the situation, we wouldn’t have any reason for this scene to be going on because they’d have fixed things goldenly already. But I think it’s a major problem that we can’t fix in a fifteen minute scene.” Unfortunately Harold did not offer any more information on this subject and was unavailable for a follow-up interview that might have shed more light on the condition. Given the context surrounding the utterance, however, I believe he was suggesting that engaging in a dialogue with the oppressive agent for a longer duration of time – perhaps even upon multiple occasions – might prove more effective. I would like to emphasize, however, that this is strictly *my* conclusion. The data collected by this study neither support nor refute this supposition.

The final condition listed as a determinant of the effectiveness of confrontation was the **Age** of the oppressor. Tammy stated the following:

I think . . . parents are responsible for some of it . . . I don’t know if it will ever change really, because I think it has to do with . . . your family. . . lot of it is . . . the way you were raised, and how you’re brought up. . . . My parents were so open-minded. So . . . I was raised to think that . . . you should respect everyone. . . . But a lot of people’s parents are like that, and so . . . when they raise their kids in a household thinking that . . . being gay is wrong . . . I don’t know. . . . feel like it’s ingrained from . . . such a young age and you identify with your family so much that you almost believe what they say is true. If your mom says something since the time you’re really young you . . . believe that as you grow older. So I think it’s harder to change the older you get. So . . . any education that’s done would have to be . . . at a really young age.
According to this quote, the age of the oppressor would seem to be very closely tied to the length of time that he/she has been indoctrinated into a certain belief system – a longer indoctrination period might necessitate a longer (not to mention more difficult) intervention.

3. Effectiveness

Audience members gauged the outcome of each intervention strategy in terms of its overall Effectiveness. Participants considered strategies that resulted in a positive outcome for the audience and/or characters to be effective. For this cohort, a positive outcome facilitated one or more of the following:

1. Acceptance of Others – Participants validate the humanity of others and learn to tolerate beliefs to which they may not personally subscribe.

2. Respect for Others – Participants treat others with civility. They also come to understand that the other’s perspective is equally deserving of consideration.

3. Rationality – Participants use reason (as opposed to emotion or prejudice as the basis for their beliefs and/or actions).

4. Knowledge of Self – Participants who were unsure of their views on an issue concretize their beliefs about the topic.

5. Open-Mindedness – Participants give equal consideration to all perspectives. They also allow for the possibility that their own position on an issue may be flawed.

6. Discussion – Participants discuss the issues in order to work through them. They do not necessarily need to reach a resolution, but they begin the process of working toward one.

7. Personal Empowerment – Participants are enabled with the ability to confront oppression.

8. Diffusion of Tensions – Participants use any number of techniques to diffuse the tensions arising from the oppression as opposed to escalating the conflict.
9. *Education* – Participants learn about the facts that relate to a given issue.

10. *Realization of Similarities* – Participants come to understand the similarities between themselves and others.

11. *Community Building* – Participants come to realize that they are part of a larger community that shares a common belief.

12. *Understanding Consequences* – Participants learn that their actions have consequences. They also gain a greater understanding of their actions’ consequences.

13. *Betterment of Self* – Participants seek ways to improve one or more of their multicultural competencies.

The participants considered approaches that resulted in either a negative outcome or an outcome that was unchanged for the audience and/or characters to be ineffective.

Students described a negative outcome as leading to one or more of the following:

1. *Judgment of Others* – Participants draw rash conclusions about others based on stereotypes, prejudices and/or incomplete facts.

2. *Offensive Behavior* – Participants cause the offensive behavior to increase. These behaviors are not necessarily perpetrated by only the identified oppressor.

3. *Defensiveness* – Participants cause another to feel as if he/she is under attack. Consequently, the other seeks ways to protect his/herself from criticism.

4. *Escalation of Tensions* – Participants intensify the hostility between opposing perspectives.

5. *Stereotyping of Others* – Participants come to see others, not as individuals, but as a conventional, formulaic conception (or misconception) of a larger group.

6. *Unchanged Dynamic* – Participants leave the dynamic of oppression unchanged.

7. *Removal of Individual Choice and/or Beliefs* – Participants deny the validity of another’s perspective on an issue
On a strictly observational level, I would like to point out that a given intervention strategy need not engender the same sub-category of effectiveness for both characters and audience. Hypothetically speaking, a participant might choose to intervene in the scene utilizing the strategy of Avoidance. In this instance, the student’s actions would be ineffective in terms of the characters while it might be effective in terms of the audience. For the characters, this strategy would lead to an “unchanged dynamic of oppression” – an ineffective outcome. Conversely, for the audience, this act of engagement with the performance might facilitate a “discussion of issues in order to work through them” – an effective approach.

B. Awareness

In addition to gaining knowledge about various intervention strategies, participants also gained a heightened awareness of both their Self and their Surroundings. Participants judged both of these outcomes to be effective as a means of beginning to deal with the issues presented by the scene.

1. Self

Participants found that practice dealing with the scene’s issues helped them gain an awareness of self. Consequently, participants became more attuned to the following: the things they say, the assumptions they make about others, and the respect they give to others. Students did not perceive this practice as a means of trying out new or unfamiliar approaches to improving the situation, but rather as a means of learning how they would
react in real-life should a situation like the one presented arise. According to Inez, “Situations like this help individuals learn what they believe in and who they are.” Francine concurred by stating, “I think many of us have been in similar situations, and it’s hard to know what you would do unless you were there, and this gave us the opportunity to do it.”

In regard to watching what she says, Kelli focused on the need to understand how words and phrases (even if used without malice) can impact others: “I still . . . sometimes I’ll catch myself saying, ‘That’s so gay.’ Just because it’s an expression, and it makes me think twice about it . . . actually the thing does pop into my mind and I was like, ‘I probably shouldn’t say that even if it’s just to my roommate.’” Conversely, Mike noted the importance of becoming aware of the assumptions he makes about others. His position was that “you really need to watch what you say. You just never know the lifestyles of other people, and to go and make insensitive comments is offensive and ignorant.” Patricia agreed, but went a bit further in her statement, stressing the need to translate knowledge of these assumptions into a newfound respect for others: “People should not think that if they are working in a group that some may not be different. Meaning that they should respect each other’s lifestyle.”

I would like to point out to the reader that, although these sentiments are commendable, there is an inherent disservice in these participants’ choice of the term “lifestyle.” While the social and biological sciences have yet to settle the debate surrounding whether homosexuality is an innate or learned behavior, usage of the term “lifestyle” privileges nurture over nature and belies the generous spirit of these
statements. The word has also become sort of a catch-phrase for the socially conservative – not to mention heterosexist – belief that if one chooses to be gay (as the usage suggests), then one may also choose to be “normal” (i.e., heterosexual). In fairness to these two heterosexual participants, however, the term was also used by one of the LGB students.

2. Surroundings

Whereas the sub-category of Self was focused inward (i.e., understanding one’s own beliefs and actions as well as their consequences), the sub-dimension of surroundings was much more focused on that which occurs outside the self. Vera stated:

I think where petty things, like what you say . . . that somebody cut you off . . . even if they’re not gay or whatever . . . then you go tell your friend, “Oh, this so-and-so cut me off.” And so, I think that’s okay. But if you’re going off on someone’s race . . . class . . . gender . . . those things, then you need to be more aware of your surroundings. I mean, who’s around you and if you’re going to be offending them because it’s not something you want to offend someone [sic].

Although the two categories bore many similarities, further dialogue revealed that participants became more aware of their surroundings in two specific dimensions: (1) understanding who else is present and that the other person’s views might be different, and (2) realizing that things are not always as they appear at first glance.

Concerning the first of these sub-dimensions, Diane related the following realization about others who might be present in a given situation:

Well, it kind of made me realize . . . if you do decide to use offensive terms . . . out of anger or something . . . you kind of have to think about who you’re around. You don’t know who could be offended by the things you say. Like your character [David] . . . you didn’t know whether or not
there were homosexuals in the room. It could be offensive. But the fact that there were kind of makes it worse . . . even though it was bad in the first place.

This statement signifies an understanding that in order to apply the previously discussed awareness of self, one must also become more aware of one’s surroundings (in this instance knowing who is – or might be – present).

While Diane expressed the need to know the truth of one’s surroundings, Ryan focused on the impossibility of *ever* completely knowing the truth about his surroundings – suggesting that not all participants saw eye-to-eye on issues of sexual orientation. He stated:

There’s lots of stuff . . . obviously . . . that you don’t know about the people that you’re around. And, even if you think you know them, you probably don’t because you’re the only person that knows yourself truly. So you don’t know everybody else that well. And . . . that’s one of the main points that I took from this is you can come into a situation thinking that you know full well what you’re getting into, but turn it around it could be something completely different.

Ryan’s awareness of his surroundings went somewhat farther than his fellow participants’ had. Whereas their observations tended to focus on the known facts of a situation, his acknowledged the improbability of ever adequately understanding the truth of any situation.

**C. Willingness to Act**

During the two month follow-up interview, it became clear to me that the performance had also impacted certain qualities of the participants’ character – particularly their willingness to take action against oppressive behavior. The first quality
participants mentioned was a willingness to **Speak Out** on behalf of others experiencing oppression similar to that depicted in the scene. In one singular instance, Elaine reported that this quality had actually translated into action and she had used the knowledge gained from the presentation to stand up for others. The second quality was a willingness to **Self-Censor**. Kelli discussed her expectation for the need to censor herself in the future: “I’m moving in with one of my gay guy friends next semester and I know I’m going to have to watch what I say and maybe possibly defend him to others.” Finally, Carl discussed a recently acquired willingness to **Acknowledge Differing Views**: “I was just more willing to hear others’ opinions.”

According to these students, the primary condition that influenced whether these qualities would result in action was the **Situational Context**. As several of the interviewees explained, participants who were not placed in a situation that required these types of actions did not experience such a behavioral modification. In other words, for a change of behavior to occur, the opportunity had first to be presented. This lack of a necessary situational context does not mean that these participants would not modify their actions if placed in such a situation (in fact, almost all of these students implied that they would react differently if given the opportunity), rather it merely suggests that the follow-up period was perhaps not long enough to gain a true sense of what their future actions would be under different circumstances. While the participants did not elaborate further, it might also suggest (although this is largely supposition) a lack of activism on the part of some, or all, of these students – if a situational context did not arise organically, they did not suggest that they would seek out ways to advocate for LGB individuals.
Conclusion

Based upon the data discussed in this chapter, the following theory begins to emerge for these participants: when participants engage with the performance, presentations of this type impact the multicultural competencies of heterosexual students. Students employ any number of strategies to ensure their engagement. These strategies include analyzing the issue, imagining solutions to the situation, intervening in the scene, and joining in discussions with their peers. Conditions that determine the degree to which the participants engage are as follows: performance characteristics (the perceived realism of the scene) and audience member characteristics (the participant’s prior experience with the issue, the participant’s age, and the participant’s background).

As previously stated, engagement with the performance influences the participants’ multicultural competencies. The first of these competencies is knowledge about the consequences of various intervention strategies – particularly avoidance of the oppression versus confrontation of the oppression. Although participants find avoidance to be an ineffective strategy, they do describe circumstances under which one might be prone to take this approach. These circumstances include the perceived importance of other matters, the feeling that one’s views are supported by the majority, the presence of psychological factors, and the potential for one’s actions to have a negative impact on the situation. Whereas participants always view avoidance as an ineffective strategy, they only find confrontation to be ineffective when employed through the use of diatribe. Despite the fact that diatribe allows the intervener to express him/herself, the ultimate consequence is that the oppressor only hides his/her behavior. Other conditions that
directly influenced the effectiveness of confrontation are the rationality of the approach, the time devoted to changing the oppressor’s behavior, and the age of the oppressor.

The second competency impacted is an increased awareness of self and one’s surroundings. In terms of self, the participants learn to be more aware of what they say, the assumptions that they make about others, and the respect that they give to others with differing views. In regard to one’s surroundings, the participants gain an understanding of who else is present and that the other individuals’ views might be different from their own, and a realization that things are not always as they appear at first glance.

Participants also refer to a willingness to act against oppression as a third category, enumerating several qualities of character that would aid in future interventions. These qualities include a willingness to speak out on behalf of others who are experiencing oppression, a willingness to self-censor in the presence of others, and a willingness to acknowledge differing views. Participants also point out that, dependent upon the situational context, this willingness can (and in one instance did) lead to a behavioral modification.

Additionally, I have recorded several key observations concerning this particular cohort (more precisely, participants who identified with the character of David) and the emergent theory. These observations are listed below:

1. Only 5 individuals who identified with David took part in the study – two during selective sampling and three during theoretical sampling. Of these five students, only one provided data that gave useful insight into the impact of this performance. Additional data may have led to other conclusions.

2. No ‘Davids’ took part in the follow-up interviews, so it is impossible to know if additional time would have influenced what these individuals took away from the performance.
3. In regard to the limiting nature of an unrealistic portrayal (a dimension mentioned only by participants who identified with the character of David), this statement was later contradicted by the same student. Consequently, it is unclear exactly to what extent that any impact may or may not have occurred. Furthermore, the performance was scripted without the input of any students who identified with these views. Had such input been present, the scene might have been more meaningful to these participants.

4. The only impact cited by these participants was an increased awareness of their surroundings. Although not grounded in the data, this observation would seem, in my view, to give some credence to the observation of other participants that confrontation of the oppression without investing the time necessary for an effective solution can result in the oppressor merely hiding his/her behavior.
CHAPTER 4
LGB STUDENT POPULATION

Introduction

As I stated in the last chapter, all three groups of participants experienced the same core strategy (Engaging with the Performance) and the same core consequence (Multicultural Competencies). I did, however, note minor differences in the explanatory paradigm – particularly in the LGB participants’ description of sub-dimensions. These students also shifted their focus away from determining the effectiveness of avoidance and confrontation (although they still explored effectiveness to some extent) and toward gaining an understanding of each approach’s consequences. In this chapter, I present the explanatory paradigm as it emerged from my analysis of the LGB cohort’s responses. My purpose is to begin to provide an understanding this study’s research question from the LGB population’s perspective.

Unfortunately, despite my efforts to the contrary, only five LGB students agreed to participate in this study. I would like to remind the reader, however, that my purpose is not to create a hypothesis to explain how all LGB students will react to the performance, but rather to describe these students’ experiences richly and to begin the process of generating a theory that future studies may probe more deeply. Of these five participants,
### DEMOGRAPHICS: LGB AUDIENCE COHORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>1 – 19 year old</th>
<th>1 – 20 year old</th>
<th>1 – 21 year old</th>
<th>1 – 22 year old</th>
<th>1 – 46 year old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEX</td>
<td>4 – Male</td>
<td>1 – Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACE</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION</td>
<td>3 – Christian</td>
<td>1 – Atheist</td>
<td>1 – Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</td>
<td>4 – Gay</td>
<td>1 – Bisexual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLITICAL AFFILIATION</td>
<td>4 – Liberal / Democrat</td>
<td>1 – Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGB Friends / Family</td>
<td>5 – Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Aggregate demographic data for the LGB audience cohort

one participated in the selective sample. The remaining four were part of the theoretical sampling. Only one student agreed to participate in the follow-up interview. The specific demographics of the LGB participants are listed on this page (Table 1) and the next (Table 2). Due to the small number of participants in this group, some of whom were more vocal than others, two of the audience members (Karl and Jennifer) dominate the quotations. I have, however, corroborated every dimension through triangulation (except where noted).
**INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>RELIGION</th>
<th>POLITICAL AFFILIATION</th>
<th>LGB FRIENDS / FAMILY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Karl</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Non-traditional</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Individual participant demographics for members of the LGB audience who are quoted in this chapter

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**Explanatory Paradigm**

The core strategy for this cohort was **Engaging with the Performance**. Unlike the heterosexual cohort, however, this group did not mention **Audience Member Characteristics** as a condition of engagement – although they did provide greater insight into **Performance Characteristics**. The core consequence for this group was also **Multicultural Competencies**, and (as one might expect) the properties of this dimension were similar to those found in the previous chapter: **Knowledge** about the consequences of various intervention strategies, an increased **Awareness** of self and others, and a **Willingness to Act** when faced with oppression. Furthermore, although LGB students did provide some data concerning each intervention strategy’s effectiveness, they did not focus on this aspect to the same extent as the heterosexual cohort had.
I. CONDITIONS FOR THE CORE STRATEGY
   Performance Characteristics
   A. Preparation
      1. Dialogue
      2. Review
      3. Analysis
   B. Group Size
   C. Allies

II. CORE STRATEGY: ENGAGING WITH THE PERFORMANCE
   Intervening

III. CORE CONSEQUENCE:
     MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES
     A. Knowledge
        1. Avoidance
        2. Confrontation
        3. Effectiveness
     B. Awareness
        1. Self
        2. Others
     C. Willingness to Act
        1. Speak Out

Figure 2: Visual representation of the LGB audience’s explanatory paradigm
I. Core Strategy: Engaging with the Performance

As with the previous cohort, the LGB audience members’ engagement with the performance directly influenced their Multicultural Competencies. These students, however, only considered engagement in terms of Intervening in the scene. In answer to a follow-up question, Jennifer replied that engaging with the performance was “very helpful because it reminded me of the importance of speaking up, standing up. Actually doing the role play [intervening] was more effective than something theoretical would have been.”

II. Conditions for the Core Strategy

The LGB audience members only listed Preparation as a condition for engagement. Whereas the heterosexual cohort mentioned Analysis, Imagined Solutions, and Dialogue as strategies of engagement, this group saw these dimensions in a slightly different light. Although the LGB participants did not mention Imagined Solutions, they did discuss the remaining two (Analysis and Dialogue) as sub-dimensions of Preparation (a condition for Engagement). LGB participants also mentioned two other conditions that influenced their engagement: Group Size and Allies. I have placed all three of these conditions (preparation, group size, and allies) under the general heading of Performance Characteristics.
A. Preparation

Preparation was the first condition that made it easier for these students to intervene in the scene’s action. Participants detailed three distinct sub-dimensions of this condition: Dialogue, Review, and Analysis. Jennifer addressed Dialogue with fellow audience members prior to the actual interventions in the following quotation: “Well, I’m glad to have a chance to talk about it [the scene] because I’ve seen these interactive theatre things twice, and . . . there’s a huge audience and . . . somebody just goes up and . . . it helps me to kind of talk things through.” Karl readily agreed with this statement. Later during the interview Jennifer reiterated this idea, further suggesting that the discussion would have consequences beyond the presentation and into her life: “I know it will help me. . . . The next time I hear somebody say something offensive. I know it will help me.”

The sub-dimension of Review referred to the audience’s ability to view the scene multiple times before intervening. Jennifer stated that Review was also an important means of preparation. As she pointed out, the performance’s repetitive nature allowed her to feel freer to speak out against the oppression: “I felt more prepared to just . . . say something because I knew what was going to happen . . . although I didn’t know how it would wind away . . . once I said something.” From this observation, she extrapolated that she would be “more likely to speak up” when faced with oppression in her day-to-day life. She continued to stress that “it was very helpful” to be in the performance situation.
The third sub-dimension of preparation was **Analysis**. For Jennifer, **Analysis** was the ability to take the time to gather her thoughts and prepare for how she would intervene prior to being asked to step into the scene:

Well, I’m big on preparation and . . . in this kind of situation it’s really hard for me to think on my feet . . . and . . . I found myself sitting here and wanting to actually . . . come up with a script in my head a little bit, . . . but I didn’t really have time. So it wasn’t like I could be really prepared or as prepared as I wanted to be . . . So in that way . . . it was still hard for me, and I didn’t know what I was going to do. . . . But . . . to have the chance to just . . . think about it a little bit . . . and prepare a little bit . . . and to talk about it was really good.

**B. Group Size**

According to Karl and Jennifer, smaller groups made it easier for the participants to engage with the performance and larger groups made it more difficult. Karl stated:

It’s good we’re in a small group like this, though . . . I think people are more likely to speak out in a small group than . . . with a million people around them. . . . If somebody was saying something in a lecture class of two hundred and fifty people . . . I think I’d just shut up and sit over there and go about my business, but in a small group like this I’d feel more comfortable.

Unfortunately, these participants did not elaborate on why they found it easier to intervene in small groups. Consequently, it is unclear if this phenomenon was an issue of shyness, more opportunities at intervention, or another variable.

**C. Allies**

The last influencing condition was allies – others who share the same perspective on an issue. Although Jennifer had stated that an “increased awareness of potential allies”
was a consequence of engagement (a consequence I will later discuss), she also implied that this awareness makes speaking out against oppression easier. More to the point, however, Karl asserted that the “knowledge of actual allies” within the audience made engagement easier. He pointed out that he would feel more comfortable intervening “especially if I knew people that were allies . . . or that . . . I knew would be on my side.” Having someone on their side (an ally) provided the LGB participants with a sense of empowerment. Consequently, this dimension seemed more important for this cohort than it had been for the others.

III. Core Consequence: Multicultural Competencies

Engagement with the performance impacted the LGB student population’s multicultural competencies in the same three primary ways as it had impacted the heterosexual participants’: Knowledge about the consequences of various intervention strategies, a heightened Awareness of self and others, and a Willingness to Act against oppression. In this section, I attempt to explain each of these properties from the perspective of the LGB cohort.

A. Knowledge

Through the performance process, LGB students learned that not all intervention strategies were equally effective – nor did they lead to the same consequences. These participants uncovered the same strategies as those I discussed in the previous chapter: Avoidance of the oppression and Confrontation of the oppression. The LGB cohort’s
evaluation of these strategies’ Effectiveness, however, was conditional upon other factors – factors that the heterosexual participants had not explored. These conditions included the Group Size (of the audience), the presence of Allies in the audience, and the Preparation provided by the presentation prior to the interventions.

1. Avoidance

All LGB audience members agreed that avoidance prevented the scene’s conflict from occurring. Consequently, the characters were unchanged. The participants did not, however, agree upon the effectiveness of avoidance. Whereas one participant viewed this method as effective, the others did not. I will briefly present my interpretation of this difference at the end of this chapter.

Karl best articulated the opinion of those who viewed avoidance as an ineffective intervention strategy:

I thought it was interesting to watch all the characters as they . . . tried to get everybody back on track. . . . There was this random discussion, and everybody was trying to be, like, “Okay. Let’s get back to the project. Let’s get back to the project.” But they never really accomplished that. . . . It was interesting to see people . . . use that as a defense mechanism . . . to try to just . . . get away from the subject . . . and not really flesh it out, but just . . . ignore it and go back to . . . what they were doing. So I don’t know . . . if it actually got them anywhere except for just . . . covering everything up.

Whereas Karl viewed avoidance as ineffective because it merely allowed the oppressor to suppress his/her behavior, Nick indicated that avoidance was sometimes the most effective strategy. He did not elaborate on the topic, however. He merely said, “I believe these situations happen often. My knowledge to let some ignorant comments lie was
reinforced by this skit.” Although Nick did not elaborate on his reasoning, I would like to point out that he was the only LGB participant in a performance intended primarily for heterosexual students (see the implications section of Chapter Six for more on this subject).

2. Confrontation

Participants deemed this sub-category both effective and ineffective depending upon certain conditions, specifically whether or not the intervener confronted the oppression through Diatribe (ineffective) or through Dialogue (effective). Generally speaking, however, the majority of LGB participants viewed the strategy of confrontation as more effective than the strategy of avoidance. Jennifer stated:

I feel like this kind of discussion . . . is important to have, and getting to the PowerPoint [getting the class project finished], . . . there’s got to be some kind of balance. But getting to the PowerPoint and doing that work, especially since it’s a small group working together over time, may not be as important . . . in my view . . . as getting some resolution. And maybe not right then . . . maybe it would need to be revisited later, but I felt like . . . it did make sense to spend some time with it [the issue of heterosexism/homonegativity].

Jennifer found confrontation preferable to avoidance since (rather than ignoring the scene’s issues) it had the potential to facilitate a dialogue between those with opposing points of view.

a. Diatribe

LGB participants deemed confrontation through Diatribe an ineffective strategy. This approach did, however, allow the spect-actor to Express Him/Herself in the same
manner that it had allowed the heterosexual students to express themselves. Jennifer stated that her first instinct would be to “nip it in the bud.” She continued by pointing out that she would “try to speak up right away . . . and it probably wouldn’t be that articulate.” Regardless of the positive impact that personal expression might hold for the intervener, participants viewed it as having a negative impact collectively. This inadequacy arose from the diatribe’s inability to lessen the scene’s oppression, leaving the conclusion virtually unaltered. In expressing why he resorted to this strategy and its ultimate effectiveness, Karl admitted that he might have been “a little abrasive” in his intervention. He speculated that his abrasiveness might have arisen in response to his general sense “that gay people are often attacked in many ways in society.” Although Karl could understand how it would be “easy” for gays who feel “passionate” about the issue to let their feelings out and “say whatever [they] want” in a confrontation, he acknowledged that such an approach might not be effective in stimulating change:

> But maybe that’s [diatribe] not always the right way to do it [confront oppression] because people might not respond to that like they should or like you wish they would . . . if you’re just railing off on them . . . even if it’s not . . . berating them . . . even if it’s . . . telling what you believe . . . the way you go about it may make them uncomfortable or make them less likely to accept what you’re saying.

b. Dialogue

Conversely, participants deemed confrontation an effective strategy when it led to a dialogue that resulted in an equal exchange of ideas by all sides and sought to reach a compromise between the dissenting views. In regard to the sub-dimension of Equal Exchange, Jennifer propounded that the characters “who were being offensive” were
more numerous than those who were attempting to calm the situation down. She concluded by stating that “there’s got to be some kind of balance” between getting the project done and having an “important” discussion about the issue of heterosexism/homonegativity. Following this assertion, Karl stressed the need for a two-way exchange (unlike the lop-sided discussion that Jennifer had just described): “If you’re exchanging ideas and exchanging your beliefs then . . . that’s what interacting with other people is all about.” He went on to focus on the need for Mutual Respect in order for the confrontation to be effective:

But I think too maybe [you should] . . . explain that . . . you understand what they’re saying and what they believe . . . and you think that’s fine for them to believe it. But maybe saying more, like . . . “Let’s not get into this. That’s . . . fine that you believe that. I believe what I believe. Let’s get to what we . . . actually need to do.” You know? Coming up with a compromise, I guess. Instead of trying to solve it one way or the other I think is what’s more effective.

In this instance, Karl is referring to finding a balance between those who wish to avoid confrontation and those who wish to discuss the issue. Jennifer agreed, expressing her desire to “facilitate people listening to each other. . . . And . . . just really talking to each other and not at each other.” For these participants, an equal exchange of dissenting ideas and a mutual respect for those ideas were the hallmarks of dialogue. Without them, they believed that the exchange would quickly disintegrate into diatribe.

3. Effectiveness

As with the heterosexual cohort, participants evaluated intervention strategies in terms of their effectiveness. Participants described effective strategies as those that
resulted in one or more of the following consequences for either the characters or audience members:

1. *Respect for Others* – Participants treat others with civility. They also come to understand that the other’s perspective is equally deserving of consideration.

2. *Rationality* – Participants use reason (as opposed to emotion or prejudice) as the basis for their beliefs and/or actions.

3. *Open-Mindedness* – Participants give equal consideration to all perspectives. They also allow for the possibility that their own position on an issue may be flawed.

4. *Discussion* – Participants discuss the issues in order to work through them. They do not necessarily need to reach a resolution, but they begin the process of working toward one.

5. *Diffusion of Tensions* – Participants use any number of techniques to diffuse the tensions arising from the oppression as opposed to escalating the conflict.

Ineffective strategies led to one or more of the results listed below:

1. *Offensive Behavior* – Participants cause the offensive behavior to increase. These behaviors are not necessarily perpetrated by only the identified oppressor.

2. *Defensiveness* – Participants cause another to feel as if he/she is under attack. Consequently, the other seeks ways to protect him/herself from criticism.

3. *Unchanged Dynamic* – Participants’ actions leave the dynamic of oppression unchanged.

**B. Awareness**

Participants also gained a heightened awareness of *Self* and/or *Others*. They judged both of these outcomes effective in terms of personal growth.
1. Self

Through the performance process and the practice that it provided, participants
became more self-aware. The participants saw this practice as a means of learning how
they would react in real-life should a situation like the one presented arise. Karl explained
that what he found the most helpful about the presentation was “having the opportunity to
just let it pour out” – to see how he would react in the situation without any preparation –
because he didn’t “really know exactly how [he would] react in a situation like that.” He
further explained:

I don’t think a lot of people get the chance to know what they would do in
a situation like that. . . . It’s like if . . . somebody were lying bleeding or
something . . . what would you do? Well, who’s ever done that? So this is
the same situation. You get a chance to see, “What would you do?” . . . So
actually it was a lot of self-discovery . . . really even more than the . . .
social implications or . . . thinking about what . . . other people thought,
but to see . . . what would I actually . . . how do I react to a situation like
that?

The performance process afforded Karl the ability to explore his thoughts without the
fear of negative repercussions. The Safe Space provided by the performance process was
instrumental in facilitating his heightened self-awareness. Karl observed, “Here . . . I was
more free . . . to keep elaborating on what I . . . thought and . . . without any kind of
penalty or anything like that.” In Karl’s case, this freedom led directly to an increased
awareness of self – how he would react in a situation like the one presented in the scene.

Jennifer, on the other hand, found that the actors’ Feedback concerning the
interventions (from the character’s perspective) played an important role in her increased
self-awareness. She discussed the importance of this feedback in becoming more aware
of her body language, remaining positive in the situation, and using the performance to
become empowered as a member of the LGB community. When I asked the participants if anything about the presentation was particularly helpful, she replied:

The most important thing that I can think of . . . was the feedback from the actors . . . good suggestions . . . and affirmation . . . the body language thing, the feedback on . . . trying to be positive . . . which of course would probably be harder in real life. And then . . . the whole thing about both of us coming from some sort of empowerment . . . it’s just helpful. It’s just helpful . . . I think I’ve worked on that [being empowered] my whole . . . adult life but . . . there are situations where I don’t feel it. I feel so in the minority . . . all of that was really helpful.

2. Others

Participants became attuned to the possibility that there might be Allies present in any given situation (others who share the same perspective on an issue as the intervening participant). Students reported learning that anyone might be a potential ally and provide support for their position on the issue – not to assume that their own belief system is the minority view. Jennifer seemed more aware of this possibility than the other LGB participants:

[The presentation] kind of reminded me that you just never know who could be your allies out there . . . Maybe when I walked in I might not have known that . . . the woman over here [Deb] would have spoken up, but . . . you can kind of have a hopefulness about you . . . even if it doesn’t happen . . . I guess I feel strongly enough about this kind of thing that . . . even if it didn’t happen . . . it would still be important to me to try to speak up, but to give me a little more courage . . . I think it would be helpful to remember that, “Hey! There might be an ally out there.”

Although I was unable to corroborate this sub-dimension through triangulation, the sub-dimension of allies was present in a substantial portion of the literature concerning identity development. Consequently, I felt that it was a salient category that warranted
inclusion in this study. I believe my inability to verify this dimension was more the product of an inadequate number of participants than of a lack of salience.

C. Willingness to Act

As with the heterosexual participants, the LGB student who participated in the follow-up interview revealed that the performance had impacted her willingness to take action against oppressive behavior. This impact, however, was limited to a willingness to Speak Out on behalf of others who were experiencing oppression. Unlike the heterosexual cohort, Jennifer did not mention either an increased willingness to Self-Censor or to Acknowledge Differing Views. When asked, “Have you had the occasion to use anything learned in the prior session?” she replied with the following: “Yes, it served as a ‘refresher’ for me. I’d had anti-racism workshops, and have done other stigma-reduction work. There I learned about ‘interrupting’ -isms, and this theater piece helped me find the courage to speak up when another TA used the word ‘retarded’ to describe something stupid.” She continued to state that although she probably would have spoken out anyway, the practice provided by the performance made the task less daunting than it might otherwise have been. As a result, she was more willing to engage in this behavior. Although Jennifer was the only LGB participant who agreed to be part of the follow-up interview, this dimension was present in all three cohorts.
Conclusion

The data presented in this chapter has led me to the following emerging theory: performances of this type impact the multicultural competencies of LGB students. Participants employ the strategy of engaging with the performance through intervention. Conditions that determine the individual’s ease of engagement are group size, allies, and preparation. Preparation might take the form of any of the following: discussion, review, and/or analysis.

The first competency impacted for this group is knowledge about the consequences of various intervention strategies – particularly avoidance of the oppression versus confrontation of the oppression. Whereas the audience members deem avoidance an ineffective strategy (with one notable exception), the effectiveness of confrontation depends upon certain conditions. While confrontation through diatribe allows the intervener to express him/herself, this strategy does not alter the oppressor’s core beliefs. Therefore, participants view diatribe as ineffective. Conversely, participants find confrontation through dialogue effective – provided that there is an equal exchange between opposing sides and there is a mutual respect for dissenting views.

The second competency that is impacted is an increased awareness of one’s self and of others. Participants state that the actor’s feedback and the safe space provided by the performance process are conducive to a heightened self-awareness. In regard to others, participants report becoming more aware of others as potential allies.

LGB students also describe a willingness to act against oppression as a third category. These individuals express this dimension as a willingness to speak out on
behalf of others who are experiencing oppression. In the one instance mentioned, this willingness to speak out actually led to a change of behavior.

I have noted two key observations concerning the LGB cohort. These observations arise in consideration of the participants’ responses that allies in the audience make engagement with the performance easier. These observations are primarily speculation on my part:

1. The only participant who stated that avoiding the confrontation was effective viewed the scene with a heterosexual audience. Had he seen the performance with an audience made up solely of LGB members, his experience might have been considerably different. If this assertion is true, a similar one might be postulated for the participant who identified with David in the last chapter. Although he stated that the scene did not impact him, had he also viewed the performance in the presence of only people he perceived to be allies, their presence might have profoundly influenced its potential impact.

2. The experience of the LGB participant discussed above also differed from the other LGB students in that he did not intervene in the performance. If engagement through intervention is truly a condition of impact, as the other participants suggest, this student’s lack of direct participation in the scene might have resulted in evaluating avoidance as an effective strategy.
CHAPTER 5
ACTOR POPULATION

Introduction

The actors also expressed a core strategy of Engaging with the Performance and a core consequence of Multicultural Competencies. This particular cohort, however, listed an additional competency (Tools) and engaged in a more thorough discussion of the previously explored categories. In Chapter Five, I present this study’s theory as it emerged from my analysis of the actors’ responses. My purpose is to begin to provide an understanding of this study’s research question from the actor’s perspective. There were a total of four cast members. I have detailed this group’s demographics in Tables 5 (p. 117) and 6 (p. 118).

Before analyzing this chapter’s data, however, I would like to make two important points to help the reader contextualize the emerging theory. First, the actors who were involved with this scene had also been involved with a number of other scenes that dealt with a variety of issues (i.e., racism, sexism, religious tolerance, etc.). Consequently, these dimensions may be the result of engagement with this scene, a different scene, or a combination of scenes. Although I instructed the participants to speak only about the
### ACTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1–20 year old</th>
<th>1–21 year old</th>
<th>1–26 years old</th>
<th>1–36 years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGEMA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEX</td>
<td>3–Female</td>
<td>1–Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACE</td>
<td>3–White</td>
<td>1–Mixed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION</td>
<td>3–Christian</td>
<td>1–None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</td>
<td>3–Heterosexual</td>
<td>1–LGB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLITICAL AFFILIATION</td>
<td>4–Liberal / Democrat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGB FRIENDS/FAMILY</td>
<td>4–Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Aggregate demographic data for the actor cohort

heterosexism scene’s performances and the resulting consequences, the participants did occasionally mention other scenes (although I made every possible effort to exclude these comments from the analysis). Second, the actors had all been involved with the scene for varying amounts of time. Because they were all interviewed as one group, however, I could not discern whether or not the length of time that they had been involved as a cast member played any role in what they got out of the experience.
INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>RELIGION</th>
<th>POLITICAL AFFILIATION</th>
<th>LGB FRIENDS / FAMILY</th>
<th>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Gay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherry</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White / Native American</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Individual participant demographics for all members of the actor cohort. All participants have been given code names to protect their anonymity.

Explanatory Paradigm

Consistent with the previous chapters, I identified two core categories for the actor cohort – a core strategy (Engaging with the Performance) and a core consequence (Multicultural Competencies). The actors indicated four types of competencies that were impacted: Knowledge about the consequences of various interventions, an increased Awareness of self, others, and oppression in general; the acquisition of Tools that aided them in facilitating these types of conversations; and a Willingness to Act against oppression. Participants mentioned only one Audience Member Characteristic as a condition for engagement: Audience Engagement (although they also listed a number of Performance Characteristics they believed encouraged audience engagement). For the purpose of clarification, a visual representation of the dimensions (as well as their sub-dimensions) appears on the following page.
Figure 3: Visual representation of the actors’ explanatory paradigm
I. Core Strategy: Engaging with the Performance

As with the other cohorts, the actors’ engagement with the performance impacted their multicultural competencies. Although all three groups focused on engagement, the performers expressed markedly different sub-dimensions. Whereas the audience members had relied on engagement through Analysis, Imagined Solutions, Interventions, Discussion, and Dialogue; the actors engaged with the presentation primarily by Interacting with the Audience.

Cast members found that interacting with the audience during the performance provided a worthwhile learning experience. Will explained:

For me, there’s not one aspect [of the performance] that has been more rewarding than any other. . . . There have been so many times and so many different parts of it . . . whether it’s at the end . . . like when I had that opportunity to talk about my own experience . . . or in the interaction. . . . All of those pieces are so important, and every single one has been equally as . . . rewarding and enriching as the next for me.

For this student, interaction led to the consequences of gaining Tools to facilitate discussions about heterosexism/homonegativity as well as Knowledge about various intervention strategies. Lori agreed with his assessment, stating that this type of interaction gave her a greater Awareness of Others.

II. Conditions for the Core Strategy

The performers listed only one condition that directly impacted their engagement with the performance. Whereas the other cohorts had focused upon their own
engagement, the performers tended to focus upon **Audience Engagement** – a condition that influenced the quality of their interactions with the spect-actors. Sherry asserted:

> Well, I think even . . . with the . . . interactive portion . . . the forum section . . . just having all these different people come in and try different things so that I get to experience what is working and what doesn’t work . . . and to think about why that is . . . that it did or didn’t. So . . . just . . . multiple opportunities . . . to glean more information.

The actors continued to outline several **Performance Characteristics** they believed were encouraging of audience engagement. These strategies included **Subject Matter**, **Humor**, **Character Replacement**, and **Character Embracement**.

Although these strategies are – in many ways – speculation on the part of the actors, they do represent the actors’ understanding of why audiences do or do not respond favorably to a scene. Consequently (and because this cohort had considerable experience with a variety of interactive scenes), I believe this sub-dimension is worthy of inclusion. I would like to stress, however, that although the actors gained knowledge from the spect-actors’ multiple perspectives, the performers did not state that **Audience Engagement** was a necessity for impact to occur. Although audience members were present and intervened at all performances, some of the consequences that I outline in this chapter may have been more a result of the rehearsal process than a result of the actual performances. Consequently, I was unable to determine exactly how influential the spect-actors were without further study.
a. Subject Matter

Actors indicated that a scene depicting a **Subject Matter** about which the audience feels passionately fosters a greater degree of spect-actor involvement. In discussing how they had scripted this scene and their understanding of its effectiveness relative to other forum theatre scripts, Will and Lori had the following exchange:

**WILL:** The heterosexism piece, to me, always facilitates the most enriching dialogue. . . . When that thing’s over, peoples’ hands are flying. . . . They’re interested . . . with a few exceptions.

**LORI:** You have to pick issues that people really care about, and that’s why I think it’s important, too…I mean, I agree with you.

b. Humor

The actors asserted that the audience is more likely to engage with the presentation if the performance has comedic elements. I would like to point out, however, that the type of ‘humor’ to which the performers were referring is neither the nervous laughter that arises from discomfort nor the mean-spirited humor that some audience members might derive from David’s insensitive comments. With this understanding of humor in mind, Lori stated:

If it’s all . . . issue-issue . . . in your face, like, “Let’s talk about this.” And there’s no . . . little break for people then that’s exhausting . . . Nobody wants to participate in that. That’s why I think it is so important when you [Kathae] come in and . . . make people laugh and stuff like that because . . . then you get more of a sense of camaraderie with the audience . . . They’re more on your side and . . . into this project instead of just, “We’re sitting in class, and rejecting it,” and being on their laptops and stuff.

Sherry replied, “There’s a really great quote from Harold Clurman, and . . . I’m paraphrasing poorly, but it’s that . . . the truth is . . . like castor oil, and so you . . . have to
make an audience laugh, and then you pour it in. . . . I do think that humor is an important element of this too.”

c. Character Replacement

Actors also believed that whether the audience member intervened as him/herself or replaced one of the characters made a significant difference in what the spect-actor learned. Initially, I had asked spect-actors to replace the character of Margaret. Will pointed out that because the spect-actors were replacing an existing character they felt the need to maintain that character’s objective: “When we first did it . . . didn’t people . . . step in as Margaret? Yeah. But unfortunately people felt like they had to maintain her objective. So it was ineffective . . . because her objective, which was a strong one, is, “Let’s not talk about this.” I corrected this weakness during the theoretical sampling by asking the audience members to intervene as a sixth student while the character of Margaret remained onstage.149

d. Character Embracement

The performers also encouraged audience engagement by fully embracing their characters. Actors described this dimension as striving for a complete and realistic portrayal, rather than merely going through the motions and relying on a superficial

149 See the section entitled “Participant Interventions” on page 41 for a slightly more detailed discussion of how and why this procedural modification occurred. Due to the fact that I initiated this change (as well as others) between selective and theoretical sampling I was unable to determine exactly to what degree participant data was influenced. Prior to these changes, however, participants had only discussed “Multicultural Competencies” in terms of “Knowledge” about various intervention strategies. It was only after implementing this change that the sub-categories of “Awareness” and “Willingness to Act” emerged for audience members.
portrayal. Sherry stated that one must “think [one’s character] through.” She also indicated that cast members must take “the time to create a biography” for their characters and outline the “historical points in their life” that shape “who they are.” Lori concurred with this assessment, “Yeah. I’ve seen people who have just sort of done . . . this surface character, and it just doesn’t work. And you can see it in the performance because you can see . . . how they’re responding to people when they come in, and it’s . . . just not . . . what it could be, I guess.” Lori continued the conversation by also stating the converse – a surface characterization leads to a performance that is lacking.

Somewhat later in the interview Karen added that this is particularly true when playing a character that is unlike oneself.

Lori went on to list actor variety as beneficial for character development. When describing the process of settling into a role she states:

When I first started . . . obviously . . . you’re new to it . . . but then . . . after the first couple of times . . . you sort of . . . figure things out. You figure out the character more . . . If you work with people in it [the scene] obviously it [your character] develops. So, I think it gets better with time, but then I think after a certain point it’s not so much . . . how long you’ve been doing it, but it’s the variety of people that you’re working with in the scene. . . . As . . . different actors played characters in different ways, that sort of helps you . . . get more out of your character and get more out of the scene.

I would like to stress that the sub-dimension of actor variety means only working on the same sketch with multiple actors. Although the race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or religion of the actor might certainly contribute to a wide variety of characterizations, participants did not identify this type of diversity as a factor.
III. Core Consequence: Multicultural Competencies

As with the LGB and the heterosexual audience members, the actors’ engagement with the performance influenced their multicultural competencies. The performers mentioned four competencies. Although the other cohorts had mentioned three of these dimensions (Knowledge, Awareness, and Willingness to Act), there were several differences in how they were described by this group. The actors also identified a new dimension: Tools for facilitating these types of discussions.

A. Knowledge

Like the other cohorts, the actors learned that not all intervention strategies were equally effective. Cast members gained knowledge about the same two strategies that the audience members had mentioned: Avoidance and Confrontation. Although these participants always saw avoidance as ineffective, they viewed the effectiveness of confrontation as conditional upon other factors.

1. Avoidance

While the actors did not explore the strategy of avoidance to the same extent as had the other two groups, they did agree that it was ultimately an ineffective strategy. In explaining, Karen remarked that in the past she had been “much more of a people pleaser.” She further speculated that, due to this tendency, she had avoided confrontation because she didn’t “want to get in a fight.” She continued by stating, “I definitely don’t think that is at all how I feel now. And . . . I just . . . don’t think that [avoidance] really
achieves much.” Finally, Karen implied that she would no longer be satisfied to avoid oppression.

2. Confrontation

Participants deemed confrontation of the oppressor as both effective and ineffective depending upon other conditions. These conditions included the investment of Time, and the utilization of Dialogue.

a. Time

Although the condition of time was also mentioned by the heterosexual group, the actor cohort went somewhat farther in their description. Whereas the first group only acknowledged that the performance did not allot enough time for an effective intervention, Will took the stance that one should not expect an immediate change of oppressive behavior. He further explained that change takes considerably longer (although he mentioned no specified period of time). He stated that when dealing with the issue of heterosexism/homonegativity he used the approach of “coming at it gently.” He elaborated by explaining that he wanted people to “like” him before knowing his sexual orientation. For Will, this strategy was less about protecting himself and his identity from potential oppressors and more about helping these individuals overcome their prejudice. He continued:

It’s not that I want to respect their rules or their world, because I’m not saying that. But I think that in order to change people’s minds sometimes you do have to play by those rules. And I have a lot of friends who are pretty . . . I don’t want to say bigoted, but they . . . believe gays are going
to hell, and it’s an immoral lifestyle, etc. But they love me, and I’m changing their minds. And it’s not something that happens overnight. And I don’t feel like I’m compromising my integrity . . . by taking time with them.

Karen readily agreed with Will’s statement and responded, “Yeah, for those same type of people I hear . . . ‘Well, he’s gay, but he’s still a really nice guy.’ Okay. And as ignorant as that comment is I think, ‘Well . . . at least they’re starting to see that at least. . . .’ I mean, they were where they had no experience . . . before . . . At least their mind is starting to be changed.”

b. Dialogue

Like their LGB counterparts, the actors viewed dialogue as a necessary component of effective confrontation. In describing this type of dialogue, Lori stressed the importance of talking to others as if they were an “equal” and addressing them in a “very calm tone.” She further pointed out that, in terms of intervention strategies, “the more effective people are the ones who take the time to listen to what someone’s saying and then . . . respond to it in a way that shows that they were listening . . . and then it’s a conversation.” She continued by adding that often simply having the dialogue is more important than stating one’s position:

I would probably tell people now . . . that when I was younger, if I was in a conversation, I would be like, “No . . . you say what you want to say. . . . You . . . get your point across.” . . . But sometimes you just . . . can’t make all the points you want to make. . . . Sometimes you can’t touch on all aspects of the issue. Sometimes you just have to . . . swallow something you were thinking about . . . or wanting to say and . . . just really have the discussion with someone.
Whereas Lori had emphasized the properties of treating others as equals, listening, and responding; Sherry stressed a fourth property by referencing the need to include the perspective of others. She also stressed that effective confrontation “takes everybody speaking up, and speaking up in a . . . manner that is inclusive as opposed to . . . defensive.”

Conversely, Will pointed out the ineffectiveness of using diatribe in the same types of situations:

*I think this is something that I knew prior to coming into this, but it’s just been proven time and time again that . . . when you have someone who is being . . . really grossly bigoted . . . you can’t come at them with guns a blazing. You really can’t be heavy-handed in your approach. . . . You have to be patient, and you have to be gentle because you aren’t going to move a mountain. But you can make a difference. You can get people to consider it.*

He continued by adding that “the more aggressive you are in your approach . . . the less effective I think you are.”

**3. Effectiveness**

The participants gauged the outcome of each intervention strategy in terms of its overall effectiveness. These outcomes differed, with some overlap, for the actors and the audience members. The performers considered strategies that resulted in a positive outcome effective. Actors defined a positive outcome as facilitating one or more of the following for the audience:

1. *Acceptance of Others* – Participants validate the humanity of others and learn to tolerate beliefs to which they may not personally subscribe.
2. *Respect for Others* – Participants treat others with civility. They also come to understand that the other’s perspective is equally deserving of consideration.

3. *Discussion* – Participants discuss the issues in order to work through them. They do not necessarily need to reach a resolution, but they begin the process of working toward one.

The actors also defined positive outcomes as resulting in one or more of the following for *both* cast members and the audience:

1. *Open-Mindedness* – Participants give equal consideration to all perspectives. They also allow for the possibility that their own position on an issue may be flawed.

2. *Education* – Participants learn the facts that relate to a given issue.

3. *Seeing Another’s Perspective* – Participants come to understand why another believes the things he/she does.

Finally, Actors considered a positive outcome as leading to one or more of the following for *only* cast members:

1. *Personal Empowerment* – Participants are enabled with the ability to confront oppression.

2. *Betterment of Self* – Participants seek ways to improve one or more of their multicultural competencies.

The participants considered intervention strategies that resulted in a negative outcome for the audience ineffective. (N.B., actors did not enumerate any outcomes as ineffective for themselves). Performers defined a negative outcome as one or more of the following:

1. *Defensiveness* – Participants cause another to feel as if he/she is under attack. Consequently, the other seeks ways to protect him/herself from criticism.

2. *Escalation of Tensions* – Participants cause the hostility between opposing perspectives to be intensified.
3. *Stereotyping of Others* – Participants cause others to be seen, not as individuals but as a conventional, formulaic conception (or misconception) of a larger group.

**B. Awareness**

Actors also reported an increased awareness of **Self**, of **Others**, and of **Oppression** in general. While the audience cohorts had discussed the first two of these dimensions, neither had broached the sub-dimension of oppression.

1. **Self**

Actors maintained that the condition of **Characterization** played an influential role in regard to the dimension of self. This condition provided the cast members with an increased awareness of either themselves or of others dependent upon the type of character they played within the scene. Actors who played a character with a personality similar to their own experienced a heightened understanding of self. As they came to understand the character’s motivations, these actors were better able to understand their own motivations and thought processes. In explaining this phenomenon, Sherry described her character (Margaret) as “milquetoast.” She surmised that because she shared the same “people-pleasing” quality as her character, she had missed many “opportunities” to “say something.” After her experiences playing this character, she pointed out that she “started to recognize” this characteristic in herself:

> Actually it was a performance with the psychology people. And they kept asking me all the questions like, “Margaret, someday you’re going to have to face some confrontation.” . . . Which I personally found kind of funny in the moment. I was like, “Yeah. She really is.” Then I was like, “Wait a minute. I really will.” . . . So . . . I think, for me, it made me realize that
there is this part of me that would much rather please people than . . . work toward a solution.

2. Others

Some participants became more aware of Others in terms of seeing their humanity, understanding that their views might be different, and respecting those views. The actors discussed two conditions for this dimension. The first was Diversity – both of actors and of audience members. The second was Characterization – actors who played a character with a personality markedly different from their own learned about others as a result of being involved with and preparing for the performance.

a. Diversity

A diverse array of both fellow actors and audience members increased the actors’ awareness of others. Performers also gained an increased desire to learn more about others. Sherry commented that a diverse audience helped the actors in terms of “learning about other people.” She surmised that this knowledge arose from the actors performing for a variety of “different classes.” Consequently, she added, the performers “are exposed to different people . . . obviously for a very short amount of time . . . but it sort of opens [one’s] eyes to how different people around the world are thinking in terms of how they react to the performance.”

Sherry also went on to state that diversity among her fellow actors had helped her become more aware of others’ perspectives. She felt it was “important” and “worthwhile” to meet and chat with fellow actors “before and after the performances.” She explained:
“[The scene] wouldn’t be as effective, and it wouldn’t be as . . . enriching for me . . . because you get comfortable with people, and that makes the performance better, and you learn more about different people because in this group we have a lot of really diverse actors and actresses I think.”

Later in the interview session she asserted that this diversity had also increased her desire to learn more about others. For her, this consequence resulted from the diverse nature of the audience as well as the cast members:

[The performances have] also made me realize how much I still don’t know. I feel like . . . just from . . . the people that I’ve met and . . . the people that I’ve worked with and performed with . . . I’ve realized that there’s just . . . so much that I still don’t know and . . . so many ways that I still haven’t been able to . . . relate to other people’s lifestyles. And it’s made me want to learn more about it.

b. Characterization

Actors who played a character with a personality unlike their own also experienced an increased awareness of others. In learning to understand the character, they came to understand why another individual might hold different views from themselves. Additional consequences of playing a dissimilar character included an increased investment in both the performance and its underlying lessons and an increased desire to perform this particular sketch. Karen discussed how “playing someone who’s different” than herself and experiencing how “other people react to that person” helped her understand others. She surmised, “It’s like a shadow of what seeing life through another person’s life would be like, because you have all of these people that don’t know you reacting to you as that person, so it can be pretty effective, I think.
Lori provided further elucidation on this dimension and how it gave her greater reason for investment in the performance’s underlying lessons. Although Lori did not consider herself to be “an especially intolerant person” prior to her involvement in the performances, she believed that playing Christa had “really changed” her. She stated that “being the character” and playing “the role of a lesbian” made her feel as though she were “in someone else’s shoes.” She continued:

It’s hard to describe but it was really . . . really effective on me, I think. But . . . my friends will be like, “Well, why don’t you say at the end, . . . ‘I’m not gay.’” Because I’ve just . . . never wanted to say that because I feel like that would defeat the whole purpose . . . I know afterwards we . . . say . . . who we are . . . but I’ve never wanted to be like, “And by the way I’m not gay” . . . because I feel like that would just . . . completely take away from [the performance].

Karen also indicated that playing a dissimilar character gave her an increased desire to perform the scene. Later in the interview session she added, “When I’m playing a character who is more so like me . . . I sort of subconsciously don’t try as hard . . . and I’m not as excited about it when I go to perform, I don’t think.”

3. Oppression

Due to the condition of diversity, actors expressed an increased awareness of and an improved ability to see oppression that was occurring around them. This newfound awareness was not limited only to the oppression of LGB individuals, however. Although the scene dealt primarily with heterosexism/homonegativity, the actors stated that

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150 These comments take on added significance when viewed in relation to the section entitled “Personal Narratives.” Further interpretation requires a fair amount of speculation, however. Consequently, I will address this connection in greater detail in Chapter 6.
diversity among their fellow actors helped them to become more aware of other types of oppression as well. Consequently, they were now more adept at identifying oppression in their everyday lives. Lori offered the following:

[The performance has] made me much more conscious. . . . In high school I’ve always hated, hated the word ‘fag.’ So . . . if any friends in high school said ‘fag’ I always called them out on it. But I didn’t call people out so much on using ‘gay’ I think – you know, like, “That’s gay.” But I just find that . . . on a day to day basis I’m . . . just more conscious of . . . underlying things that people say where . . . there’s hidden meaning in what they’re saying. And I think I try to be a little bit more . . . conversational about that than I used to be.

Later in the discussion she pointed out that this increased awareness resulted from her interaction with the cast. She explained, “There are some things where now . . . I feel like because I’ve become close with the people in this group and . . . stuff that . . . didn’t bother [me] before kind of bothers me now.”

C. Tools

Participation in the performance provided the actors with a wide array of tools that assisted them in confronting oppressors effectively. Will remarked, “[The performance has] really equipped me with a lot of . . . great tools. I think . . . more than anything I’ve done in college.” Sherry took this statement even further, proclaiming that these tools provided her with a sense of empowerment. As a graduate student, she had always felt as though she did a “pretty okay job of having an open discussion about things.” She believed, however, that her involvement with the performance gave her “far more tools to be able to set ground rules and all those things to have a discussion.”
Consequently, she reported feeling more “prepared” to discuss issues of heterosexism/homonegativity after her involvement with this forum theatre project.

Among the tools that the actors reported gaining were the need to set **Ground Rules** prior to engaging in dialogue, take **Personal Responsibility** for one’s actions, ask **Questions** to generate dialogue, maintain a **Non-Judgmental Attitude**, and treat others with **Respect**.

1. **Ground Rules**

   The participants stressed the need to set ground rules for conducting dialogues on difficult subjects such as heterosexism and/or homonegativity. When asked what, if anything, have you learned from this experience, Sherry remarked, “Well, I think just in terms of . . . what we gathered out of this . . . of being able to say . . . if you’re going to have a conversation set some ground rules.” She went on to list the use of a “safe word” as a particularly useful example of an effective rule: “You find an ‘ouch’ word.”

   These actors had employed the word “ouch” as a means of either informing others that something had offended them or that they felt personal discomfort with the situation. Although the actors had originally included this particular “safe word” as part of the ground rules that they had decided upon for their work in rehearsal, they felt that this rule was also useful when facilitating a difficult dialogue because it allowed them to inform others in a non-threatening manner that they had been offended. The performers believed that setting ground rules was effective in the context of the scene, the presentation, and real life.
2. Personal Narratives

Participants described the dimension of personal narratives as a means of “putting a face” on the oppression. Lori explained that telling one’s story was an effective method of combating oppression because “there are people from really small towns here who have . . . never . . . at least to their knowledge . . . known someone who was gay or anything.” She surmised that when individuals who “don’t have any personal experience with it [the LGB community]” come into contact with someone who is gay and hear his/her story, “that [event] makes a big difference.”

Approaching this dimension from a slightly different angle, Will explained why he initially felt the need to tell his story and the consequence of this vulnerability:

We’d had this . . . what I felt was a really . . . really effective performance. . . . And we had an actress who was like, “Well, I’m not gay . . . but . . . let me tell you . . .” And at that point I was like, “Oh, shit.” So I felt like, “Okay.” . . . As you say, it’s so important that there is a face. So . . . I feel like I have to come out to these people . . . which, at that time, I wasn’t doing that in general a lot . . . Especially to large groups . . . I don’t know how new I was to being gay, but I was new to being so open about it. But I did, and I was like, “Well, I am gay. And I want you to know that this experience is real,” . . . and then . . . I told them . . . a story about my life. . . . So it’s definitely changed me too . . . It’s helped me . . . I think, be more comfortable with who I am . . . and also given me beyond just how to dialogue about . . . heterosexism . . . dialogues about all sorts of different things.

For Will, the consequence of telling his story was personal empowerment. He felt better equipped not only to deal with heterosexism/homonegativity, but also to confront other oppressive behaviors. He continued, “For me it’s made me think I need to be more vocal about . . . my sexuality. But . . . in a way that is non-confrontational.”
The participants did point out one condition for this sub-dimension: courage. The actors generally agreed that the ability to tell about one’s story was linked to the bravery that he/she possessed. According to Sherry, “[It] takes more guts to be vulnerable than it does to be confrontational.” Unfortunately, however, it is not clear from the discussion whether the type of confrontation to which the actors referred was an aggressive use of diatribe (an ineffective type of confrontation) or the more effective dialogic response discussed earlier in this chapter.

3. Non-Judgmental Attitudes

Actors also stressed the need to avoid making snap judgments about others. Although Lori stated that she did not come to this realization entirely from the performances, she did point out the following:

You may think you know where a person’s coming from, but you really don’t. And you may think that . . . it’s easy to look at someone and . . . think that you know everything about them based on what they’re wearing, or how they look, or whatever. But . . . most of the time, that’s by far not the case . . . which seems like a really simplistic lesson to learn, but it’s actually kind of hard . . . because I still catch myself doing it.

Lori learned this lesson as a result of the combined experiences of coming to college and of being involved with the performance. Consequently, I was unable to determine if the dimension would occur solely as a consequence of being an actor in the sketch.

4. Respect

Maintaining a respectful demeanor was closely related to the dimension of confrontation through dialogue. For the participants, dialogue could not occur without
respect – particularly in terms of treating others as equals and approaching the oppressor from a non-aggressive stance. Will and Sherry discussed the effectiveness of respecting others as equals and validating their experiences in the following exchange:

SHERRY: What I’ve seen totally fail is when it’s, “I’m going to talk down to you because you’re an idiot.”

WILL: Yeah. Or patronize, you know.

SHERRY: Yeah. So that really talking to everybody as equals . . . and making everyone feel like they’re on equal ground . . . has worked.

WILL: And being willing to validate their experience. . . . But for me . . . I guess I’m the person who’s like, if you treat them with respect and kindness . . . chances are you can change their mind a lot more than if you treat them with impatience.

Lori explained that approaching the oppressor from a non-aggressive stance, does not mean that one shouldn’t attack the oppression, but rather that one should not attack the oppressor. She asserted that, when addressing an oppressor, “little things in wording can make such a big difference.” She continued by pointing out that instead of saying “You’re really offending me,” one should focus on statements like “What you are saying is really offending me.” Whereas the first approach caused the oppressor to “get more defensive really quickly,” the latter was much less of a personal attack. In this second statement, the comment refers to the speaker’s reaction as opposed to the oppressor’s action – consequently, the assertion’s validity becomes more difficult for the oppressor to deny. She concluded by adding that in the second approach, “You’re not attacking the person, but attacking what they said.”
5. Personal Responsibility

The participants also commented on the importance of accepting personal responsibility for the consequences of what one says and does, rather than placing the blame elsewhere. Sherry briefly iterated this dimension while listing several others found elsewhere. She stressed the importance of “treating each other with respect . . . really listening . . . and being vulnerable and taking responsibility for yourself as opposed to saying, ‘It’s your fault.’” She believed that taking personal responsibility for one’s actions was about taking the initiative necessary to remedy a bad situation as opposed to assigning blame for the problem. It was also about acknowledging mistakes that one might make and trying to avoid them in the future.

6. Questions

Karen believed that asking questions was perhaps the best method of generating dialogue when faced with oppression. She continued to suggest that this approach can force an oppressor to actually think about his/her comments:

I think that one of the best things that I’ve found as far as . . . tools to . . . use are just asking questions. I think the more questions you ask people when they make hateful comments or they make . . . some statement that is so intolerant or so inappropriate . . . by immediately responding and saying, “Well, why did you say that?” or “What do you mean by that?” it makes it where . . . because so many comments I think are so unconscious. . . . they’re just said. Like, “Oh, well, that’s gay.” . . . “Well, what do you mean by that?” . . . “Why is that gay?” . . . Whereas before, if it was said and no one said anything, they [the oppressors] would just go on and not give any thought to that comment.

Participants thought questions were an especially effective tool for discussion because they rely heavily on listening and responding – two aspects of dialogue that performers
had previously mentioned. Questions, by their very nature, also seek to include the perspective of others (a third aspect).

**D. Willingness to Act**

Although not as large or well-defined a category as it had been for the other cohorts, actors speculated that they would be more willing to **Speak Out** against oppression and to **Encourage Others** to engage in dialogues about heterosexism/homonegativity. I would like to stress that these dimensions were only speculation on the part of the participants. None of the actors reported having actually engaged in this behavior. In regard to speaking out, Karen stated, “I think this has helped me when . . . those people say things or . . . upset me in that way . . . offensive comments. I think now I am more willing to say something back and to have a conversation with them.”

When asked what, if any, advice the actors would give to others in a similar situation Karen explained that she would also “be more encouraging of people having a conversation.” She added that if one believes that one is “capable” of having such a conversation and has the necessary “tools” to do so, that one shouldn’t “shy away” from the topic simply for fear that the discussion “might go wrong.”
Conclusion

The data generated by this cohort have led me to the following emerging theory:

When actors engage with the presentation, performances of this type influence the participants’ multicultural competencies. The actors understand engagement to involve interaction with the audience. Furthermore, the audience’s engagement with the performance shapes the actors’ engagement. The performers also mention a number of strategies that encourage audience engagement: (1) The scene should depict a topic about which the audience feels passionately, (2) The scene should be infused with humorous elements, (3) The spect-actors should intervene as themselves rather than replacing an existing character, and (4) the actors should embrace their characters as completely as possible (working with a variety of different actors helps the performers embrace their character).

Performances of this type shape several of the actors’ multicultural competencies. The first competency is knowledge about the consequences of various intervention strategies – particularly avoidance of the oppression versus confrontation of the oppression. Whereas these participants always view avoidance as ineffective, however, they see confrontation’s effectiveness as dependent upon certain conditions. Conditions of effective confrontation are as follows: one must invest time in the encounter, and the encounter should take the form of a dialogue as opposed to a diatribe. Participants describe this dialogue as an equal exchange (stressing both listening and responding to the views and opinions of others) that must include all participants (regardless of their role as spect-actor or performer).
The second competency is an increased awareness of self, of others, and of oppression in general. The conditions that contribute to this competency are characterization and diversity. Actors who play a character whose personality is similar to their own experience a greater awareness of themselves. Actors who play a character that is markedly different gain an increased awareness of others (this type of character also leads to a greater investment in the role and an increased desire to perform the scene). Diversity of both fellow actors and audience members contributes to an increased awareness of both others and oppression in general (this condition also increases the actors’ desire to learn about others).

Additionally, actors report gaining a wide array of tools that help them deal with oppression. These tools include setting ground rules for facilitating difficult dialogues, taking personal responsibility for their actions, asking questions, having the courage to tell their personal narrative, maintaining a non-judgmental attitude, and respecting others. This respect encompasses treating others as equals and taking a non-aggressive stance.

Performers also indicate a greater willingness to act when faced with oppression. These participants specifically mention a willingness to speak out on behalf of others who are experiencing oppression, and a willingness to encourage others to engage in these types of dialogues.

In the final chapter, I will bring the explanatory paradigms that emerged for each of the three cohorts together into a single summation. I will then compare this overview to existing literature. Finally, I will discuss the implications of this study in terms of current practice and future research.
CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Given my lengthy discussion of the data in the previous chapters, the reader may wonder how these three cohorts’ contributions form a single, cohesive theory. In this chapter, I present the explanatory paradigm in its entirety (What strategies, actions, or processes occur? Under what conditions? What are the consequences? For whom?). Following this summary, I compare my emergent theory with the relevant literature in order to understand their relationship to one another better. Finally, I discuss the study’s implications for current practice and indicate where further study is needed.

Summary of the Explanatory Paradigm

When participants Engage with the Performance, presentations of this type impact one or more of the participants’ Multicultural Competencies. Both Audience Member Characteristics and Performance Characteristics appear to influence engagement. Because each group’s experience varies, I have chosen to discuss the unique aspects of each cohort’s paradigm separately as I present the dimensions. Despite these differences, however, the following model presents a simplified version of the paradigm that applies to all participants.

151 To remind the reader, I have used bold print to indicate the major dimensions of this study.
I. What Strategies Occur?

Engaging with the Performance influences all participants’ multicultural competencies. Participants who choose to disengage themselves from the performance experience no impact – positive or negative.
*Heterosexual Audience Members* –

Heterosexual audience members employ several methods of engagement:

**Analyzing** the performance, **Imagining Solutions** for the oppression, **Intervening** in the scene’s action, and **Dialoging** with the peers. The first three methods seem to be conditionally linked: (1) participants must analyze the performance in order to imagine solutions, and (2) participants must imagine solutions prior to intervening. Lack of familiarity with the issues, however, may inhibit an audience member’s ability to imagine solutions and thus to intervene. Personal discomfort may also limit the ability to intervene.

*LGB Audience Members* –

The audience members’ sexual orientation seems to influence how they perceive engagement. LGB students only consider engagement in terms of their **Interventions**. Although these students also engage in **Analysis** and **Dialogue**, they tend to view these activities more as conditions for the subsequent interventions rather than types of engagement unto themselves.

*Actors* –

Actors only engage with the presentation by **Interacting with the Audience**. Cast members find that interaction with the spect-actors during the performance provides a worthwhile learning experience for everyone involved.
II. What Conditions Influence the Core Strategy?

A number of conditions influence a participant’s engagement with the performance. These conditions fit into one of two categories: Audience Member Characteristics and Performance Characteristics.

All Audience Members –

Several Performance Characteristics appear to influence all audience members’ engagement. First, the scene’s Subject Matter fosters a greater degree of involvement if the audience feels passionately about the topic. Second, Humor encourages a more participatory atmosphere. Third is Character Replacement – when the majority of audience members are most likely to experience the oppression as a bystander, intervening in the action as an existing character appears to be less effective than intervening as themselves. Finally, Character Embracement (the degree of realism the actors portray in each character) also influences engagement.

Heterosexual Audience Members –

In addition to the performance characteristics listed above, the scene’s Realism may also play a factor in heterosexual audience members’ engagement.\(^{152}\) If individuals perceive the scene as lacking verisimilitude, they may not engage. The audience member characteristics that influence this cohort include Prior Experience, Age, and

\(^{152}\) Realism may play a role for all audience members, although only heterosexual students mentioned it. From an observational perspective, I believe this discrepancy may be the result of only using gay and gay-friendly actors to script the scene.
**Background.** First, the performance appears to exert no additional influence on students with extensive previous experience intervening in real-life instances of heterosexism/homonegativity. Second, the performance seems more effective for younger students than for significantly older students. Finally, although not fully explicated, the spect-actor’s background (i.e., the manner in which he/she was raised) may also be an influencing force. Unfortunately, I was unable to gather enough data about this final condition to make any pattern discernable.

*LGB Audience Members* –

LGB participants are influenced by the following performance characteristics:

**Preparation, Group Size, and Allies.** LGB students prepare for engagement through **Dialogue** with fellow audience members, multiple opportunities to **Review** the scene, and **Analysis** of the presentation. The size of the audience also shapes engagement, however. Smaller groups make engagement easier whereas larger groups make it more difficult.\(^{153}\) Finally, an audience of allies (others who share the same position on an issue and provide support) also makes engagement less daunting.

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\(^{153}\) Unfortunately, LGB participants did not discuss why small groups made engagement easier. As a matter of conjecture, this condition may the result of more opportunities to intervene, shyness, fear of failure, or another variable.
Actors –

Whereas the other cohorts focus upon their own engagement, the performers are influenced by Audience Engagement (an audience member characteristic). When the spect-actors are not engaged, the actors find audience interaction more difficult.

III. What Consequences Occur?

Engaging with the presentation shapes one or more of the participants’ Multicultural Competencies. These competencies include Knowledge about the consequences of various interventions; Awareness of self, surroundings, others, and oppression in general; Tools for confronting oppression, and a Willingness to Act when faced with oppression.

A. Knowledge

The performance influences participants’ knowledge about the consequences of various intervention strategies – particularly Avoidance of the oppression versus Confrontation of the oppression. Both actors and audience members view avoidance as ineffective (I discuss one notable exception in the LGB Audience Members section). Conversely, all students learn that confrontation, under certain circumstances, can effectively combat oppression.
1. Avoidance

*LGB Audience Members* –

Although most LGB students view avoidance as ineffective, there are some exceptions. Unfortunately the reasons for this discrepancy are unclear. As a matter of conjecture, it is my hypothesis that when oppressed individuals experience the presentation in what they perceive to be a hostile environment (i.e., without the presence of Allies) they may choose avoidance over the potentially negative repercussions of confrontation.\(^{154}\)

*Heterosexual Audience Members* –

Heterosexual students seem to learn the most about specific types of avoidance. These sub-dimensions include: maintaining *Silence in the Face of Oppression*, *Changing Subject*, and *Exiting from the Situation*. These audience members also learn about conditions under which they might avoid confrontation. First is the *Perceived Importance* of the issue. The presence of a more pressing issue may lead to an avoidance of the topic through a change of subject. The second relates to whether or not a participant’s views on an issue match those of the *Majority* When the majority of people present already agree with an individual’s perspective, he/she often perceives ignoring the oppression as easier than confrontation. Third, internalized *Psychological Factors* (or state of mind) are also a conditional force. Finally, the potential *Negative Impact* of their

\(^{154}\) I explore this hypothesis in greater detail in the “Implications” section.
actions plays a role. If spect-actors believe speaking out might further complicate the situation they may choose avoidance.

2. Confrontation

Both actors and audience members view confrontation as an effective strategy depending upon the presence or absence of certain conditions. The one condition that all students agree upon is the use of Diatribe – a strategy that all three cohorts categorize as ineffective. Participants disagree, however, about both the consequences of diatribe and the conditions of effective confrontation.

LGB Audience Members –

LGB students tend to focus on the notion that Diatribe allows the intervener to Express Him/Herself. In these instances, the confrontation is less about the oppressor and more about providing a sort of catharsis, or purging, of pent up emotion for themselves. LGB students view avoidance as ineffective, however, because it leaves the scene’s oppression unresolved. Conversely, audience members view Dialogue as an effective strategy when it results in an Equal Exchange of ideas and seeks to reach a compromise through Mutual Respect.

Heterosexual Audience Members –

Although heterosexual students reach the understanding that Diatribe allows the intervener to Express Him/Herself, they also learn that it can force the oppressor to
**Hide His/Her Behavior.** Participants view both outcomes as ineffective, however, since (although his/her behavior may be altered) the oppressor’s belief system is left unchanged. For these students, effective confrontation hinges upon the conditions of **Rationality, Time, and Age.** Rationality refers to the ability to be ruled by neither emotions nor prejudices. Time points to the understanding that the issue of heterosexism/homonegativity has no quick fixes. Finally, the oppressor’s age relates to the length of time that the individual has been indoctrinated into a certain belief system – a longer indoctrination period might necessitate a longer (not to mention more difficult) intervention.

**Actors –**

While the actors acknowledge the ineffectiveness of **Diatribe,** they tend to focus on the conditions that influence effective confrontation. Like the heterosexual cohort, this group agrees upon the need for an investment of **Time.** Actors also believe that the utilization of **Dialogue** is a necessary component of effective confrontation. The performers define dialogue as treating others as equals, listening to others’ perspectives, responding in a thoughtful manner, and including the perspective of others.

**3. Effectiveness**

The students gauge each intervention strategy’s outcome in terms of its overall effectiveness. A positive outcome facilitates one or more of the following for each of the cohorts listed:
Heterosexual Audience Members –
1. Acceptance of Others
2. Respect for Others
3. Rationality
4. Knowledge of Self
5. Open-Mindedness
6. Discussion
7. Personal empowerment
8. Diffusion of Tensions
9. Education
10. Realization of Similarities
11. Community Building
12. Understanding Consequences
13. Betterment of Self

LGB Audience Members –
1. Respect for Others
2. Rationality
3. Open-Mindedness
4. Discussion
5. Diffusion of Tensions

Actors –
1. Open-Mindedness
2. Education
3. Seeing Another’s Perspective
4. Personal Empowerment
5. Betterment of Self

Conversely, the students consider approaches that result in either an outcome that leaves the audience unchanged or has a negative impact on them to be ineffective (N. B., actors did not enumerate any outcomes as ineffective for themselves). These include:

Heterosexual Audience Members –
1. Judgment of Others
2. Increases in Offensive Behavior
3. Defensiveness
4. Escalation of Tensions
5. Stereotyping of Others
6. Unchanged Dynamic
7. Removal of Individual Choice and/or Beliefs
LGB Audience Members –
1. Increases in Offensive Behavior
2. Defensiveness
3. Unchanged Dynamic

B. Awareness

Students may also experience an increased awareness in one or more of the following areas: Self, Surroundings, Others, and/or Oppression. These sub-dimensions, however, differ for each group. None of the populations included in this study appear to gain awareness in all areas.

Heterosexual Audience Members –

Heterosexual audience members gain an increased awareness of both Self and Surroundings. The practice provided by the performance provides these students with an increased awareness of self (i.e., what they say, the assumptions they make, and the respect they give to others.) Participants also become more aware of their surroundings. They begin to think about others who may be present. They also come to the realization that things are not always as they appear at first glance.

LGB Audience Members –

LGB audience members gain an increased awareness of both Self and Others. More specifically, they learn how they might respond if a situation like the one depicted in the performance should occur in real life. LGB students also become more aware of the possibility that the other might prove to be an Ally (someone who shares the same
perspective on an issue and provides support). Consequently, they also come to the realization that their own belief system may not be the minority view.

Two conditions influence these participants’ increased awareness: the Feedback given after each intervention, and the Safe Space provided by the performance process. For some LGB students, the actors’ feedback helps to increase their self-awareness. Audience members become more aware of their body language. They come to understand the need to remain positive, and they become an empowered member of the LGB community. For others, the performance process affords a safe space – an outlet to explore intervention strategies without the fear of negative repercussions.

**Actors** –

Actors experience an increased awareness in the most areas: **Self, Others**, and **Oppression**. The condition of **Characterization** plays a role for the actors that it does not for the audience members. Actors who play a character with a similar disposition experience a heightened understanding of self. In coming to understand the character’s motivations, these actors become aware of their own motivations and thought processes. Actors who play a dissimilar character learn about others as a result of both the presentation and the required preparation. In learning to understand the character, they learn why another might hold different views from themselves. These actors become more invested in the performance and the underlying lessons that it teaches, and they also gain an increased desire to perform this particular sketch.
Diversity (of both fellow actors and audience members) also influences the actors’ awareness of the other’s perspective. Also as a result of this condition, participants express a desire to learn more about others and an improved ability to see oppression in their everyday lives (this newfound awareness is not limited only to the oppression of LGB individuals, however).

C. Tools

Actors –

Only the actors appear to gain tools that help them to confront oppressors effectively. Participants found these tools to be useful in the context of the scene, the presentation, and their life. Examples of these tools include setting Ground Rules for facilitating difficult dialogues, taking Personal Responsibility for their actions, asking Questions to understand another’s perspective, telling their Personal Narratives, maintaining a Non-Judgmental Attitude, and having Respect for others.

D. Willingness to Act

All Students (Actors and Audience Members) –

Students also exhibit a greater Willingness to Act against oppression as a result of the presentation. Both actors and audience members experience an increased willingness to Speak Out on behalf of others who are being oppressed. In some cases, this desire translates into action. In these instances, students use the knowledge gained from the presentation to stand up for others. Students who are prone to speak out prior to
the presentation, however, may also be influenced. These individuals find that the practice provided by the performance makes the task less daunting than it might otherwise appear.

_Heterosexual Audience Members –_

Heterosexual audience members also experience an increased willingness to **Self-Censor** and to **Acknowledge Differing Views**. The primary condition that influences whether heterosexual participants’ willingness to act will translate into action is the **Situational Context**. Students who are not placed in a situation that requires action may not experience any such behavioral modification. In other words, for a change of behavior to occur, the opportunity first needs to arise.

_Actors –_

Actors also experience a greater willingness to **Encourage Others** to engage in dialogue about oppression – especially if the other believes that he/she is capable of having the conversation and possesses the tools to do so. The actor cohort, however did not experience any discernable change in behavior. The reasons for this apparent lack of activism are unclear. Although this observation is based on conjecture, it may simply be a result of the fact that they were already taking action against oppression through their involvement with the interactive theatre project.
Discussion

Given the data presented, the reader may wonder how this emergent theory can enrich our understanding of interactive theatre’s impact on college students. With an eye toward this goal, I will compare and contrast this emergent theory with the existing literature. As a reminder to the reader, I am using this analysis to gain insight into the various ways that others have conceptualized interactive theatre’s impact. Consequently my analysis need not be all inclusive, but rather sufficient to familiarize the reader with the various dimensions.

To achieve this aim, I sought to explore how scholars had previously conceptualized the consequences of interactive theatre, the strategies from which these consequences arose, and the influencing conditions. In the following sections, I examine the explanatory paradigm (in relation to the relevant literature) with the following questions in mind: (1) how do theorists believe interactive theatre should impact audiences?, and (2) what do interactive theatre practitioners state is the impact? I also consider the core consequence of this paradigm (when appropriate) in relation to the scholarly literature on alternative methods of addressing heterosexism/homonegativity (i.e. speaker panels, film, television, art exhibits, etc.).

155 Kilarski, 228.

156 Bowers, “Intergenerational Caregiving,” 5; Strauss, 300.

157 In addition to the specific type of Forum Theatre used in this study, the term “interactive theatre” is used in reference to Theatre of the Oppressed, Applied Theatre, and Socio-Drama.
I. Core Strategy: Engaging with the Performance

In this section, I focus on the core strategy of Engaging with the Performance and the various types of engagement. When appropriate, I also attempt to describe any new dimensions found within the literature. The categories covered in this portion include Analysis, Imagined Solutions, Interventions, Dialogue, and Interacting with the Audience.

Many of the surveyed authors outline strategies that audiences use to engage with the performance. The strategies correspond roughly to those found in this study. Kaplan points out that his spect-actors “identify the problems” and “question the actors” (what I have referred to as Analysis). Further in the same text he states that they also “find ways that an audience member can enter the scene and redirect the action” (Imagined Solutions). Other scholars suggest that their participants “enact other directions that the story, and the teller’s life, might take” or engage in “active learning” (Interventions). Still others describe how auditors “brainstorm” or discuss ideas (Dialogue).

Although most of the readings broached the topic of audience engagement in one way or another, I could find only one brief passage that discussed a specific correlation

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158 37, 39.
159 39.
160 Cohen-Cruz, 106.
161 Burgoyne and others, “Faculty Development,” 114.
between engagement and impact (see Group Size in the next section). More often than not, scholars seem to assume that engagement is part of the performance’s natural progression. Although some authors detail conditions that influence the degree to which an audience is engaged, a lack of engagement is never discussed.

Scholars discuss actor engagement even less often. When the topic is addressed, authors tend to discuss it only in terms of its influence on the audience. I was unable to locate any studies that discuss actor engagement in terms other than as a condition for audience engagement.

My study differs from the existing literature in that it begins to establish a link between the core strategy (Engaging with the Performance) and the core consequence (Multicultural Competencies). Furthermore, it suggests that – for varying reasons – not all spect-actors are automatically engaged by a performance of this nature. It is also the first to examine actor engagement as a strategy that leads to significant consequences for both performers and audience members.

II. Conditions for the Core Strategy

The first condition for engagement, Audience Member Characteristics, is severely underrepresented in the literature. Burgoyne and others seem to have conducted the most thorough discussion of this dimension. In their investigation, they uncovered several sub-dimensions of the audience members’ Background that had not appeared in my research. These sub-dimensions included “place of origin,” “academic discipline,” “formal training,” and “significant prior experience” (Although the participants of my
study also commented on prior experience, I chose to treat this category as an entirely separate dimension.\textsuperscript{163} The researchers went on to add that their “study suggests that constellations of factors, not just one causal element, influence a participant’s reaction to the performance.”\textsuperscript{164}

**Performance Characteristics** appears in the literature slightly more often. The most frequently mentioned sub-dimension of this category is **Realism**. Although the sub-dimension has not been explored to its fullest potential, theatre practitioners tend to agree that the credibility of their performances/actors helps to heighten the interest and engagement of audiences.\textsuperscript{165} Quoting a participant who viewed a performance on the subject of bullying, Houston writes that interactive theatre “works because it’s real and gritty…it’s accurate in its message…it captures the reality of the abuse, it’s true, real – unlike the Hollywood version”.\textsuperscript{166} All these authors focus on the positive impact a realistic performance has for the audience. In contrast, this study seems to suggest that the presence of unrealistic elements can limit the presentation’s impact on audience members.

A second sub-dimension, **Group Size**, also appears in the literature. Houston remarks that small groups are necessary for the success of interactive theatre since they allow issues to be “sensitively handled” and “formal rules” can be “identified for

\textsuperscript{163} 112.

\textsuperscript{164} 113.

\textsuperscript{165} Burgoyne and others, “Faculty Development,” 115; Chauhan; Day, 26; Houston, 290; Kaplan, 37.

\textsuperscript{166} 290.
Boal also states his preference for small groups because they encourage a more effective *type* of engagement:

> In the end, I think that the presence of a large audience . . . makes the theatrical nature of the show almost inevitable. It is also in the latter type of situation that exhibitionists are at their most numerous . . . . When dealing with smaller audiences, of motivated people, reflection gains the upper hand, and the search for solutions can be more fruitful; especially if the forum is to be followed by a real action.  

I would like to draw attention to two items in the above passage. First, Boal asserts that small groups of “motivated people” foster the most effective engagement – an **Audience Member Characteristic** that was not mentioned by this study’s participants. Second, Boal appears to be the only author to suggest – regardless of his brevity – the link between the strategy of reflection (a means of **Engaging** – although different from what I have outlined in this study) and the consequence of a fruitful search for solutions (**Knowledge**). Although Boal’s dimension of “reflection” is similar to my participants’ “analysis,” there is a noticeable difference. Whereas analysis refers to the scene’s dissection and the study of its constituent parts, reflection also seems to encompass the process of creation. For a participant to reflect on the presentation effectively, he/she must bring new information that exists outside of the presentation to the equation. He/she must also draw inferences and conceive of new ideas.

In her discussion of Boalian theatre techniques, Jan Cohen-Cruz notes a third condition that did not appear in my data. She states that engagement of others also influences engagement of self – albeit in the context of personal narratives. She asserts,

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167 290.

168 *Games,* 263.
“An individual alone may feel she has nothing of interest to share. But invited to do so in a group where everyone else is doing the same makes it more possible."169 Although my study’s actor cohort did mention the engagement of others as a condition of their engagement, they were the only group to do so.

Scholars seldom explore strategies for audience engagement, however. Although Boal outlines several “rules” that he believes can generate “serious and fruitful discussion,”170 practitioners have added little to the conversation.171 These “rules” cover both the areas of dramaturgy and staging.172 Unfortunately, these standards read as more of a “how-to” guide than anything else.173 There is no real examination of how or why they influence audience engagement. Elsewhere in the literature, practitioners have commented that emotional involvement may prompt engagement.174 For these authors, 

169 104.

170 *Games*, 242.

171 Although not listed as a strategy *per se*, Burgoyne and others ("Faculty development,” 114) note that “stereotypes in characterization” led to frequent discussion in their performances. In their assessment, however, the effectiveness of this strategy was less clear.

172 Boal, *Games*, 242-45. Examples of these rules are 1) The text must identify the “nature” [ideology] of each character” clearly, 2) “The original solutions proposed by the protagonist […] must contain at the very least one political or social ‘error’ […]” 3) Any genre is acceptable except “surrealism or the irrational,” 4) Actors must articulate their character’s ideology physically. If they do nothing the spect-actors will be inclined to stay in their seats and only discuss the issues presented, 5) You “must find the most suitable means of expression” for your “subject matter,” 6) “Each character must be presented visually, in such a way as to be recognizable independently of their spoken script […]”

173 Rohd (131-34) also includes a list of “rules” that are similar in tone to Boal’s: 1) Develop continuity through the use of a single facilitator who either leads the entire performance or connects the different parts of the presentation, 2) Make sure that the group has enough time for the performance and that the space is adequate for its needs, 3) Take the necessary time to introduce the presentation (i.e. expectations, goals, and structure), 4) Make sure the acting troupe conducts itself professionally and is energized to be performing, and 5) Pose questions (as opposed to providing answers) with the presentation.

however, evoking emotions such as Passion (a byproduct of Subject Matter) and/or Humor appears to be less of a specific strategy they use to engage their audiences and more of what they perceive to be a natural by-product of the presentation’s theatricality. In this study, I begin the process of interrogating these “rules” in order to distinguish those conditions that truly influence audience engagement from those of a more arbitrary nature. I also draw attention to some of the assumptions that practitioners have made in regard to the Performance Characteristics of interactive theatre (such as the evocation of emotion) and begin to take note of them as a necessary condition of Audience Engagement.

II. Core Consequence: Multicultural Competencies

Scholars agree that interactive theatre should, and does, impact multicultural competencies. When explaining this impact, however, authors rarely focus on more than one or two areas. I encountered no studies that addressed all the competencies this study’s participants describe.

A. Knowledge

Although a wide range of both theorists and practitioners agree that students gain knowledge about the consequences of various intervention strategies, they seldom engage in any lengthy discussion of these strategies. More often than not, the authors simply

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175 Burgoyne and others, “Faculty Development”; Bury, Popple, and Barker; Chauhan; Houston and others; Kaplan; Mady Schutzman, “Brechtian Shamanism: The Political Therapy of Augusto Boal,” in
state that the participants learned either “problem-solving strategies” or “techniques” that were effective in addressing the issue of oppression – they seldom state the exact nature of these strategies. Furthermore, only Boal lists both Avoidance and Confrontation as intervention strategies – although he also adds a third strategy that this study’s participants did not mention: Resignation. For Boal, the strategy of resignation is learned from a scene depicting an inescapable oppression (e.g., a man in front of a firing squad). In such instances, individuals can neither successfully avoid nor confront the oppressor – they can only resign themselves to the inevitable.\textsuperscript{176} Aside from Boal’s mention of avoidance and resignation, I only found mention of confrontation in the literature.

I came across only one other relevant methodological approach for combating heterosexism/homonegativity – speaker panels. In his study of these panels, Crouteau asserts that when an audience member feels attacked he/she may become defensive or hostile.\textsuperscript{177} This strategy most closely resembles what I have termed confrontation through Diatribe. Although Crouteau’s statements are not supported by clear examples or discussions of method, both he and my participants view this strategy as ineffective. Overall, however, he states that speaker panels are quite adept at using question and answer sessions to promote effective Dialogue.\textsuperscript{178} In my assessment, the specific


\textsuperscript{176} Boal, \textit{Games}, 254-55.

\textsuperscript{177} Croteau, 397.

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 398.
intervention strategies utilized by students in both interactive theatre and other approaches are severely underrepresented in the literature.

Although scholars of both interactive theatre and alternative methodological approaches frequently discuss the outcome of intervention strategies, they only sporadically comment on the effectiveness of these strategies. Furthermore, even when authors tout these techniques (e.g., interactive theatre performances, speaker panels, etc.) as “effective,” they seldom define the word in terms of specific outcomes. I could only locate one direct reference of an effective outcome from the author’s perspective in the literature – discussion. Bollag provides one example of discussion in the following statement: “Although the performance does not end with a sense of resolution, its sponsors feel that engaging a faculty audience in an animated discussion of the issues is in itself a success.”

Also with one notable exception, studies do not mention outcomes that participants consider successful. Only Burgoyne and others discuss effectiveness from a participant’s perspective in any depth. Their findings indicate that some interactive theatre techniques are more effective because they lead to reflection, an increased awareness of and desire to learn about others, and provide practice for real-life situations. However, the literature never fully reconciles the views of participants and the researcher on the matter of criteria for effectiveness. In this study, I offer the beginnings of a codified standard, based upon participant perception, that may provide a rudimentary evaluative tool against which others may gauge a program’s effectiveness.
B. Awareness

One topic that I found to be overwhelmingly present in the readings was the notion that engagement with interactive theatre projects of this sort engendered an increased awareness (of self, others surroundings, and oppression) in the participants.\textsuperscript{179} Researchers seemed to be more willing and/or better equipped to discuss this dimension. Generally speaking, the findings in the literature support those in this study.\textsuperscript{180} Although the literature mentioned each of these sub-dimensions, there were some subtle differences between the way authors presented certain aspects in the literature and the way they emerged in this theory. The first of these discrepancies occurs in the sub-dimension of the Other. Although scholars stress an increased awareness of and respect for the other (as did the students in this study), only rarely do they suggest that the other may also come to be seen as a potential ally – a sub-dimension provided by the LGB cohort. Second, existing studies also propound that interactive theatre performances lead to an increased awareness of key “issues.”\textsuperscript{181} As these authors never attempt to examine precisely what

\textsuperscript{179} The dimension of Awareness was not found to present in studies of alternative methodological approaches.


\textsuperscript{181} Howard, 227; Kaplan, 36; Ressler, 28, 79-80.
these issues are, however, I was unable to ascertain if they have been addressed herein. Finally, studies give little more than a passing acknowledgement to the conditions cited by my participants as influencing awareness. Two of these conditions went entirely unspoken: Diversity among the actors and the audience, and the actor’s Feedback. Only Sternberg even marginally examines the condition of Characterization (specifically the impact of playing a dissimilar character) from the actor’s perspective.\textsuperscript{182} Finally, while several interactive theatre studies mentioned the issue of Safe Space, authors listed it as a condition of Engagement as opposed to a condition of Awareness.\textsuperscript{183}

C. Tools

Although other works on interactive theatre approach some of the tools mentioned by the actor cohort as procedural matters – they do not examine these tools as something that the participants have learned. Rohd spells out several rules for his peer educators (facilitators): confidentiality, nonjudgment, respect, openness, honesty, right to pass, and anonymity.\textsuperscript{184} While two of these rules (nonjudgment and respect) bear a striking resemblance to the Ground Rules in this study, I was unable to determine whether or not his rules are a competency that the spect-actors gain. Only Day lists actual tools (she calls them “moral codes of conduct”) that audience participants learn:

\textsuperscript{182} Sternberg discusses sociodrama in terms of participants “putting themselves in other people’s shoes” as a way to “understand themselves and others better.” 4

\textsuperscript{183} The literature’s treatment of Safe Space is more fully examined in the later section entitled Engagement.

\textsuperscript{184} Rohd, 130-31. Houston also suggests that his participants follow rules, but these rules are not enumerated, 290.
1) “Be nice to everyone you meet . . . .”
2) “Don’t judge [others].”
3) “Show respect to anyone . . . .”

The only tool mentioned by my participants that resurfaces in numerous other studies is **Personal Narratives**, and the vast majority of these explorations go somewhat farther than did my participants – stressing the therapeutic powers of telling one’s story for both the storyteller and the witness. Other methodological approaches have also taken note of the personal narrative’s power, however. Researchers have found that these stories have a positive effect on the witness’ attitudes toward LGBT individuals – a phenomenon more commonly referred to as the “contact hypothesis.”

Introduced by Gordon W. Allport, this hypothesis revolves around the proposition that exposure to members of other cultures may provide a “means for reducing negative attitudes and imbu[ing] new information that challenges stereotypes of stigmatized groups.” First applied to interracial contact, this theory has recently (with considerable success) been applied to the LGB community. Although prejudice is the result of mistaken beliefs about a group of people, these errors can be rectified through positive and contradictory interactions with a group member. There are, however, some qualifications to the

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185 Day, 28.

186 Bollag; Jan Cohen-Cruz, “Redefining the Private: From Personal Storytelling to Political Act,” in *Boal Companion*, eds. Cohen-Cruz and Schutzman, 103-04, 113; Salas, 80; Sternberg and Garcia, 84; Thompson, 57-59.

187 Croteau, 397; Salas, 80.

188 Liang and Alimo, 239-4.

theory’s successful application. Successful contact “involves people of equal status, occurs under cooperative conditions, and has the active support of powerful authorities […]”\(^{190}\) Other scholars, however, have argued that the following conditions must also be met: “(1) the minority group members’ behavior is inconsistent with their stereotype, (2) contact occurs often and in various contexts, and (3) the minority members are judged as typical.”\(^{191}\) Allport’s contact hypothesis (and the subsequent studies detailing its positive effect on LGB attitudes) would seem to support two of the concepts found in this study’s emerging theory. First, they give credence to the notion of **Personal Narratives** as an effective **Tool** for engaging in these types of dialogues: the use of personal narratives helps to provide the type of contact that Allport describes. Second, they substantiate the condition of **Diversity** (particularly the inclusion of members of the LGB community) as influencing the **Multicultural Competency** of an increased **Awareness** of **Others**.

### D. Willingness to Act

Once again, there are no great surprises in this dimension.\(^{192}\) One of the primary purposes of interactive theatre, as conceived by Boal, is to instill a desire in the spectator to take some sort of action against oppressive elements after viewing a


\(^{191}\) Schiappa, 94.

\(^{192}\) The dimension of Willingness to Act was not present in studies of alternative methodological approaches.
performance. He states, “If the show starts in fiction, its objective is to become integrated into reality, into life.” Accordingly, much of the literature on interactive theatre also takes this position. Despite the prevalence of this dimension, however, I could only find three instances where examples were actually given. In the first two, the authors assert that their participants expressed an increased willingness to Speak Out against oppression. In the third, Kaplan states, “Given the power of the Theatre Program, it can also help create change on an institutional level. […] Administrators and faculty who have contributed to their [various interactive sketches] creation want to bring them to their departments and use them as tools for making difficult conversations go better.” This sentiment is probably most closely related to what I have termed a willingness to Encourage Others to engage in difficult conversations about oppression.

In comparison to this study, interactive theatre scholars rarely note that a Willingness to Act translates into actual behavior. Why the literature failed to note any behavioral modification is unclear. None of the studies, however, examined any of the potential conditions that might influence a change in behavior. According to the data gathered in this study, the desire to take action is not always sufficient – oftentimes

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193 Boal, Aesthetics, 6; Boal, Games, 17, 251.
194 Boal, Games, 276.
195 Day, 29; Placier and others; Ressler, 81; Sternberg and Garcia, 52; Wrentschur, 108.
196 Howard, 225; Salas, 81.
197 36.
198 Bury, Popple, and Barker, 30; Howard 225.
changes in behavior depend upon the **Situational Context**. The participants were more prone to alter their behavior in a situation that required immediate action.

### III. Conditions for the Core Consequence

A number of interactive theatre studies have taken note of their performance’s **Memorability**. Researchers indicated that participants found the issues and lessons learned in an interactive theatre performance more memorable than other, more didactic, diversity presentations. Allen states, “The data indicated that the children were moved by the experience of ‘Forbidden Fire’ [an interactive theatre performance dealing with the subject of auto crime] and that they recalled the experience some 7 months later. We were told in the interviews that they preferred the non-didactic play and drama activities to ordinary lessons and other interventions such as the police visiting the schools.”

Burgoyne and others advance the possibility that the “active learning approach” of interactive theatre may influence increased recall. In contrast, others have suggested that the “emotional effect of the performance” is the cause. Although the participants in this study who contributed to the follow-up interviews were able to recall a great deal of detail about the performance, I cannot claim that any such assertion of memorability is grounded in the data.

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199 28.

200 114.

201 Black and others, 603.
IV. Summary

Although the results of this study bear many similarities to the existing literature, I would like to point out several distinctions. First, unlike current scholarship, this examination of interactive theatre is unique in its exploration of the connection between audience engagement and impact. In establishing this link, the explanatory paradigm also provides a measure of insight into the conditions that prevent some students from engaging with the presentation and, consequently, benefiting from any possible positive impact. Furthermore, knowledge of these conditions may potentially suggest a more effective course of action for practitioners who wish to encourage engagement among all spect-actors. This observation would seem to be particularly important because those students who are most likely to disengage are also the students who, I believe, would receive the most benefit (see “Implications for Practice and Research,” section II: “The Link between Engagement and Impact”). Second, prior inquiries into the effects of interactive theatre have tended to focus on the audience members. Examinations of this approach’s impact on actors are virtually nonexistent. Although this work leaves many unanswered questions, it begins to move the scholarship in new directions. Finally, although published studies frequently comment on the “effectiveness” of a particular interactive theatre program, they have done little to define and unpack this term. This study begins the process of codifying the outcomes that constitute both effective and ineffective engagement. Furthermore, it begins to offer standards by which these outcomes might be measured.
Implications for Practice and Research

In the remainder of this chapter I examine the implications that the emerging theory holds for both practice and further research. I have further divided these implications into four categories: (1) Interactive Theatre and the Contact Hypothesis, (2) The Link between Engagement and Impact, (3) Long-Term Effects, and (4) The Impact of Interactive Theatre on Actors.

I. Interactive Theatre and the Contact Hypothesis

As I pointed out earlier in this chapter, research has shown that contact with members of the LGB community can have a positive effect on an individual’s attitudes toward homosexuality when certain conditions are also met.\(^{202}\) Recently, however, researchers have begun to explore Edward Schiappa, Peter Gregg, and Dean Hewes conception of the “parasocial contact hypothesis.”\(^{203}\) Their contention is that parasocial interaction, or interaction with a mediated figure, can be used as a substitute for actual interaction. Currently, three studies (none of which examine live performances) support this assertion. These works examined student responses to two television programs (Six Feet Under and Queer Eye for the Straight Guy) and one taped performance of the transvestite comedian Eddie Izzard.\(^{204}\) They found that parasocial contact had a positive effect on heterosexual students’ attitudes toward members of the LGB community only if

\(^{202}\) Croteau, 397; Salas, 80.

\(^{203}\) Schiappa, 91-117.

\(^{204}\) Ibid., 102-14.
the portrayal allows majority members to form discrete judgments about minority members (e.g., likability, similarity, and predictability) and if the contact is positive.\textsuperscript{205} Currently there are no studies examining the intersection of this hypothesis and live performances – interactive or otherwise.

While my study does not provide substantive evidence in support of the parasocial contact hypothesis, it does offer insights that warrant further exploration. First, I argue that Forum Theatre provides audience members with an experience that is infinitely closer to an actual encounter with LGB individuals than recorded programming. Audience members cannot query a television character in regard to his/her motivations. In the following example of such a discussion, Christa starts out by explaining to an audience member (Carla) that Deb is the only person she has told about her sexual orientation.

CHRISTA: She’s the only person I’ve ever told this. I’ve haven’t even told my parents. . . .

CARLA: If you were out…do you think you’d feel more comfortable saying something?

CHRISTA: I’d be terrified, because I would be afraid that I would meet David somewhere, sometime. Maybe, you know, he’d start giving me shit, and you know.

Forum Theatre allows members of the dominant group to engage in dialogue – not only with one another, but also with the characters. Second, unlike their mediatized equivalents, the LGB characters in a Forum Theatre performance have the ability to meet all of the qualifications for the “parasocial contact hypothesis” and most of those

\textsuperscript{205} Schiappa, 99-100.
described for actual contact as well. Third, interaction with a fictional member of the LGB community allows for the inclusion of personal narratives even when LGB cast members are not available or are hesitant to tell their own story in a potentially hostile environment.

II. The Link between Engagement and Impact

In this study, unlike the research that precedes it, I have attempted an in-depth exploration of the link between the condition of engagement and the consequence of impact. Consequently, I have suggested reasons for student disengagement with the performance and the subsequent consequences. I have also suggested ways that practitioners can further encourage effective engagement so as to maximize the performance’s positive impact on all participants. Although theatre practitioners have little control over the condition of Audience Member Characteristics, they do possess the ability to alter many of the Performance Characteristics and, consequently, facilitate the needs of resistant audience members better. The data suggest that participants are more likely to engage in the performance when the audience is composed of like-minded individuals. This observation seems to be particularly true for LGB students.

The reader may gain some further insight into why some students disengage by examining these observations through the lens of Michel Foucault’s conception of the archetypal panopticon. In describing the panopticon, Foucault states that when power is visible and unverifiable, the subject “inscribes in himself [sic] the power relationship in
which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection."\textsuperscript{206} Foucault’s assertion might help to explain why the only participant who came to view the strategy of Avoidance as effective was a gay male. This particular participant viewed the scene with a group of heterosexual students (several of whom identified with the homonegative character). Because the archetypal panopticon also forces the individual to police him/herself, an individual (such as this student) who holds views that are inconsistent with the majority will be reticent to express those views when he/she senses that he/she is in the minority. Providing these individuals with an audience comprised of Allies might lead to significantly different – not to mention more effective – results.

A similar hypothesis might also apply to students who identified with the character of David – or any student whose views are inconsistent with the majority of other audience members. In the instance of this specific study, the presentation’s panoptical effect may have been even more pronounced for these individuals. Almost without exception, participants who fit this category either stated that they learned nothing from the performance or that they learned to be careful of what they say in public. The actors’ unilateral acceptance of LGB individuals may have further exacerbated these students’ feeling of being “outside” of the group. Although the actors did not make their perspectives on the issue of heterosexism/homonegativity readily known to audience members, their views may have been perceptible in terms of the

\textsuperscript{206} Michel Foucault, “From \textit{Discipline and Punish},” in \textit{A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader}, eds. Antony Easthope and Kate McGowan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 86.
scene’s realism (a condition that was also found to influence a participant’s engagement). Research indicates that homogenous groupings generate a higher level of participant involvement than do their heterogeneous counterparts.\footnote{Morgan, 12, 21.} Since the students in question viewed performances that were conducted for the most heterogeneous groupings, these findings might explain the students’ disengagement. This assertion is also supported by this study’s explanatory paradigm that states an equal exchange of dissenting ideas is a crucial aspect of dialogue. Further study is warranted in regard to this phenomenon – especially if the resulting knowledge aids practitioners of interactive theatre to attain a more effective outcome for their audiences. Further study is also needed to understand if the conditions for engagement that each group cited were limited to that cohort or if they have a broader influence.

III. The Impact on Actors

Studies examining the impact of interactive theatre on the actors are extremely rare. In fact, although I would not go so far as to say that they do not exist, I was unable to locate any such studies while preparing my dimensional analysis. Although the following observations are not grounded in the data, I do have unanswered questions arising from certain discrepancies between the audience members’ competencies and the actors.’ I also wonder about the predisposition of the performers (i.e., were actors already more willing to \textbf{Speak Out} than the other cohorts – a quality that may have contributed to their initial involvement with the project).
The actor cohort reported gaining an additional Multicultural Competency that the other groups had not. Participation in the performance provided the actors with a wide array of Tools that helped prepare the actors to confront oppressors effectively. As I indicated in the earlier discussion, these tools bear a striking similarity to the rules used by theorists/practitioners. Consequently, I question whether these tools are truly the result of engagement with an audience or if they are rather a product of the performers’ training.

The core strategy of Engaging with the Performance is another area where I have been unable to determine the influencing conditions. Actors playing a dissimilar character stated that both the performance and the rehearsal process helped them to learn about others. Speaking as an actor who portrayed such a character in the scene, I know that actors need a certain understanding of their character before ever stepping in front of an audience. I also know that this understanding may become infinitely deeper with more performances. This observation suggests that an increased Awareness of others may also be a condition of engagement for actors. I do not know, however, if my experience is typical of the experiences of others.

The final area I would like to discuss before moving on is Awareness of Oppression. Only the actors mentioned this sub-dimension. The condition influencing this consequence was a Diversity of both audience members and fellow cast members. I question whether diversity of both groups is necessary or if one is more influential than the other. Certainly performances are needed in order for performers to encounter a
diverse audience. However if only a diverse cast is required, the rehearsal process may be sufficient.

I believe that there is a great deal more that can be learned from the actors than I have included in this study. For example, in hindsight I am sure that the line between what performers learned as a direct result of engagement with the audience and what was learned prior to such engagement becomes infinitely more difficult to distinguish afterward. Due to a lack of scholarship on the subject, further study is warranted in order to discern exactly which consequences are the direct result of audience engagement and which would have occurred solely as a result of the rehearsal process.

IV. Long-Term Effects

Finally, I have also begun the process of codifying the outcomes that comprise both effective and ineffective engagement. Consequently, my analysis suggests knowable standards (albeit unproven) by which one can gauge the effectiveness of a program of interactive theatre. Additional research, however, is needed to understand fully the accuracy of this list and to determine the degree to which these outcomes are indicative of effectiveness. Longitudinally speaking, it is also unclear from the data gathered whether these potential shifts in attitude are transitory or of a more permanent nature. Furthermore, the timeframe of this study proved to be insufficient to determine accurately if the gains experienced by these students in terms of their multicultural competencies would translate to an actual modification of behavior. A longitudinal study might yield more definitive answers to these questions.
Conclusion

Due to the nature of qualitative research, this study cannot show the emergent theory to be applicable to a more general population than this particular cohort. Nor can it generalize beyond the topic of heterosexism/homonegativity. An unfortunate side-effect of using a sample of convenience resulted in a cohort that was not particularly diverse in any conventional manner (e.g., race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or age). Additionally, the majority of these students may have been predisposed to a particular way of thinking due to the common denominator of being enrolled in a single, elective course. Although this study cannot prove the emergent theory to be generalizable to a wider population, comparing the theory to the available scholarship leads me to believe that not only is it likely transferable to other settings because it is supported by the literature but that it also sheds new light on interactive theatre’s impact on college students. Further studies should be conducted on a larger scale to refine the emerging theory and determine whether it applies to a more general population and to a wider range of multicultural issues.

Lest anyone believe that a dialogue on the topic of heterosexism might have naturally occurred without intervention, the survey information would indicate otherwise. Of the 53 participants, 20 suggested that they would either attempt to avoid addressing the issue of heterosexism/homonegativity if placed in a position similar to that portrayed in the scene, or that they felt uncomfortable having a discussion of these issues in general. Students can and will learn from the experiences of their peers, but we must give them the opportunity to engage in such conversations in order for this learning to occur.
Based upon my analysis, Forum Theatre provides such a learning experience for both actors and spect-actors.
APPENDIX 1

Forum Theatre Script

(Room with a large table and five chairs. MARGARET seated alone studying. Enter CHRISTA and DEB talking: they are friends outside of class.)

CHRISTA: I already saw that one.

DEB: Was there something else you want to go see?

CHRISTA: Is that movie about the Chronicles out yet?

DEB: You mean *The Chronicles of Narnia*?

CHRISTA: Yeah, Oh hey Margaret, how’s it going?

MARGARET: Hi guys! How’s it going? I’m so excited about getting started on this project.

DEB: Excited?! (puzzled face)

MARGARET: Oh yeah, I have some research I am really excited to show you guys!

(Enter KATHAE)

KATHAE: Hey you all. Debbie what are you wearing? Hi Christa. Are those scrubs?

DEB: Yeah?! I work at a women’s clinic and I just got off work.

KATHAE: Oh…

MARGARET: Could we start talking about this? I know David isn’t here yet, but I thought we could just get started. I thought we could do a power point presentation. I don’t know how to do one, that’s where I am in my thinking, but does anyone know how to do one?

DEB: Christa will do it. We did one for Intro to Art.

CHRISTA: Yeah, I could show you guys how to do it, it’s easy.
KATHAE: Oh God, do we have to do one of those? Haven’t we had enough of bad power point for one lifetime? We have had to sit an entire semester through the lame ones that our professor does. I for one am…(Enter DAVID)…Oh, and here’s Docta D. Just kidding, Hi David.

DAVID: Sorry I’m late you guys, some bull dyke stole the last parking spot and I had to walk all the way across campus.

KATHAE: That’s funny. How do you know she was a dyke?

DAVID: She had a mullet!

KATHAE: That’s really upsetting, there is nothing worse than bad hair. I don’t have anything against lesbians, but I have something against people with bad hair, so call her what you will David.

(CHRISTA and DEB exchange looks)

DAVID: I swear to God she looked like a guy from behind. Oh, and when she turned around, I swear, she had on a Xena: Warrior Princess T-shirt.

KATHAE: Jesus Christ…that’s unfortunate.

DEB: (to DAVID) What you said was really offensive.

DAVID: David: What? What did I say?

KATHAE: Oh PUH-LEASE!

DEB: Bull dyke?

DAVID: Sorry, diesel dyke? Carpet muncher? Queen of the Isle of Lesbos?

KATHAE: Don’t defend people who wear Xena shirts.

MARGARET: Well this is all really interesting, but now that David is here, I really think we should get to work on starting this project. I really want to find out how to do this power point presentation.

CHRISTA: Well okay I can show you. (Christa gets out laptop)

DAVID: We’re going to do a power point?
MARGARET: Yes, it’s really exciting, we are going to do this power point presentation and I have some exciting ideas for it.

DAVID: I don’t know how to do power point.

MARGARET: That’s okay Christa knows how.

KATHAE: Christa, you’d better not suck at this. Why do we have to do some lame ass Power point presentation anyway? They are so gay! They are gayer than the gayest gay that ever gayed. They are gayer than the gay fraternity they are trying to start here, which by my estimation is pretty damned gay.

DAVID: You gotta be kidding me!

KATHAE: Yes, I mean it is not like there are not gays in fraternities. There are gays in my fraternity. I am not sure exactly why they need their own house.

DAVID: A fraternity of fags! That’s just what this campus needs.

DEB: What is the problem with that?

DAVID: That’s sick. What…don’t you ever read the Bible?

KATHAE: I mean I’m not a homophobe. I just don’t understand why they need their own house.

MARGARET: Really we are not going to get anything done if we don’t get to work on this presentation. Can we at least start on our outline?

CHRISTA: That’s a good idea. So I thought we could start our project talking about mitosis.

DEB: No I am sorry, I am really offended.

KATHAE: Why? Why are you getting so uptight about this Debbie? What’s your problem?

DEB: My problem!?! What the hell’s his problem? Oh, like you’re gonna come in here after doing the barnyard bump with your daddy’s prize bull and tell other people how they ought to conduct their private affairs. Sex is private! Unless you’re doing it with your momma on your front porch, but I guess that’s your business farm boy.

DAVID: God! Chill out! What are you a raggin’ feminist?

DEB: Yeah, you want your red wings?
KATHAE: Debbie, why are you being such a bitch! It’s not like anyone here is gay anyway.

DEB: Aren’t you gonna say something Christa?

DAVID: What? You’re a dyke?

CHRISTA: Can we just get back to work.

KATHAE: You are lez?

CHRISTA: It doesn’t matter. Let’s just get back to work.

KATHAE: Oh my God!

DAVID: Is that why you got so upset? Are you guys bumping uglies?

KATHAE: Okay, that’s foul.

(DEB gets up to leave)

KATHAE: Debbie…Debbie, come on.

DAVID: God, it was just a joke!

KATHAE: Are lesbians technically eternal virgins?

CHRISTA: Fuck you!

(CHRISTA leaves)

KATHAE: OK. If everybody else is leaving, I’m going too.

DAVID: Hey! Let me catch a ride back to my car with you.

(KATHAE and DAVID leave)

MARGARET: Great! Great! We’re never going to get this presentation done.
APPENDIX 2
Consent Form

Principal Investigator: Kevin Babbitt  
kbd6w4@mizzou.edu  
(479) 619-6785  

Advisor: Suzanne Burgoyne  
burgoynes@missouri.edu  
(573) 882-0528

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the proposed methods. It describes the procedures, benefits, risks, and discomforts of the study. Participation is **purely voluntary** and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Your participation in this study is **anonymous and confidential**. It is important for you to understand that no guarantees or assurances can be made as to the results of the study.

**Purpose of the study and how long it lasts:**  
The purpose of this study is to improve the quality of the interactive performance which you will observe. It will take about 50 minutes to view the performance and complete a short survey.

**Description of the study including the procedures to be used:**  
You will view a scene dealing with the issue of sexual prejudice and then be asked to explore alternate methods of intervention in the scene. Data will be gathered from observations of your interaction with the scene and with one another as well as from the survey. After viewing the scene, you will discuss your impressions of the interactive theatre presentation with approximately 20 other participants and a facilitator. To ensure that the researchers have an accurate understanding of the participants' comments, the interventions and group discussion will be audio-recorded. Survey questions will collect demographic data (i.e., age, sex, etc.) and ask for your opinions on the topic of sexual prejudice and the usefulness of the scene.

**Description of procedures/elements that may result in discomfort or inconvenience:**  
Since multicultural topics can be sensitive, emotional reactions may occur. You are free to choose to not answer any questions you prefer not to respond to, or to discontinue participation in either the survey or the theatre activities at any time without suffering negative consequences. The facilitators will refer you to resources in the event that you would like to process your reactions outside of the interactive theatre presentation setting. Moreover, participation is not expected to cause any harm outside of what is normally encountered in daily life. There may be unforeseen circumstances that develop under which your participation may be terminated by the investigator.
**Benefits to the subject or others:**
This interactive scene is designed to allow students the opportunity to gain practical experience in standing up to oppression, particularly sexual prejudice. Your participation in this study will help us to improve the scene. We hope that eventually the scene will be shown to a wide range of students in order to foster a more welcoming campus for all students regardless of race, sex, religion, or sexual orientation.

**Confidentiality of research records:**
Several safeguards will be taken to protect your anonymity and confidentiality in this study. You will not be asked any identifying information on the research surveys. The completed surveys will be kept in a secure location, in which only a small research team will have access to information, and no names attached to the survey. In regard to the audio-taped observation, your name will not appear on the written transcript of the group discussion; a code number will appear instead of your name. The audio recordings will be kept in a secure location, in which only a small research team will have access to information. The master key list with the names and corresponding code numbers will be kept in a secure location separate from the data itself. The recordings along with the master key list will be destroyed three (3) years after completion of the study. You may also contact the researchers at any time prior to May 30, 2011 to request that a particular piece of information you contributed to the study be deleted from the records, or that all identifiers linking your identity to the data be destroyed. Results from this study may be published in a professional journal, but you will not be identified as an individual.

**Withdrawal from the study:**
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time without consequences. Your grade will not be affected by your consent or refusal to participate in this study.

If you have any questions or concerns about participation, you may contact Kevin Babbitt. **If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in research, please contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at 483 McReynolds, University of Missouri Columbia, MO 65211. PHONE: (573) 882-9585, FAX: (573) 884-0663**

The Counseling Center  
119 Parker Hall, MU  
(573) 882-6601  
http://www.missouri.edu/~lgbt/  
M - F  8AM – 5PM

LGBT Resource Center  
216 Brady Commons, MU  
(573) 884-7750  
http://www.missouri.edu/~lgbt/

By completing this form I signify that I understand my rights as a research subject, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. Additionally, I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done.
My signature on this form also affirms that I am 18 years of age or older (individuals must be at least 18 to participate in the study)

__________________________  ____________________________
Date                                                                     Signature
APPENDIX 3

Debriefing Form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The general purpose of this research is to understand the impact of the interactive presentation that you just observed on three distinct categories of respondents:

1) A sample of the general undergraduate student population.
2) A sample comprised solely of LGB students.
3) A sample of the actors involved in the scene.

It is expected that the impact may vary considerably between these three samples. You were invited to participate in this study based upon your status as a member of one or more of these groups.

In this study, you were asked to view a scene dealing with the issue of sexual prejudice on campus and then to explore alternate methods of intervention in the scene. Data has been gathered from observations of your interaction with the scene and with one another as well as from the survey. As stated earlier, your responses will be absolutely confidential. Your name will be converted to a code number, and only people who are associated with this research will see your name or your responses. In return, we want you to honour our confidentiality -- please do not tell anyone about the details of this study. If the other students know about the study before they participate, their data will be biased and thus cannot be included. The results from this study will be used to foster a more welcoming campus for all students regardless of race, sex, religion, or sexual orientation.

If you feel especially concerned about the issues raised by this presentation and wish to process your reactions outside of the interactive theatre presentation setting, please feel free to contact the researcher about options for counseling.

Kevin Babbitt
kdb6w4@mizzou.edu
(479) 619-6785

Alternatively, you could also contact either of the resources listed below.

The Counseling Center
119 Parker Hall, MU
(573) 882-6601
http://www.missouri.edu/~lgbt/
M - F 8AM – 5PM

LGBT Resource Center
216 Brady Commons, MU
(573) 884-7750
http://www.missouri.edu/~lgbt/

Thank you for your participation in this study. If you would like to learn more about this experiment and its results, please contact the researcher (Kevin Babbitt) at the above email address and/or phone number. In addition, if you have any concerns about any aspect of the study, you may contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at 483 McReynolds, University of Missouri Columbia, MO 65211, PHONE: (573) 882-9585, FAX: (573) 884-0663
**Additional Reading:**
APPENDIX 4

Focus Group Protocol

The interviewer will use probing techniques to encourage the participants to expand upon their responses to the following topics.

1. Beliefs about sexual orientation (e.g., Do you believe that the university should have a non-discrimination statement which includes sexual orientation? Why or why not? Why do some people oppose homo/bisexuality while others are accepting? Is either stance morally right or wrong? Why?)

2. Personal experiences (e.g. Have you ever witnessed prejudice of the type depicted within the scene in an educational setting? Observed a situation where you thought someone else was being discriminated against in this manner? Can you tell the story? How did you react?)

3. Previous preparation. (e.g. Have you had any experiences in your family or community setting that have prepared you to deal with these types of situations? Explain.)

4. Attitudes concerning the interaction of students from disparate backgrounds. (Do you think it is valuable to teach students to deal with these types of issues? Why or why not?)

5. Reactions to interactive theatre intervention. (e.g. What were your reactions to the interactive theatre presentation? Explain. How would you describe the problem in the scene and how would you intervene? Did you think that the intervention was effective? Why or why not? Were there any problems in the scene which this particular intervention did not address? How might these other problems be addressed?)

Beliefs/theories about interactive theatre and student attitudes/competencies. (e.g. What are your ideas about whether interactive theatre can help students be better prepared to deal with these types of prejudice? Do you think the interactive theatre presentation was effective? Why or why not?)
APPENDIX 5

Actor Protocol

1. What impact has the interactive theatre experience had overall on your thoughts about any of the issues raised by the sketches?

2. Were there pivotal moments that really struck you during a performance or rehearsal? If so, explain.

3. Have you had any experiences in which you were able to use something drawn from your interactive theatre experience? If so, please give specifics.

4. Do you feel more prepared/equipped to deal with any of the issues portrayed in the interactive theatre? If so, please give specifics.

5. Has working on interactive theatre with actors with different views affected your own perceptions/beliefs? If so, please give specifics.

6. Is there anything in your own background that has influenced how participating in the interactive theatre project impacted you?

7. What do you consider to be the most significant impact of the interactive theatre experience on you?

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208 These initial questions were drawn from a survey conducted by Elif Celebi in 2006. Most likely, they will be refined and altered in order to more precisely address the needs of this particular study.
APPENDIX 6

Survey Questions

1. Age –
2. Gender –
3. Sexual Orientation –
4. Race/Ethnicity –
5. Religious Affiliation –
6. Political Affiliation –
7. Are any of your friends or family members gay or bisexual?
8. In your own words, describe the issues involved in this scene.
9. If you were a student in this situation, how would you respond?
10. Which character do you identify the most with? Why?
11. Which character do you most disagree with? Why?
12. What, if anything, did you learn from this experience?
APPENDIX 7

Matrix for the Heterosexual Cohort
APPENDIX 8

Matrix for the LGB Cohort

Performance Characteristics

Engagement (Core Strategy)

Interventions

Multicultural Competencies (Core Consequence)

Knowledge about Various Intervention Strategies

Awareness

Willingness to Act

Confrontation

Avoidance

Dialogue

Diatribe

Safe Space

Feedback

Group Size

Allies

Preparation

Dialogue

Review

Analysis

Others

Self

Speak Out

Effective

Dialogue

Mutual Respect

Equal Exchange

Express Him/Herself

Ineffective
APPENDIX 9

Matrix for the Actor Cohort

- Audience Member Characteristics
- Audience Engagement
- Performance Characteristics

Engagement (Core Strategy)

Interacting with the Audience

Multicultural Competencies (Core Consequence)

- Knowledge about Various Intervention Strategies
- Willingness to Act
- Awareness
- Tools

- Encourage Others
- Speak Out
- Self
- Characterization

- Confrontation
- Time
- Dialogue
- Diversity

- Avoidance
- Confrontation
- Ground Rules
- Non-Judgmental Attitudes
- Personal Narratives

- Diatribe
- Ineffective

- Effective

- Subject Matter
- Humor
- Character Replacement
- Character Embracement

Willingness to Act

Awareness

Self

Others

Oppression

Encourage Others

Speak Out

Character Embracement

Ground Rules

Respect

Questions

Non-Judgmental Attitudes

Personal Narratives
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VITA

Kevin Babbitt was born and raised in Missouri. He received his BA from Missouri Southern State University and his MA from Missouri State University. During his tenure at the University of Missouri-Columbia, he served as the Assistant Director for the interactive theatre troupe under the direction of Dr. Suzanne Burgoyne. He also has worked as an interactive theatre consultant for Missouri State University. Kevin’s research interests include all forms of social justice theatre – specifically, however, the intersections of sexual orientation with theatre of the oppressed and solo performance. While at MU, he was commissioned to create a solo performance based on the life’s work of journalist Arthur Unger. He performed the resulting piece, “Being Frank” (an adaptation of an interview with Otto Frank), at the Anne Frank Center in New York. Kevin is also a recipient of the Mizzou Inclusive Excellence Award.