Gendered harassment in secondary schools:

Understanding teachers' perceptions of and responses to the problem

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the phenomenon of gendered harassment in secondary schools from the teachers' perspectives. The few studies that address the biased behaviors that are linked under the concept of gendered harassment (sexual harassment, homophobic harassment, and harassment for gender non-conformity) indicate that teachers are less likely to intervene in these incidents. This dissertation explores how teachers understand and respond to (hetero)sexist and homophobic behaviors when they occur.

Six teachers in one urban school board participated in a series of three open-ended in-depth interviews where they spoke about the many factors that influenced how they saw and intervened in various forms of bullying and harassment in their schools. Interview data were analyzed using contextual and thematic codes to locate similarities, differences, and stories in the data. This study is informed by critical, feminist and queer theories. The findings have been organized in a conceptual framework that emerged from the research.

Findings indicate that there are both external and internal influences that shape how teachers view and respond to gendered harassment in schools. The external factors, also described as school culture, include both structural-formal and structural-informal influences. Formal influences include policies, training, curriculum and contracts. Informal influences refer to leadership style, relationships with colleagues, policy implementation, and community values. Internal influences that shape teachers' perceptions and responses include: educational biography, teaching philosophy, and personal identities.

The implications of this study for research and practice can have impacts on the fields of school policy, teacher education, curriculum, and educational leadership. It provides a framework for understanding how school cultures interact with teachers' identities and shape how policies and curricula are implemented. It also offers suggestions for scholars, advocates, and educational leaders to proactively address the negative impacts of gendered harassment by transforming teacher education, educational leadership programs, and in turn, school cultures.

RESUME

Cette recherche explore le phénomène du harcèlement genré dans les écoles secondaires selon ledu point de vue des enseignant(e)s. Les quelques études qui ont examiné les gestes discriminatoires qui sont liés au concept de harcèlement genré (harcèlement sexuel, harcèlement homophobique, et harcèlement devant la non-conformité de genre) indiquent que les enseignant(e)s interviennent moins souvent dans ces cas. Ce mémoire explore la question suivante : comment est-ce que les enseignant(e)s comprennent et interviennent devant les actions sexistes, homophobes, et transphobes qu'ils et elles rencontrent ?

Six enseignant(e)s dans une commission scolaire en milieu urbain ont participé à une série de trois entrevues semi-dirigées en profondeur où ils et elles ont parlé de plusieurs éléments qui influençaient leurs perceptions et leurs interventions devant différents types d'intimidation, de « bullying » et de harcèlement dans leurs écoles. Les entrevues furent analysées en utilisant une codification par contexte et thématique, pour ainsi identifier les similarités, les différences, et les histoires à travers les données. Cette étude s'inspire des théories critique, féministe, et <<queer>>. Les résultats sont organisés à travers un cadre conceptuel qui a émergé de la recherche.

Les résultats indiquent qu'il y a des influences internes et externes qui dicte la façon dont les enseignant(e)s regardent et répondent au harcèlement genré dans les écoles. Les éléments externes concernant la culture du milieu scolaire, incluent les éléments institutionnels (structure formelle) et les éléments sociaux (structure informelle). Par ailleurs, les éléments institutionnels incluent les politiques, la formation, le curriculum, et les contrats. Les éléments sociaux incluent le style de gestion, les relations avec les collègues, l'implantation des politiques, ainsi que les valeurs communautaires. Les éléments internes qui façonnent les perceptions et les interventions des enseignant(e)s : la biographie éducative, le style pédagogique et les identités personnelles. Les éléments internes ont tendance à motiver les enseignant(e)s d' agir, tandis que les éléments externes ont tendance d' agir comme obstacles aux interventions.

L'apport de cette étude sur la recherche et la pratique peut avoir des impacts sur les politiques des écoles, la formation des enseignant(e)s, le curriculum scolaire, et finalement la gestion de l'éducation. Il offre un cadre d'idées afin de mieux comprendre la façon dont les cultures des milieux scolaire interagissent avec les identités des enseignant(e)s et façonnent la manière dont les politiques et les curriculums sont implantés. Il offre des suggestions aux chercheur(e)s, aux avocat(e)s, et pédagogues pour agir devant les conséquences négatives du harcèlement genré soit en transformant la formation des enseignant(e)s, les programmes de gestion de l'éducation, et ensuite les cultures scolaires.

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and gave fully of themselves to this project. I truly enjoyed listening to their stories and am grateful for all I have learned through them.

Finally, I must thank my family for their enduring love and support during this process. My parents, Carolyn & George, provided me with the encouragement and support I needed to return to graduate school. Your understanding and high expectations have enabled me to grow and challenge myself and others in important ways. Thank you for making this journey possible. Also, my deepest love and gratitude go to my wife, Veronika Lesiuk, who has been incredibly patient, loving, and supportive. In addition to endless hours of editing she gave freely of her time, her heart, and her mind to help everything I do become better than it would have been without her input.

PREFACE

November 19, 1993 – a private boarding school in rural New York

Celebrate! Today is the first day of my first vacation as a teacher! The kids leave for Thanksgiving today, and I get a break. Life here has been hectic but good. In the past two weeks, I've developed quite a friendship with Ruby Kavno[1]. She's a senior from Pennsylvania who went on a wilderness expedition this summer, and during her trip she developed quite a relationship with a girl from L.A. named Raven. Listening to her talk reminds me of how things developed with Marie and me two summers ago. It makes me miss Marie, but she seems happy in Colorado, and I'm glad I chose to come here and try out teaching to see if I like it.

Ruby is a very bright, intense, and beautiful girl. Unfortunately, this being the male-dominated conservative hockey-haven that it is, she takes a lot of shit for her outspoken views, and has been accused more than once of being a dyke. I don't know how to approach the subject with her, because it has come up several times. I don't want to preach to her, but I do want her to get some reassurance so that she knows that she's not a freak and doesn't call herself into question for feeling more strongly towards women. She is currently dating Jon Payne who is a cool guy, but I'm glad she feels comfortable talking to me about all sorts of things so I can know what's going on with her.

She got mad at me yesterday and gave me the cold shoulder all day. We finally talked it out and she then burst out with a stream of compliments that truly blew me away. She said she was so happy to finally connect with a female faculty member, and she really respects me, trusts me, and looks up to me as a role model. At this point we were both on the verge of tears. I was surprised at how deeply her rejection for one day affected me. It's probably not good, but I don't want to distance myself either. She needs support and close friends right now.

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[1] Although these are excerpts from my own personal journals, I have changed any identifying information about the school and the individuals in it.

January 24, 1994

I went to my first meeting of the local gay and lesbian group tonight and found out that K's partner was Bonnie from hockey! There was also another teacher there from school and she told me that the Dean of Students was also GAY, which rocked my world. The ratio at this small conservative school is staggering!! So, I'm reaching out, finding new people and reveling in the new company. I'm also making a lot of contacts through Speaking OUT (a newsletter for gay and lesbian teachers), the Gay and Lesbian Alumni Network, the local gay, lesbian, and bisexual social group, and other books and magazines. I just read *The Cat Came Back* by Hillary Mullins and passed it on to Ruby. She of course devoured it and loved it!

Ruby's having crises with her family right now about Raven, L.A., school, college, etc. Her parents are coming up this weekend and she's tempted to run off. Hopefully she's realized that isn't a bright idea and is gonna stick around.

April 13, 1994

I am on April vacation and I came to Boston because the Gay and Lesbian Independent School Teachers' Network (GLISTN) conference was at Milton Academy on Monday. I went and it was great! The sessions were informative and helpful, but the most interesting parts were the Q&A when everyone shared stories and questions and truly networked. In one of the sessions I met a really cool woman named Anna. She feels she was fired from one school because of her lesbianism and is feeling shut out at another, and is beginning to wonder if she is cut out for teaching. Unfortunately, she had to leave, so our conversation couldn't continue – but I really hope to keep in touch with her.

May 13, 1994

Well, Ruby is leaving today. She got kicked out yesterday because she supposedly stole and overused her friend's calling card to talk with Raven. She'll still get her diploma, but she has to take her exams at home. She was already on probation so the only thing different is that she's leaving five days early and under a cloud. It is really sad: after four years here, she has to leave like this. She seems to be doing pretty well, though the main

word she keeps using to describe herself is "lost". I don't envy her position, and she has a tough road ahead. I hope she makes it through.

Later…

I just got spoken to by the Headmaster because Ruby's dad complained about my lending books to her that were "pro-homosexual." I was furious! I tried to tell him about the novels (Hillary Mullins' *The Cat Came Back*, and Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle*), but he didn't care. I refused to let him think he was right. I mentioned the idea of starting a diversity group at school and he said it sounded so "radical" that he is going to have to run it by the board. He also told me that he read my article in *Speaking OUT* and that I had no right to publish articles that "purported to represent the school". When I submitted that article, the editor had suggested that I publish it anonymously, but I didn't want to hide. I have no reason to be ashamed. That's why I stated upfront in my article that I was bisexual. I never thought anyone at this school would actually read it though. This should be interesting.

Two weeks later I got a letter from the school's lawyers informing me that my teaching contract was being revoked, effective immediately.

July 31, 1994 – New York City

I have yet to hear from Lambda Legal or the ACLU, and no unemployment money yet because the school is contesting my claim. The Labor department has been somewhat helpful and supportive, so hopefully the back payments will come through soon. Kevin Jennings of GLSTN has been really helpful.

August 25, 1994

I got a job at a downtown hotel, and I've become very active with the Lesbian Avengers. I've participated in actions, wheatpasting, and organizing. It's a pretty interesting group of women, and I'm planning an action protesting the Smith-Helms amendment. I need to start actively hunting for a lawyer since it seems like so far no one's going to take the case. I really thought people would be outraged and come running to help when they heard about what happened to me. I guess injustice is more common than I thought.

September 1, 1994

I feel much emotional turmoil coming on. I'm seriously considering therapy before things get really bad. I'm still trying hard to locate a lawyer, and I'm pretty sure that it's going to end up costing a good amount because of the distance involved since I can't find anyone near the school. I want to work with kids again but will my sexuality always be an issue when it has nothing to do with anything?!?! It makes me so angry that people are still so petty and stupid. Even with the gay community. If there's no unity, how can we make any headway? Why must everything be black and white? You love a person, not a gender. It seems so vulgar to reduce passion and love to genitalia. I mean really…

October 23, 1994

I finally had part one of my labor department hearings last Thursday. My lawyer didn't show up, but I think I did all right. I felt pretty good leaving the hearing, but the next session will be the hardest since I will have to testify and prepare some closing remarks. Kevin Jennings is still trying to help me find another lawyer – he's very encouraging.

February 7, 1995

I've decided that I have to take a break from this activist shit – especially the Avengers. It is draining me, and I'm getting nothing back from it. It was excellent to begin with because it got me involved in the dyke community here and gave me some friends. I guess I'm reevaluating what I'm doing here and what happens next for me. I'm sick of having to fight and justify myself every step of the way.

I got the decision back from the labor department upholding the initial finding: I was fired for insubordination: I refused to disclose personal information told to me by students (their sexual orientation) when directed by my boss. The school wins. It was a blow, but it wasn't unexpected. I guess I'm gonna leave it at that. I love teaching, and I really miss having the school community, but if I'm ever going to go back I need some new experiences and some new influences.

March 3, 1995 – Boise, ID

I escaped the city and am now teaching wilderness emergency medicine! I also got into C.U. Boulder's MA in Education program: Social, Multicultural, and Bilingual Foundations. I'm off to spend the summer leading wilderness trips in Maine then will be moving back west for school. I'll start in the fall.

August 18, 1999 – a private boarding school in northern New England

My first night in my new home! Today was a good day. I met with the Dean first thing and she was so great. She understood why I couldn't work with Brian anymore on the outdoor program after our breakup. She was so supportive and understanding and unquestioning of my judgment of what I need. My first year here was all about him and the outdoor program, so I didn't really connect well with other students and staff.   Now I can move in a different direction. She suggested I consider becoming the assistant coach for the women's hockey team. I just might!

August 28, 1999

Ruby called me tonight! I was so excited to get her call. When she emailed me almost two weeks ago, I was so thrilled to hear from her finally. She'd been getting all my cards and address updates, but had never felt ready to respond. Now that she's off drugs, graduated college, and starting a new job tomorrow, she was ready to talk. She is 23 now and sounds so mature. She described her falling out with Raven, her 2 ½ year saga with an older woman (36!) and all the bouncing around she did to finish school. I am so amazed and proud of her.

She told me how much she really appreciated my being there for her that year and how it was mostly a blur. She apologized for not helping me in my legal case against the school, and I'd forgotten that I'd ever asked. All's well in her family and her parents are cool with her being out, and she's now living with her sister in NYC. It felt so good to talk to her and feel our relationship evolve naturally into friends – no more teacher/student walking the fine line and keeping her out. I told her the short version of my past 5 years and most recently about my heartbreak with Brian. I could never have her listen to me

before, and now she did. It feels really good and rewarding to reconnect with her and know that she is well.

I've decided this year that I'm going to get more involved in things outside of school. This bubble keeps us so isolated, and I want to get more community organizing going around gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues. I'm going to try and start up a local chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network and see what other folks in the area are doing around these issues.

January 25, 2000

I'm trying to convince Kelli, the biology teacher, to attend this conference with me called, "I am what I am" since three students have come out to her. She talks to me about this all the time. She doesn't know what to do with that information since she's not too comfortable with it herself. She's been in a relationship for over 2 years with a "friend" from college, but won't call Sadie her girlfriend. How can she support and advise students when she isn't even comfortable with herself?

February 18, 2000

I had a good talk with Jaynie today. I took her out to the diner for lunch to sort through her side of the drama in her dorm and on the hockey team. I had followed her roommate, June, yesterday after she ran out of School Meeting in tears. She and I had a good long talk, too. She's sick of getting called a dyke. I came out to her, shared a few tales, listened a bunch and did what I could to alleviate her pain. I said I'd try to talk to the guys who were responsible. I also lent her *Rubyfruit Jungle* – which she's already 60 pages into. That's the fourth copy of that book I'll never see again.

So this week has been full of long talks, pulled heart strings, and deepening connections with people here. Beth had a bit of a breakdown Tuesday night after hockey, and seems to be slowly coming out of that. Things are falling apart a bit with the girl she met at the party last month, and she doesn't have anyone to talk to about it. Kelli's been a good support to her though. I hope we are able to get Beth into some counseling. She needs some ongoing outside support. She seems to be hanging in there though. I went to the dorm late last night because I was so worried about all of them: Jayni, Ruth, and Beth.

They were all talking with Kelli and we ended up staying until midnight. Maybe I'm getting too involved? Caring too much? Dangerous territory?

March 29, 2000

Well, I was all fired up to do a presentation in faculty meeting tomorrow on supporting GLBT youth. I had gotten the green light from the Headmaster to work with the Dean of Students on the problem and this was the first step that everyone agreed the school was ready for.

Mike, the English teacher, and I met twice to put together a short presentation and had a slick PowerPoint show with handouts and activities all ready to roll. I called Julie, the Dean, yesterday to confirm the details so she knew what we had planned for the meeting. Last night, while I was on dorm duty, Julie came to tell me in person that the Headmaster had cancelled the training. She was emotional and upset with him and the situation. She felt bad and tried to offer some other possibilities to ease the faculty into thinking about these issues.

I was excited and optimistic about presenting tomorrow. I feel so betrayed by the Headmaster and disappointed in him. I know I asked for his permission to plan this with Julie and he definitely gave me the green light. She said that he had concerns that people would assume that Mike was gay and what kind of pressure he might get from parents if they learned that a gay man was living in a boys' dorm. I know he suspects I might be gay too. In one meeting he told me, "Our school is not ready to have an openly gay teacher." Since I have long hair and an ex-boyfriend on staff, most people don't seem to wonder about the rainbow flag on my car. I'm allowed to be an ally as long as people can assume I'm straight. He asked me to help him, to teach him, but right now he doesn't want to be taught.

I'm not crushed because I've learned to live with disappointment and expect very little. I knew that this was all going too smoothly, so I guess I'm not surprised --just saddened. At least I have a clearer understanding of the Headmaster's position now – he really showed his true colors.

April 15, 2001

The first statewide gay youth prom made the front page of the newspaper! We had about 15 students come from our school and over 200 came from all over the state! The event went really well: drag show, DJ, and a prom king and queen as well as drag king and queen were announced. I was pissed because Kelli decided to show up with her new girlfriend even though she did nothing at school to support the event. I've put forth so much effort to get this school to recognize GLBT issues and to start a local GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) chapter so we could have this event. I was the one who asked the Dean to allow me to announce the event at School Meeting. I'm the one taking a free Saturday night to drive a vanload of our students, and she gets to waltz in to dance with the students for a few moments of fun and glory with no time invested and no repercussions back at school. I was livid.

August 14, 2001

Well, Doomsday arrived. I returned home this morning from vacation only to have a curt phone call from Julie, the Dean. Meeting ASAP in her office. From the tone, I knew it wasn't good. Julie said that my public activism on gay and lesbian issues and closeness with some of my hockey girls has raised concerns with some parents. They've decided not to renew my contract for the following school year. They are still supporting the Fulbright exchange so I can go teach in France, but will not hold my position open for me after the exchange is over.

I was shaken and unsure of how to respond, so I said, "Thank you for allowing me to have the Fulbright opportunity. I can understand the pressure that you are under…I don't know what else to say." She said that there's really nothing to say, so I got up and left. The teacher from France is already staying in my guest room. I leave in two weeks.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The personal and professional experiences offered as a preface to this dissertation are what led me to pursue advanced study in the field of education and the current doctoral research presented here. This project seeks to develop an understanding of specific forms of harassment in high schools, called gendered harassment, from the teachers' perspectives. This introductory chapter outlines the goals and structure of this doctoral dissertation. The first section provides a statement of the problem and a basic definition of the issues being studied. The next section outlines the objectives for this research. The third section describes the theories that frame and inform this inquiry. The fourth section follows with a brief discussion of phenomenology, and why I chose it as the methodology that most informs this study. The fifth section provides an overview of the subsequent chapters and acts as a road map for the reader. This chapter concludes by connecting my personal experiences with the research question and the future impacts the findings of this work could have on North American schools.

Statement of the Problem

This dissertation will examine how educators construct their understandings of and responses to the issue of gendered harassment in secondary schools. I define gendered harassment as any unwanted behavior that polices and reinforces the traditional notions of heterosexual masculinity and femininity. This includes (hetero)sexual harassment, homophobic harassment, and harassment for gender non-conformity (also known as transphobic). Such behaviors can range from nonverbal acts such as gestures and facial expressions, to verbal behaviors such as name-calling and telling jokes, to acts of physical and sexual violence. This research is important as educators are becoming more aware of bullying and harassment between students and the negative effects it has on individuals and the school culture. Studies have been done on the damaging effects of bullying in schools (Glover, Gough, Johnson, & Cartwright, 2000; Olweus, 1978, 1993; Slee, 1995) as well as the specific damage caused by the lack of effective intervention by professionals in the face of sexual and homophobic harassment (Bochenek & Brown, 2001; Harris Interactive, 2001;

Kosciw & Diaz, 2006), but few studies conceptualize bullying and gendered harassment as related. No qualitative studies to this date have examined teachers' experiences in relationship to bullying and harassment. My personal struggles as a teacher to address these issues combined with the findings of the studies outlined in Chapter 4 provide the starting point for this dissertation.

It is important to understand how teachers view and respond to gendered harassment as they are key figures who implement and support the structures of a school and convey what a community values and expects of its members. My colleagues in both schools were aware of the problems happening between the students, but most of them chose to ignore them and remain silent. Schools are important sites of cultural transmission: the society's values and knowledge are passed down through the planned and hidden curricula (Apple, 1990; Bourdieu, 1973; Wotherspoon, 1998). Students learn how to survive and thrive in their social world from textbooks, teachers, administrators, and each other. In the case of gendered harassment, many students learn that it is an accepted and often tacitly condoned aspect of school culture. Teachers and administrators allow this violence to continue by their lack of consistent or effective response to incidents in the school. In some extreme cases, they are also active perpetrators of the harassment (Duncan, 1999; Larkin, 1994; Lipkin, 1999; Smith & Smith, 1998; Stein, 1995).

In the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) National School Climate Survey, 82.9% of the respondents said that faculty and staff rarely or never intervened when they heard homophobic comments (Kosciw, 2004). In the landmark case *Nabozny v. Podlesny* ("Nabozny v. Podlesny", 1996), Wisconsin teen Jamie Podlesny was awarded $900,000 in damages when his school district was found liable for violating his right to equal protection after he endured five years of unchecked homophobic and sexual harassment in school. More recently, in Canada, a school district was held responsible for not protecting a student from homophobic harassment. The Supreme Court upheld the decision of the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal that found in favor of a student, Azmi Jubran, who had endured years of bullying, much of it included anti-gay slurs and comments ("School District No. 44 (North Vancouver) v. Jubran", 2005). The fact that the plaintiff in this case, Jubran, did not identify himself as gay demonstrates how all students are harmed when these biased behaviors are tolerated in schools. When school

professionals do not address harassing behaviors they are sending a message that it is acceptable to use sexist and homophobic language and jokes to bully and hurt others. Schools enforce adherence to strict gender norms and compulsory heterosexuality with their silence. In this way, they are tacitly condoning these behaviors and the prejudices they enforce.

In a recent study commissioned by GLSEN, 52% of teens reported frequently hearing other students make homophobic remarks and 51% frequently heard sexist remarks. This study also showed that 62.5% of students reported that other students were called names or harassed at their school on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation and that 90% of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) teens had been verbally or physically harassed or assaulted in the past year (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2005, p. 7). LGBT students, students who have LGBT parents or siblings, as well as students who are gender nonconforming[2] are often targets of gendered harassment. LGBT students are also at a higher risk of shunning higher education, dropping out, abusing drugs, engaging in high-risk sexual behavior, and attempting suicide (Bochenek & Brown, 2001; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2005; Lipkin, 1999; Reis & Saewyc, 1999). Other students are also adversely affected by attending school in an environment that supports discriminatory attitudes and behaviors.

One of the key concerns at the foundation of this study is the reports of teachers' non-intervention in incidents of gendered harassment. In a 2004 study conducted in California, students reported that teachers and staff were unlikely to intervene and stop bias-motivated comments, particularly comments based on sexual orientation, gender presentation and body size (Figure 1.1). Several sexual harassment studies have also shown that schools are highly tolerant of this behavior as it tends to happen in public spaces and is accepted as a part of the school culture (Harris Interactive, 2001; Larkin, 1994; Timmerman, 2003).

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[2] This term is used to describe individuals whose gender performance (attire, speech, gestures, extra-curricular interests, etc.) does not adhere to the traditional norms of masculinity for males and femininity for females and may or may not identify as transgender.

Bias-related comments and teacher/staff response
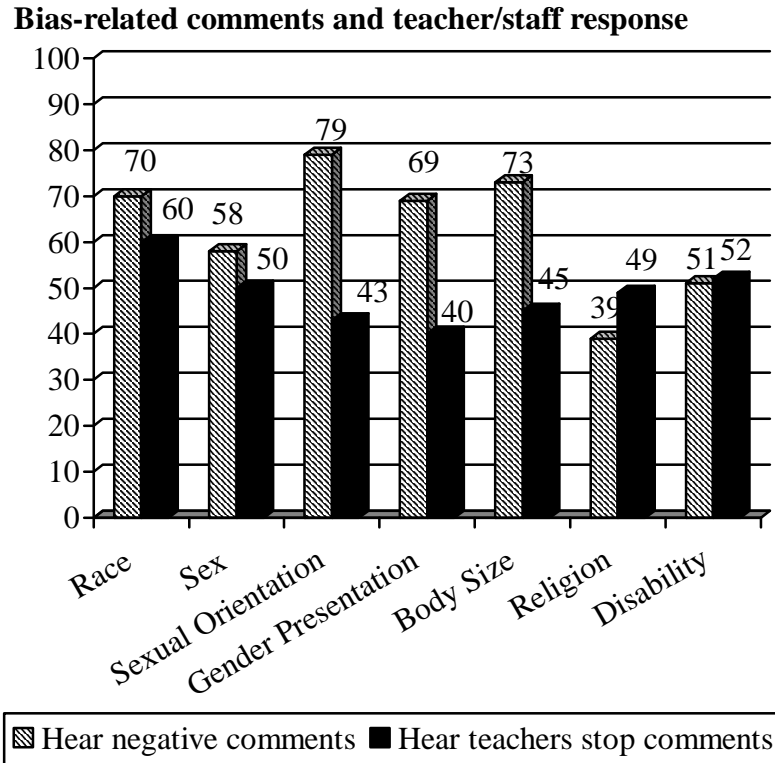
Figure. 1.1 Bias-related comments and teacher/staff response (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004, p. 14)

In order to reduce the prevalence of this form of harassment, it is important to understand why it is so pervasive in schools. To answer this question, this study aims to understand the reported non-intervention of teachers. Through an examination of school policies, the stated mission and values of the school, as well as in-depth interviews with secondary teachers, I explore how the culture of the school along with a teacher's own identity and experiences impacts how teachers view and respond to gendered harassment in secondary schools. Gendered harassment is pervasive in secondary schools throughout North America. What is not currently understood is how and why such harmful and discriminatory acts are allowed to persist.

Study Objectives

In order to understand why gendered harassment continues to be ignored, it is important to examine not only how the structures of the school frame this problem, but also how current educational practitioners understand this issue and their relationship to it. This study intends to fill this gap.

Through a series of in-depth interviews with teachers that will be supplemented by policy and document analysis this project will explore the following questions:

1. What incidents or reports of gendered harassment have teachers witnessed? What were the responses?
2. What policies do the school board and school have to address this form of harassment? What knowledge do teachers have of these policies?
3. What do teachers see as their role in implementing the strategies? Is there ongoing support and monitoring? Are resources provided?
4. What kinds of professional development and education on gendered harassment are available? What kinds of support might help teachers address these issues?
5. How does the school leadership shape how school staff addresses gendered harassment? How do responses to other forms of bullying and harassment differ and why?

These questions outline the general objectives guiding the research but are not posed in this fashion to the participants. Chapter 5 outlines the methods used to collect this data in greater detail.

Theoretical foundations

This qualitative study is informed by queer theory and phenomenology to gain a greater understanding of how teachers in public secondary schools in one urban area of Quebec view and respond to incidences of gendered harassment. Queer theory is a school of thought that aims to challenge and disrupt traditional ways of looking at the world. It is informed by critical and feminist theories and provides a useful set of tools to critique and understand sexed and gendered practices in society. Chapter 2 will provide a deeper discussion of queer theory and how it informs this study. Phenomenology is a theoretical approach to understanding the world that allows one to conceptualize how various individuals understand and experience a specific social phenomenon. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews with public school teachers, I seek to uncover how they experience and respond to incidences of gendered harassment.

This theoretical approach will allow each teacher's own views and realities to frame the problem and share what barriers and motivators exist for educators working to reduce gendered harassment in schools. It will also explore how teachers understand the categories of sex, gender, and sexual orientation and how these conceptualizations shape their perceptions of bullying and harassment in their school. By interviewing teachers I

expect to develop a better understanding of how they see and experience this issue. This is an essential first step in order to create interventions that will reduce the prevalence of gendered harassment.

This study is informed by critical, feminist, and queer theories. Critical theory seeks to make explicit how dominant power is exercised through hegemonic forces and aims to undo multiple forms of oppression through making visible the ways in which these prevailing ideologies work (Giroux, 1983; Kincheloe, 2005b). Feminist theorists used a similar framework of ideas to conceptualize women's oppression in society with the goal of achieving sex equity. Later feminist theorists began to question the category of "woman" and explored the intersections of sex, gender, and sexuality which helped inform the work in queer theory (Nicholson, 1997; Oleson, 2000). The intersections of these theoretical foundations are explored in depth in Chapter 2. The points that are helpful to note here are that they each offer critiques of narrowly defined social constructs and examine how hegemonic forces act to ensure conformity to society's expectations of how men and women should act and interact. As a critical, queer feminist scholar, I aim to question and explore personal experiences and institutionalized practices that make explicit how gendered oppression function on an individual and institutional level with a view to eliminating such situations.

The aspect of queer theory that distinguishes it from critical and feminists theories is its main focus on issues related to sexual and gender orientations and identities. Queer theory seeks to understand social mechanisms that privilege certain behaviors and identities over others. It is important to acknowledge the danger of reifying the categories of heterosexual/ homosexual and masculine/feminine by using the terms as a point of departure. As Steven Seidman explains,

> Queer theory is suggesting that the study of homosexuality should not be a study of a minority – the making of the lesbian/gay/bisexual subject – but a study of those knowledges and social practices that organize "society" as a whole by sexualizing – heterosexualizing or homosexualizing – bodies, desires, acts, identities, social relations, knowledges, culture, and social institutions (cited in Gamson, 2000, p. 355).

The act of harassing students with anti-gay epithets is one form of this sort of social control. The students who are most often targets of this harassment are the ones who most

blatantly violate gender norms or do not participate in the heterosexual activities of the school like school dances, flirting, even sex (O'Conor, 1995). It is for this reason that this study is not focused solely on the issue of homophobic harassment, but rather the impacts of school cultures that reify and police the boundaries of the patriarchal heterosexual gender binary.

As a critical research project, there is an underlying assumption that the status quo is problematic and needs to be changed. Critical inquiry attempts to confront the injustice of a particular society. This project aims to be a transformative endeavor that is "unembarrassed by the label *political* and unafraid to consummate a relationship with emancipatory consciousness" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 280). This research seeks not just to understand but also to critique and change society (Patton, 2002). All three of these theories seek to deconstruct current structures of power and in doing so create a more liberatory and empowering experience in schools.

Through interrogating how educators understand and typically respond to gendered harassment, I hope to increase their understanding of how gendered harassment works to privilege certain kinds of masculinity and femininity and supports the oppressive heteronormative ideals of North American society. This will lend the study catalytic validity "not only [by] display[ing] the reality-altering impact of the inquiry process, it will direct this impact so that those under study will gain self-understanding and self-direction" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 297).

The focus of this study is to examine how educators understand and respond to the phenomenon of gendered harassment in secondary schools. It is important to understand why teachers are not stopping this persistent and damaging behavior. The best way to access this information is through an attempt at understanding how they experience and make meaning out of this phenomenon. By using tools grounded in a phenomenology, such as in-depth interviews and narrative analysis, this study will generate a deeper and more complex understanding of this phenomenon in secondary schools.

The subsequent chapters of this dissertation are organized to introduce the reader to important concepts that shape and influence how educators in Quebec schools experience gendered harassment. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical foundations for an examination of gendered harassment in schools. Chapter 3 presents the legal context for this study by

discussing current law and policy issues relating to gendered harassment in Canadian schools. Chapter 4 introduces readers to the current state of scholarship on bullying and harassment. This comprehensive review of the literature and accompanying analysis will introduce the readers to the main themes and the current gaps in this field of research. Chapter 5 will present a discussion of phenomenology and explain the research methods used. This section includes information on participant recruitment, data collection, and analysis. Chapter 6 presents the findings from this study and a conceptual framework that emerged from working with the data. This framework outlines the influences that shape teachers' perceptions of and responses to gendered harassment and identifies the various barriers to and motivators for teacher intervention in cases of gendered harassment. Finally, a discussion of my conclusions and the implications of this research are presented in Chapter 7.

Conclusion

Gendered harassment in schools threatens the health and well-being of all students and educators. The homophobia and heterosexism that I experienced as a high school teacher forced me out of the classroom but not out of the field of education. I miss teaching high school, but I do not miss the frustration, the resistance, and invisibility I felt while I was there. I am proud to be a queer scholar and feel fortunate to have the freedom to pursue this research in spite of the obstacles I faced along the way. Some of these challenges included: finding a supervisor willing to support this research, gaining admission to a doctoral program, locating committee members who would support my work in queer theory and add to my understanding of the field, securing ethics board approval, gaining permission from the school board research committee, and locating participants when most schools refused to distribute recruitment letters for the study. Each of these challenges provided important knowledge and experiences that enriched my understanding of the research process and how continued work on similar projects will shape my future as a scholar, educator, and activist.

In May of 2006 I got married, and at times I still can't believe that I was able to legally marry a woman. I am fortunate to now live in a country that fully recognizes my relationship with my same-sex partner. Unfortunately, as this study shows, this extension

of equality rights has not had significant impacts on the lived realities of students and teachers in Canadian schools. I hope that the work presented in this dissertation contributes to the groundbreaking work of other scholars, teachers, and activists working to improve the experience of marginalized students in schools in North America.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE STUDY

Many scholars and educators steer clear of queer theory because the word "queer" has a long history of being a pejorative term for gays and lesbians or anyone perceived to be different. What many people do not understand is that in the past twenty years, this term has been actively under reconstruction and has been infused with new meanings and applications. Although "queer" is still often used with the intent to harm, in scholarly contexts it has come to represent new concepts that when applied in the educational research setting, can have a liberatory and positive influence on the way schools work today.

Another common misunderstanding about queer theory is that it is a synonym for gay and lesbian studies. Although queer theory emerged from the work of scholars in this field, it has evolved to become much more broad and encompassing than gay and lesbian studies. Queer theory goes beyond exploring aspects of gay and lesbian identity and experience. It questions taken for granted assumptions about a diverse array of relationships, identities, sexes, genders, and sexual orientations. It seeks to explode rigid normalizing categories into possibilities that exist beyond the binaries of man/woman, masculine/feminine, student/teacher, and gay/straight. Queer theory offers researchers a lens through which they can transform their praxis so as to explore and celebrate the tensions and new understandings created by new ways of seeing the world.

Sexism, heterosexism and homophobia are common, yet controversial problems that are present in most North American schools (Bochenek & Brown, 2001; GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2005; Harris Interactive, 2001; Larkin, 1994). These issues manifest themselves in different ways from sexual harassment ("Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education", 1999), to censoring literature that represents gay families in a positive light ("Chamberlain v. Surrey School District No. 36", 2002), to educators being fired for being gay, lesbian or bisexual ("Vriend v. Alberta", 1998; , "Weaver v. Nebo School District", 1998), to students being violently and repeatedly harassed with homophobic taunts and slurs ("Nabozny v. Podlesny", 1996; , "School District No. 44 v. Jubran", 2005). In order

to better understand the complex issues of sexism, heterosexism, and genderism[3] and how they work together in schools, it is important to build a firm foundation in existing theory. As a researcher, it is important to make clear the guiding principles and assumptions for any study, and that is the goal of this chapter. In particular, I will outline the key ideas from queer theory and the influences from the fields of critical theory and feminist theory to show how I situate the issue of gendered harassment in schools and my relationship to it.

In recent years there has been an increase in public awareness around violence in schools. The issue of bullying and harassment is one aspect of school violence that has received a significant amount of attention from the media as well as school officials and community members. It is encouraging that this important issue is getting widespread attention, but as I argue in Chapter 4, much of the information about bullying and harassment is flawed because it fails to address the greater underlying social forces at work. As Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli point out in their study of masculinities, the problem of bullying has been depoliticized and examined as isolated acts of teasing or violence rather than as a form of policing and enforcing the norms of our culture. They explain that, "bullying needs to be understood in terms which acknowledge the regime of normalizing practices in which sex/gender boundaries are policed for adolescent boys" (2003, p. 54). These same processes shape adolescent girls' behaviors and relationships as well (Brown, 2003; Duncan, 2004). Since much of the bullying that occurs in schools is discriminatory in nature (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Canadian Public Health Association, 2004; GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2005; Harris Interactive, 2001; Reis & Saewyc, 1999); it is clear that this behavior acts to create and support a social hierarchy that privileges mainstream identities and behaviors over marginalized ones.

Bullying and harassment are ultimately about power and control in schools. As bullying literature points out, there is always a power imbalance in bully-victim scenarios (Olweus, 1993) but it is not only about physical power, it is also about social power and the dominant discourses of the school (Duncan, 2004; Hepburn, 2000). When bullying is understood in this way, it is important to situate the problem in a framework that has the language and the theoretical foundation to understand how power and control work in

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[3] This term is used to describe the belief that there are only two possible gender identities or expressions that denies the realities experienced by transgender and genderqueer people.

society and whose purposes it serves. This chapter will discuss these notions of power and control and will include Antonio Gramsci's concept of *hegemony*, and Michel Foucault's *panopticon* to demonstrate various ways that they function in society. Critical theory is one important framework that will help contextualize how bullying behaviors – and gendered harassment in particular – serve to privilege and maintain certain forms of social power in the context of the school.

The term gendered harassment links the behaviors often referred to separately as sexual harassment, homophobic harassment, and transphobic harassment. Understanding this theoretical linking of behaviors is central to this study. I assert that the underlying social forces that have created and sustained sexism, genderism, heterosexism, transphobia and homophobia can all be traced back to Western patriarchal notions of gender. This assertion will be examined in greater detail in this chapter. I must clarify that by examining sexual, transphobic, and homophobic harassment as connected issues does not imply that sex, gender and sexual orientation are causally linked, rather they are separate aspects of an individual's identity that may or may not align with dominant social norms. Many individuals make the mistake of conflating issues relating to gender expression and sexual orientation. This confusion is at the root of much homophobic and transphobic harassment. As many researchers have pointed out, the usual targets of homophobic harassment in school are students whose gender identity or expression does not align with the societal expectations of heterosexual attractiveness or dress and behave according to the gender norms for their sex. In other words, "butchy" girls and "sissy" boys are the most visible targets for such attacks (Bochenek & Brown, 2001; Duncan, 1999; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; O'Conor, 1995; Rofes, 1995). In a California study titled *Consequences of Harassment Based on Actual or Perceived Sexual Orientation and Gender Non-Conformity and Steps for Making Schools Safer,* researchers found that 27% of students surveyed reported being harassed because they were "not masculine enough" or "not feminine enough". In addition, 53% said that their schools were unsafe for "guys who aren't as masculine as other guys" and 34% said that their schools were unsafe for "girls who aren't as feminine as other girls" (2004, p. 2).

Another important reason to examine sexual harassment alongside homophobic harassment is because oftentimes the behaviors are motivated by homophobia, but the acts are sexual in nature. The following story is such an example,

> This ninth grader is open at school about being a lesbian. For six weeks, she is the target of harassment, including pictures left in her locker. The harassment reaches a crisis point when she and her girlfriend attend a high school sporting event. There, the two girls, aged thirteen and fourteen, are attacked by four male students. The attackers follow, chase and haul the girls under the bleachers. They call the girls "queers," "dykes," and "bitches." They force them to "have sex" with one another while the attackers watch. The fourteen-year-old is told that, if she thinks her girlfriend is pretty, she had better make her respond or the attackers will "make sure she doesn't look pretty" any more. They force the younger girl to say things they want her to say. They break her hand anyway and beat both the girls up. Then they hold the fourteen-year-old down and make her watch as they strip and rape her girlfriend (Reis, 1999, p. 52).

Other reports and legal cases demonstrate the connection between sexual and homophobic harassment (Duncan, 1999; Mills, 2001; , "Nabozny v. Podlesny", 1996; Reis & Saewyc, 1999; Stein, 1995, 2002; , "Wagner v. Fayetteville Public Schools", 1999). In the 2001 study *Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School,* researchers found that being called gay or lesbian was among the top three "most upsetting" examples of sexual harassment in schools according to students (Harris Interactive, 2001, p. 5). It is important to examine these issues simultaneously to gain a better understanding as to how they work together as systems of control that support and police the patriarchal, heteronormative, demands of hegemonic masculinity and femininity in dominant culture. Queer theory as informed by the related fields of feminist theory and critical theory offer the language and framework necessary for this study. This chapter will explore the roots of queer theory and describe how its application creates new and critical readings of behaviors related to gendered harassment in schools.

The foundation: Critical theory

Critical theory and its application in the field of education, critical pedagogy, is a school of thought that grew out of work developed by the Frankfurt School that included scholars such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse. They were influenced by the work of German scholars like Karl Marx, Immanuel Kant, Georg Hegel

and Max Weber, but went beyond the critiques of economic oppression offered by these thinkers (Kincheloe, 2005b). Although capitalism and the related class system was the primary object of critique, these theories were expanded and used to understand oppression, alienation, and inequality on many other levels. The early work of these theorists has helped many different oppressed groups understand how social forces work against them and in overt and covert ways maintain the power structures that privilege the dominant group. Some of the major foundational concepts of critical theory inform and support the work of both feminist and queer theories. In order to gain a stronger grasp of these common guiding principles, I will examine the three major concepts of hegemony, discursive power, and liberatory pedagogy to reveal how these principles influence and inform a study on gendered harassment in schools.

Gender and hegemony

In order to understand how critical theory has influence feminist and queer theories, an understanding of the concept of hegemony and how it relates to gender is essential. Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony showed how groups in power are able to maintain structures that benefit them through gaining the consent of subordinate groups (1995). It is not done through overt or forceful means, but rather through subtle, yet powerful, messages that repeatedly permeate daily life. He argued that "*ideology as cultural hegemony* (overriding cultural influence or authority) is an important aspect of power over society, even more than the modes of material production" (Ozmon & Craver, 1999, p. 327). This theory showed how groups in power are able to maintain structures that benefit them through gaining the consent of subordinate groups.

In *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci wrote about education and how it contributes to hegemony. "Everything that influences or may influence public opinion directly or indirectly belongs to it: libraries, schools, groups and clubs of different kinds, right up to architecture, street lay-out and street names" (1995, p. 155). Contemporary educational theorists Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, Joe Kincheloe, and Peter McLaren, among others, have examined how the explicit and hidden curricula in schools work to support existing dominant structures and contribute to the continued exclusion and oppression of marginalized groups in schools. In the preface to his book

Official Knowledge, Apple explains the core of his work as focusing on, "the struggles over meaning, space, the body, the politics of daily life in schools, the media, the state, and other sites, and the ways in which dominant groups try to maintain or restore their own meaning" (2000, p. xviii). McLaren supports this perspective and goes further to clarify his position when he explains how certain cultural fears are reproduced in schools and serve to limit educational freedom. He writes,

> We rely as a society on perceptions that have been filtered through constellations of historical commentaries rooted in xenophobia, homophobia, racism, the commodification of everyday life, and the reproduction of race, class, and gender relations. Schools both mirror and motivate such perceptions, reproducing a culture of fear that contributes to a wider justification for vigilance surrounding sexual practices through polar definitions of youth as morally upright/sexually deviant, and approvingly decent/unrepentantly corrupt. This Manichaean perspective on youth further supports a paternalistic and authoritarian politics and policing of the unconscious by limiting access to more progressive and liberatory vocabularies and practices of knowing (1995, pp. 105-106).

He explains how dynamics of race, class, gender and sexuality are perceived and controlled in schools as ways of maintaining hegemonic dominance through the use of fear, policing, and the power of language. These systems of power and control will be explored later when I address the concept of discursive power.

Madeline Arnot explains, "one of the ways in which male hegemony is maintained is obviously through schooling, where it is most easy to transmit a specific set of gender definitions, relations and differences while appearing to be objective" (2002a, p. 119). She describes how gender categories are taught in schools and explains how these "arbitrary social constructs" are reproduced through various social structures such as schools, families, churches and the media. One example of this is the role of adults in schools actively reinforcing these gender norms. It is not uncommon for students to be told to act more feminine if they are a girl, or more masculine if they are boy in order to blend in and avoid harassment and discrimination at school. One student said that when she reported harassment, "they told me to get over it. That maybe if I acted more like a girl that I wouldn't get harassed so often" (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006, p. 39). This is why it is important for all educators to understand how gender codes function and how we can work against these narrow definitions that hurt us all.

Judith Butler's (1990) groundbreaking work *Gender Trouble* provides a framework for understanding how the social category of gender works. She takes a postmodern understanding of gender and explores it in-depth. Her concepts of gender performativity and the heterosexual matrix are of significant interest to understanding how homophobia and sexism work in schools. Butler shows how gender has been theorized as a "performance" of identity and how the narrow structures – or matrix -- of heterosexuality contribute to our existing notions of gender. What this means is that our daily behaviors that signify our gender (separate from, but often related to, biological sex) such as clothes, hairstyle, manners of speech and body language, are external representations that are chosen and fall within a wide spectrum of masculinities and femininities. When these representations adhere to traditional expectations of a masculine male who partners with a feminine female, they are never questioned. However, if just one aspect of this equation is changed (for example, two masculine males together, or simply an androgynous or gender non-conforming person alone) the individuals become curiosities and are often subject to harassment or other unwanted attention.

Children's early lessons include what cues represent boys and girls in our culture. They begin their school careers with this knowledge and work alongside their teachers to practice and perform these gender norms. Gender theorist Sandra Bem recounts an illustrative tale about when her son first attended nursery school. She prefaces the story by explaining the fact that she has taught her children that "being a boy means having a penis and testicles; being a girl means having a vagina, a clitoris, and a uterus; and whether you're a boy or a girl, a man or a woman, doe s not need to matter unless and until you want to make a baby" (Bem, 1993, p. 149). She goes on to tell about the following experience:

> Both the liberation that can come from having a narrow biological definition
> of sex and the imprisonment that can come from not having such a
> definition are strikingly illustrated by an encounter with my son, Jeremy,
> had when he naively decided to wear barrettes to nursery school. Several
> times that day, another little boy insisted that Jeremy must be a girl because
> 'only little girls wear barrettes.' After repeatedly insisting that 'wearing
> barrettes doesn't matter; being a boy means having a penis and testicles,'
> Jeremy finally pulled down his pants to make his point more convincingly.
> The other boy was not impressed. He simply said, 'Everybody has a penis;
> only girls wear barrettes" (Bem, 1993, p. 149).

This anecdote demonstrates that children learn at a young age that it is not biological sex that communicates one's gender to the rest of society; rather it is the signifiers we "choose" to wear that will identify us as male or female. These choices are informed by codes that are explicitly and implicitly taught to children. Some examples of explicitly taught rules include comments like, 'boys don't wear dresses' or 'Mommies wear makeup to look nice'. Implicitly taught dress codes are even more invisible and pervasive and include the layout of clothing stores, models in the media, and parental and peer influences.

The fact that most people wear clothes and accessories that are consistent with the gender role expectations for their biological sex demonstrates the strength of hegemony in the *gender codes* that we have been taught. Lyn Mikel Brown describes the harmful impacts of these codes in shaping young women's experiences in school,

> By high school, many girls have become practiced in voicing these misogynistic cultural stereotypes of girls and women and ascribing them to other girls. It's as though girls become voluntary spokespersons for the status quo, missionaries for the heterosexual script when they claim that 'other' girls are 'hos' and 'bitches'. 'Other' girls are those held up to and judged through a male gaze, against male standards of behavior and beauty, cast in those now familiar derogatory roles: good girls or bad, Madonnas or whores. Cultural messages and childhood patterns of girlfighting have become crystallized for adolescent girls; they have become social reality (2003, p. 138).

All individuals are constrained by these gender codes. The strict expectations that accompany them severely limit girls' opportunities to be assertive, physically strong, and competitive and boys' opportunities to be creative, sensitive, and cooperative. A nationwide study conducted in the United States by the *Human Rights Watch* supports this assertion. The authors state:

> It quickly became obvious from our research that the abuse of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth is predicated on the belief that girls and boys must strictly adhere to rigid rules of conduct, dress, and appearances based on their sex. For boys, that means they must be athletic, strong, sexist, and hide their emotions. For girls, that meant they must be attentive to and flirtatious with boys and must accept a subordinate status to boys. Regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, youth who violate these rules are punished by their peers and too often by adults.(Bochenek & Brown, 2001, p. 49)

This finding is based in extensive interviews with students in various regions of the U.S. and reflects the work of gender theorists analyzing these practices in schools. Madeleine Arnot explains of how gender codes work in school:

> The concept of gender codes distinguished between the principles of *gender classification* which reflected gender power relations and the gendered *framing* of classroom interaction in which students learnt the extent to which they could negotiate gender identities. The effect of the gender code transmitted through the structures and processes of schooling would be found in the formation of an individual's gender identity, experience and property (2002b, p. 9).

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler writes, "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (1990, p. 33). All individuals are constrained by these gender codes and the strict expectations that accompany them severely limit girls' opportunities to be assertive, physically strong, and competitive and boys' opportunities to be creative, sensitive, and cooperative. Sandra Bem and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill are two scholars who examined the sociocultural influences that contribute to how gender is learned and performed. Bem examines how these codes or "lenses" have limited women's opportunities, and Mac an Ghaill studies how boys have been constrained by similar forces.

In *The Lenses of Gender*, Sandra Bem presents three major forces that work together to promote patriarchy and discriminate against women: androcentrism, gender polarization, and biological essentialism. *Androcentrism* is the male-centered lens through which most western cultures are viewed which she defines as, "the privileging of male experience and the 'otherizing' of female experience" (1993, p. 41). Her defense for this assertion lies in a critical examination of Judeo-Christian history, the writings of Greek philosophers, Freudian psychoanalysis and finally American Civil Rights legislation. She effectively demonstrates that the concept of 'patriarchy' has been deeply imbedded and intentionally perpetuated by influential men throughout history. The second lens, *gender polarization,* is more specifically related to issues of sexual orientation and will be addressed more in-depth in the next section.

The third lens is *biological essentialism.* Bem examined scientific studies and American legislation that allowed men through the ages to justify and promote their

location at the top of the social hierarchy. Using a critical analysis of eugenics, social Darwinism, hormone theories, and sociobiology Bem effectively argues against the assertions made by these influential movements. Instead she asserts that the sexual division of labor is being the actual root cause for men's and women's varied contributions to the public sphere through the ages. She argues that due to the biological necessity for women to bear and nurse offspring, they were never given the opportunity to involve themselves in more public-domain activities. Bem concludes by asserting, "like the concepts of masculinity and femininity and the concepts of Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and White, they are fictions that come to have psychological reality if they are institutionalized by the dominant culture. Accordingly, they can have extraordinary political power both for cultural oppression and for the resistance to cultural oppression" (1994, pg.175).

Mac an Ghaill was one of the first educational researchers to give masculinity the same rigorous examination that feminists had been subjecting femininity to in his work, *The Making of Men: Masculinity, sexualities, and schooling*. In this book he uses Connell's concept of *hegemonic masculinity* to construct his arguments. He explains that hegemonic masculinity is, "constructed in relation to and against femininity and subordinated forms of masculinity. The dominant masculine form is characterized by heterosexuality, power, authority, aggression and technical competence" (1995, p. 12). Connell's theorizing on masculinity strikes a familiar chord to Bem's, in that he discusses a gender order that is a function of three major structures: division of labor, power relations between men and women, and sexuality (Connell, 1995). Mac an Ghaill uses the theoretical foundation built by previous gender theorists and includes the concepts of power relations borrowed from Gramsci and Foucault to ground his research. The Foucauldian concept of discursive power is central to his analysis and will be explored further in the next section.

The Making of Men looks at how teacher ideologies, student cultures, and the structures of schooling actively produce and enforce the narrow definition of hegemonic masculinity. In Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli's more recent work *So What's a Boy?* they look at similar structures but from the perspective of what they call "borderland existences". Through studying young Australian men who defy traditional notions of

masculinity they effectively render visible the covert and overt school practices that work to marginalize these non-traditional students. They explain, "our focus, therefore, is both on the ways in which boys come to understand and fashion themselves as particular kinds of subjects, and how they defy categorizations and binary classifications that are inscribed through certain normalizing tendencies and practices" (Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003, p. 3). One of the most powerful normalizing practices within the school that both Mac an Ghaill and Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli examine is the importance of heterosexuality to the masculine identity.

Gendered harassment in school is a way that society polices and reinforces this heterosexual matrix. By targeting students who openly identify as gay or dress and act in gender non-conforming ways, heterosexual male hegemony is supported and marginalized identities continue to be oppressed. Additionally, when schools fail to intervene or punish perpetrators appropriately, the structure of the school system is supporting these disriminatory policing behaviors in order to support existing dominant ideologies. Schools also actively silence and censor any discourse that could be seen as positive towards homosexuality. These concepts of power and control lead us into a discussion of how the use of language and activities of surveillance in schools contribute to homophobic attitudes and reinforcing the heterosexual norm.

Discursive power

    Discourse and homosexuality

Language is power. The ability to name and create concepts through discourse is a form of control and domination. These concepts were introduced by such theorists Jacques Derrida ([1968] 1986), Jacques Lacan ([1957] 1986), and Michel Foucault (1980; , [1971] 1986). These theorists explored the power of words as signifiers to constitute a subject and his/her experiences as well as the structures in society that police and reinforce the dominant ideology through discursive practices. Peter McLaren clarifies how these forces work:

> discourse and discursive practices influence how we live our lives as
> conscious thinking subjects. They shape our subjectivities (our ways of
> understanding in relation to the world) because it is only in language and
> through discourse that social reality can be given meaning. Not all

discourses are given the same weight, as some will account for and justify the appropriateness of the status quo and others will provide a context for resisting social and institutional practices (1998, pp. 184-185) .

Historically, Western cultures have constructed homosexuality (and related sexual practices) as an illness, a deviance, and a sin. This dominant ideology was created through medical and psychological research, interpretations of religious texts and the political and financial privileging of heterosexual and monogamous family structures by the state.

Foucault traced the birth of the modern idea of the "homosexual" to the 1870's to an article by Westphal on "contrary sexual sensations" (1980, p. 43). Although sexual practices labeled as "sodomy" had been criminalized in Europe as early as 1477 (N. Sullivan, 2003, p. 3), individuals who had engaged in such behaviors had never been categorized as a class of persons. As Foucault explains, "The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (1980, p. 43). It was during the late 1800's that a public discourse around homosexuality emerged and lawyers (Karl Heinrich Ulrichs), psychiatrists (Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Sigmund Freud), and sexologists (Havelock Ellis, Carl Westphal, and Magnus Hirschfield) began to define the terms that were used to view homosexuality as a perversion, illness, pathology, or abnormality (N. Sullivan, 2003, p. 7). Although many of these men were working with the goal of reducing the persecution of (male) homosexuals, the terms in which they framed the debate were used to help justify the criminalization, medical treatment, and institutionalization of individuals identified as homosexual.

The main focus on male sexuality underlines the phallocentric construction of sexuality in Western European cultures, but Lillian Faderman examined the impacts of this work on women's lives in her work *Surpassing the Love of Men*. She asserts that before this time period, "romantic friendships" between women were socially sanctioned and it was the concurrent emergence of first-wave feminism in the early 1900's that produced this change in attitude. Faderman explains, "the sexologists' theories frightened, or attempted to frighten, women away from feminism and from loving other women by demonstrating that both were abnormal and were generally linked together" (cited in Jagose, 1996, p. 14). The emergence of the identity category "homosexual" during this era led to the neologism "heterosexuality" to define opposite-sex identities. This provides an excellent example for

understanding how language shapes our understandings of the world and how ideas and identities are constructed in specific social, historical and cultural contexts. Without the exploration of same-sex desire and behavior, the dominant way of being, heterosexuality, had never been named or examined. The fact that heterosexuality was created to describe behaviors and identities that were not homosexual is an important fact to consider when examining issues related to sex, gender, and sexual orientation in contemporary western society.

This discourse has been disrupted and challenged by the gay rights movements that gained momentum in the 1960's and 1970's. More recently, scholars have taken up the work of activists and examined the social, historical, and political forces that have worked together to construct the idea of the homosexual and then demonize it (Bem, 1993; Foucault, 1980; Halperin, 1993; Jagose, 1996; Scott, 1993; Weeks, 1985). By understanding the history of gender, sex, and sexuality in western society, we can better work to undo the bias and resulting harms caused by the oppressive patriarchal structures that framed it in the first place.

Compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1978/1993), the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990), and gender polarization (Bem, 1993) are all different terms that scholars have used to explain heterosexism, the privileging of opposite-sex attraction and sexual behavior. As noted above, the designation of homosexuality and subsequently heterosexuality is just over a century old (Jagose, 1996, p. 17), and the resulting prejudice against those who deviate from this social script has been carefully developed by institutional heterosexism through the privileged discourses of organized religion, medicine, sexology, psychiatry, and psychology (Bem, 1993, p. 81). Sandra Bem explains how her cultural lens of *gender polarization* works to reinforce heterosexuality by creating, "mutually exclusive scripts for being male and female [and defining] any person or behavior that deviates from these scripts as problematic". These two practices work to create and normalize a gender-polarizing link between one's biological sex and one's psyche and sexuality (1993, pg. 81).

These powerful social discourses are generated through schools and other public institutions. As Foucault argues, institutions contributed to the creation of multiple sexualities in their attempts to control and regulate them.

Educational or psychiatric institutions, with their large populations, their hierarchies, their spatial arrangements, their surveillance systems, constituted, alongside the family, another way of distributing the interplay of powers and pleasures; but they too delineated areas of extreme sexual saturation, with privileged spaces or rituals such as the classroom, the dormitory, the visit, and the consultation. The forms of a nonconjugal, nonmonogamous sexuality were drawn there and established (1980, p. 46).

The ideological power of schools is significant due to their role in teaching what the culture has deemed as important and valuable to future generations. Teachers, principals, and school boards determine what lessons are passed on to students and whose knowledge or "truth" is valued. Schools are important sites that contribute to the normalization of heterosexual behavior. Richard Friend's article, *Choices not Closets,* exposes two ways that such lessons are passed on in schools through the processes of systematic inclusion and systematic exclusion. Systematic inclusion is the way in which negative or false information about homosexuality is introduced in schools as a pathology or deviant behavior. Systematic exclusion is the process of erasing positive role models, stories, and images about lesbian, gay and bisexual people in schools (1993, p. 215). Ironically enough, schools make efforts to de-sexualize the experience of students while they simultaneously affirm heterosexual behavior and punish those who appear to deviate from it. Epstein and Johnson explain,

Schools go to great lengths to forbid expressions of sexuality by both children and teachers. This can be seen in a range of rules, particularly those about self-presentation. On the other hand, and perhaps in consequence, expressions of sexuality provide a major currency and resource in the everyday exchanges of school life. Second, the forms in which sexuality is present in schools and the terms on which sexual identities are produced are heavily determined by power relations between teachers and taught, the dynamics of control and resistance (1998, p. 108).

Therefore it is not really a question of whether discussions of sex, gender, and sexual orientation belong in schools, rather than what kinds of conversations are allowed, which lessons are presented and whose interests they serve.

Foucault's Panopticon

These acts of surveillance are rooted in Michel Foucault's concept of the Panopticon – an all-seeing, yet completely invisible source of power and control. In his

work *Surveiller et Punir* [Discipline and Punish] he explains how the panopticon works: "to work, this power makes itself the instrument of a permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of rendering everything visible, but all the while making itself invisible. Power must be like a faceless observer that transforms the entire social world in one field of view…" (translation my own 1975, p. 215). This type of surveillance and control is particularly effective because we all unknowingly contribute to it unless we actively work to question and challenge it. Another example of this panopticonic power is seen in what Mills calls 'containment discourses'. He explains how these work in relation to teachers' roles and identities in the classroom.

> The discourse of teacher 'professionalism' is one of the most powerful educational discourses in its containment of teacher-student challenges to the existing heteronormative order. It regulates and monitors the boundaries between students and teachers so that much remains deliberately unspoken or unconsciously unseen. Teachers who resist the heteronormativity of the school, of one's teaching peers, are liable to be accused of unprofessional activity or have their careers ended (cited in Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003, pg. 227).

Schools reinforce heterosexism through the surveillance and policing of bodies and language. These structures promote heterosexuality among students and teachers and work to exclude identities and experiences that queer this social order.

Art Lipkin's (1999) work, *Understanding Homosexuality, Changing schools*, provides in-depth accounts of the discrimination experienced by gay, lesbian, and bisexual educators as well as the painful and enduring stories of students who were emotionally and physically harassed for their perceived or actual queer performance of identity. In other words, schools are not safe for "guys who aren't as masculine as other guys" or "girls who aren't as feminine as other girls" (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004). The lack of effective intervention in incidents of gendered harassment by school staff combined with the invisible heterosexual scripts of the school that sends the message that these borderland or queer identities are not valued or welcomed.

Heterosexism and homophobia are linked to gender norms and are informed by the patriarchal practice of misogyny. The most effective challenge to any boy's masculinity is to call him 'gay', 'fag', or 'queer' (Epstein & Johnson, 1998; Mac an Ghaill, 1995; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003). His masculinity is being challenged– his gender code – but it

is being done by accusing him of being not-heterosexual. Gay males have been historically regarded as acting *feminine* and the resulting disdain for this behavior is linked to misogyny, the disdain for women and "femininity". Girls are also subject to similar kinds of policing, but research shows that it is much more prevalent among male students (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Harris Interactive, 2001). Many activists and radical educators are pushing for a deconstruction of gender codes and de-labeling of sexual orientations. By continuing to live within these prescribed linguistic and behavioral matrices, the hierarchical binary of male-female and gay-straight will remain unchallenged. This work of dismantling socially invented categories is necessary to create educational spaces that liberate and create opportunities as opposed to limiting and closing down the diversity of human experiences. We must move towards understanding identities and experiences as falling on a continuum of gender expressions and sexual orientations. In order to move in this direction, understanding the work of liberatory educational theorists is essential to creating educational practices that can transform oppressive educational spaces.

Liberatory pedagogy

Brazilian educator and activist Paulo Freire is widely recognized for advancing the concepts of liberatory pedagogy and consciousness-raising or *conscientização.* He worked with oppressed groups to resist and counteract social structures in order to critically interrogate them and transform them. This concept of education as praxis was influential for many writers and academics who shared Freire's ideals of creating a non-oppressive and equitable society. Although Freire was widely criticized by feminists for his sexist language and assumptions in his writings pre-1980, many feminist thinkers have taken his ideas aimed at empowering exploited workers and built upon them to include anti-sexist and anti-racist work as a form of liberatory pedagogy. bell hooks explains this conflict when she wrote, "To have work that promotes one's liberation is such a powerful gift that it does not matter so much if the gift is flawed. Think of the work as water that contains some dirt. Because you are thirsty you are not too proud to extract the dirt and be nourished by the water" (1994, p. 50). hooks also points out that Freire's own concepts of critical pedagogy invites readers and activists to critically interrogate his work to point out flaws and work to address them to make the approach more meaningful and inclusive of all

people. Interestingly enough, her work actually excludes discussion of oppression based on sexual orientation, but again, her own language would support the use of her ideas to advance anti-homophobia work in conjunction with anti-sexist, anti-racist and other anti-oppressive efforts. She proclaims,

> Feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist apart from and as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all of its forms. We must understand that patriarchal domination shares an ideological foundation with racism and other forms of group oppression, that there is no hope that it can be eradicated while these systems remain intact….This effort at revision is perhaps most evident in the current widespread acknowledgement that sexism, racism, and class exploitation constitute interlocking systems of domination – that sex, race, and class, and not sex alone, determine the nature of any female's identity, status, and circumstance, the degree to which she will or will not be dominated, the extent to which she will have the power to dominate. (hooks cited in Giroux, 1991, p. 33).

Feminist theorists have taken the work of early critical theorists and through their critique and reinterpretation of it have made it more effective and more inclusive of different voices and experiences in anti-oppression work. In education, feminist pedagogy has built on Freire's concepts to work towards more liberatory educational experiences for all students. In her article, *Rereading Paulo Freire*, Kathleen Weiler points out many of the similarities in the feminist and Freirean pedagogies. She explains that, "like Freirean pedagogy, feminist pedagogy emphasizes the importance of consciousness raising, the existence of an oppressive social structure and the need to change it, and the possibility of social transformation" (2001, p. 68). She goes on to make the distinction that feminist pedagogy is different in that it includes an analysis of patriarchy and attempts to develop an education that is supportive to women. Many scholars of color, lesbian scholars, and Marxist theorist have critiqued much feminist theory as being centered in the realm of white, middle class, heterosexual privilege. Although third wave feminist scholars have worked to address these issues, queer scholars have had the benefit of learning from this history. While some have argued that queer theory is "male-centred, anti-feminist, and race-blind," (N. Sullivan, 2003, p. 48) and erases and ignores differences within the glbt community, I argue that queer pedagogy has worked quite consciously to decenter these traditional forms of ideological domination. Liberatory pedagogy and queer pedagogy are mutually reinforcing

philosophies that share a radical vision of education as the path to achieving a truly equitable and just society.

Queer theory

In April 2004, the Lesbian and Gay Studies Special Interest Group (SIG) at the American Educational Research Association voted to change its name to Queer Studies. This marked an important shift in focus and demonstrates where the work in this field is headed. In her study, *Come out, Come out, Wherever You Are: A Synthesis of Queer Research in Education*, Janna Jackson (2001) demonstrates the evolution in research and language examining homosexuality and schooling. In studies pre-dating 1990, she noted that the studies presented homosexual youth as victims, focused primarily on the experiences of gay men, and that none of the studies presented teachers as political agents. As research in this field evolved, later studies (1994-1996) began questioning the construction of gender roles and viewed youth as active agents in creating their own identities. Finally, Jackson noted that every study post-1997 addresses the hidden curriculum of schools, "transmitting dominant heterosexist ideology to the younger generation" (Jennings cited in Jackson, 2001, p. 26). Thus her review of research recorded how the field of gay and lesbian studies has made a radical shift from studying an imagined, unified experience of being gay in schools to a more broad and open understanding of how categories of gender and sexuality are learned and experienced in schools, and has clearly documented the epistemological and pedagogical effects of the emergence of queer theory.

Advocates of a queer pedagogy have grounded many of their assertions in critical and feminist theories. The concept of queer as a more inclusive and empowering word for the gay and lesbian experience emerged in the early 1990's as a controversial and deeply political term (Jagose, 1996, p. 76). Queer is understood as a challenge to traditional understandings of gender and sexual identity by deconstructing the categories, the binaries and language that supports them. Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* and Eve Kosofky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* were influential works for this emerging school of thought. Jagose explains that its most significant achievement is to specify "how gender operates as a regulatory construct that privileges heterosexuality and, furthermore, how the

deconstruction of normative models of gender legitimates lesbian and gay subject-positions," (1996, p. 83). Queering seeks to disrupt and challenge traditional modes of thought around gender and sexual identity and, by standing outside them, can more effectively examine and dismantle them. Deborah Britzman, a leading theorist in this field, explains how she understands queer theory and its role in learning:

> Queer Theory offers methods of critiques to mark the repetitions of normalcy as a structure and as a pedagogy. Whether defining normalcy as an approximation of limits and mastery, or as renunciations, as the refusal of difference itself, Queer Theory insists on posing the production of normalization as a problem of culture and of thought (1995, p. 154).

In Kevin Kumashiro's work, *Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Antioppressive Pedagogy* he writes, "learning is about disruption and opening up to further learning, not closure and satisfaction" (2002, p. 43) and also "education involves learning something that disrupts our commonsense view of the world" (p. 63). This concept of resistance and disruption is central to enacting a liberatory and queer pedagogy.

The work of trans[4] and intersex scholars and activists have contributed to this resistance and disruption by challenging the narrow binary of sex and gender by proposing a more fluid and expansive concept of identities and expressions. Trans and intersex individuals have experienced invisibility and exclusion from gay and lesbian scholarship and activism, and queer scholars seek to address the related issues of genderism and transphobia in their work. As individuals whose bodies and work disrupt dominant notions of sex and gender, their knowledge and experiences are influential in this study of gendered harassment in schools. Writers and activists such as Leslie Feinberg (1993; , 1998), Kate Bornstein (1997), Aiyyanna Maracle (2001), Riki Anne Wilchins (1997) and Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) have greatly expanded my understanding of sex and gender. Through their writing, performance, and research, they push the boundaries of what sex and gender mean and how they are lived in different bodies. Queer theory and this research project have been greatly enriched and strengthened by their ideas.

Early studies of transgender individuals helped lay the foundation for reconceptualizing sex and gender in western society (Garfinkel 1967 cited inWest &

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[4] I use the term "trans" here to refer to multiple identities that challenge the sex and gender binary: transgender, transsexual, and transformed

Zimmerman, 1987, p. 131). It is the undeniability of people's lived experiences that lend credibility to much of the theoretical work of queer theory. Transgender, transsexual, and intersex individuals have experienced much harm as a result of the narrow sex and gender binary that orders patriarchal cultures. The powerful narratives offered by trans writers Feinberg, Wilchins, Maracle, and Bornstein about their often painful experiences as trans people show how the sex/gender binary is flawed and does not adequately represent the full range of human experiences and identities. The scientific examination of intersex by Fausto-Sterling also demonstrates how artificial sex and gender categories are and how necessary it is that we work to transform our current understandings of them.

In discussing how to challenge *pedagogical* forms of resistance, she encourages educators to recognize the power that *Eros* can play in teaching. By understanding sexuality as a force that, "allows the human its capacity for passion, interests, explorations, disappointment, and drama" and "because sexuality is both private and public – something from inside of bodies and something made between bodies – we must focus on sexuality in terms of its contradictory, discontinuous, and ambiguous workings" (2000, p. 37). Finally, in addressing *psychical* forms of resistance, Britzman advocates working through internal

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While marginalized groups employ new strategies to challenge dominant ideologies, these entrenched discourses push back. Resistance is offered up by the dominant structures of society to forces that try to change them. Britzman presents the queer theoretical approach to understanding this opposition in outlining three forms of resistance to sexuality: structural, pedagogical, and psychical. She defines these terms as follows: a) structural resistance is "the very design or organization of education" b) pedagogical resistance, "worries about Eros between students and teachers [and] considers sexuality as the secret of an individual's nature" and c) psychical resistance as "the conflict within" (2000, p. 34).   She asserts the need to challenge all forms of resistance. She specifically addresses how sexuality is currently inserted into the school curriculum. She notes, "this has to do with how the curriculum structures modes of behaviour and orientations to knowledge that are repetitions of the underlying structure and dynamics of education: compliance, conformity, and the myth that knowledge cures" (2000, p. 35). *Structural resistance* is especially resilient to change as the findings in Chapter 6 will show.

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conflicts and ambivalence towards sexuality in order to, "raise rather serious questions on the nature of education and on the uses of educational anxiety" (p. 35). These three themes will be revisited in the conclusion as they tie in with the findings of this dissertation.

This disruption and open discussion of previously silenced issues can be a very difficult one for teachers to navigate. A liberatory and queer pedagogy empowers educators to open up traditionally silenced discourses and create spaces for students to explore and challenge the hierarchy of identities that is created and supported by schools, such as: teacher-student, jock-nerd, sciences-arts, male-female, white-black, rich-poor, and gay-straight. In order to move past this, teachers must learn to see schooling as a place to question, explore, and seek alternative explanations rather than a place where knowledge means "certainty, authority, and stability" (Britzman, 2000, p. 51).

Kumashiro, an emerging voice in queer theory and anti-oppressive pedagogy, offers four different approaches that can be used to challenge multiple forms of oppression in schools: "education for the Other, education about the Other, education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and education that changes students and society" (2002, p. 23). In true postmodern fashion, Kumashiro explicitly states that his is not a prescriptive program, he explains:

> I do not aim to offer strategies that work. Rather, I hope to offer conceptual and cultural resources for educators and researchers to use as we rethink our practices, constantly look for new insights, and engage differently in antioppressive education…I encourage readers to think of reading this book as an event that constitutes the kind of antioppressive educational practices that I articulate throughout its discussion. It is queer in its unconventionality and it is activist in the changes it aims to bring about. In this way, my book is not a mere exercise, and not a final product, but a resource that I hope can be in some way helpful to the reader, as it was for the researcher, and as I hope it was for the participants (2002, pp. 25-26).

In this explanation he is challenging us to find our own ways of creating useful knowledge and understanding the world. He refuses to be placed in the position of "authority" where his work will be read unquestioningly and used as a one-dimensional text. Instead he is pushing educators to find new approaches to destabilize traditional ways of learning and offers different tools with which we can build that understanding. In his more recent work, *Against common sense,* he explains that, "the most significant way that anti-oppressive

teaching is queer is its use of discomfort or crisis" (2004, p. 47) This is what a queer and truly liberatory pedagogy is about.

Conclusion

　　Historically, schools have been institutions that have filled an important cultural role of teaching children to learn what has been deemed important by the people in power. In North America, these people have been overwhelmingly White, European, heterosexual, male, Christians. As a result, children emerge from school having learned only the language, the history, and the ideals of this dominant culture. The recent shift towards critical pedagogy since the civil rights movement and the second-wave feminist movements of the 1960's has begun to question this type of schooling in search of a way to create students and citizens who will be critical, engaged, independent thinkers in order to move our society in a more egalitarian direction. In understanding how the forces of hegemony and discursive power work, educators will be better equipped to create classrooms that enact the ideals of a liberatory pedagogy.

　Queer theory offers a further application of ideas introduced by critical pedagogy, feminist theories, and other approaches to emancipatory learning by calling on educators to question and reformulate, through a queer pedagogical lens: a) how they teach and reinforce gendered practices in schools, b) how they support traditional notions of heterosexuality, and c) how they present culturally specific information in the classroom. In so doing, we will be able to reduce and eventually remove all forms of gendered harassment and other related forms of discrimination from schools and consequently, most realms of society. Schools need to begin to challenge and disrupt traditional ways of knowing and encourage students to question and "trouble" all that is normally assumed and taken for granted in society. Institutions of learning must redefine themselves in order to move towards a truly liberatory and emancipatory learning experience. This project builds on and extends the work of critical pedagogy. Barry Kanpol affirms:

> the critical pedagogue always seeks just and fair ways to alter a system
> which, by and large, and despite seemingly good intentions, has effectively
> oppressed many of its members. Critical postmodernism, then, is not only
> about passive judgment but also about active engagement in change and

> reform issues that seek to sever inequalities and other forms of social and
> cultural injustices (1994, p. 33).

By doing away with the docile, submissive, *banking* (Friere, 1970/1993) style of learning in schools, we can open up more educational possibilities and socially just experiences for future citizens rather than confine them with ideologies of traditional hegemonic, heterosexist gender roles. In order to move in this direction, it is important to understand the psychical, pedagogical, and structural resistance that prevent teachers from challenging these strict codes and police their own language and behavior in addition to that of their students. This is the goal of the research outlined in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3: THE CLIMATE IN CANADA: A SURVEY OF LEGAL AND POLICY
PROTECTIONS FOR QUEER YOUTH AND EDUCATORS

Canada is a global leader in extending legal rights and recognition to gays and
lesbians. The existence of federal and provincial human rights protections that include
sexual orientation, as well as the recent federal recognition of same-sex marriage rights
show the world that Canada is a nation that places value on equality rights. This positive
international image acts as a model for activists working to achieve the same protections in
their own regions. As the data for this study was collected in Canada, this chapter will
provide a brief overview of the Canadian legal context for understanding how schools are
developing and implementing policies that address issues of sexual diversity. There has
been virtually no inclusion of trans issues in the legal system in Canada which is why it is
not discussed in this chapter.

In the first section, the reader will be introduced to the Canadian system through a
discussion of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and provincial Human Rights
Codes. The second section will review relevant legal decisions and what they mean for
Canadian schools. The third section will analyze school policies from two exemplary
school boards (Vancouver School Board and Toronto District School Board) and discuss
how they align with the legal responsibilities of educators as well as the obstacles and
potential solutions to effective policy implementation. The fourth section will conclude
with a discussion of the implications of this legal climate for educational practitioners and
community activists working to reduce gendered harassment in schools.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Provincial Human Rights Codes

The current progressive political climate in Canada was achieved through a long
and slow process of legislative reforms. In 1944, the Province of Ontario set the stage for
equality for all Canadian citizens by creating the first human rights legislation with its
Racial Discrimination Act. In 1947 Saskatchewan followed suit with the more broadly
defined and inclusive *Bill of Rights Act*. Ontario then established the first Human Rights
Commission in 1961, and eventually all provinces followed its example. In 1960, the

Federal Government passed the *Canadian Bill of Rights*, but this legislation was somewhat faulty in that it lacked an enforcement agency and had little meaningful impact in provincial matters. In 1980, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* was enacted and the Supreme Court of Canada stated that this act should be given a broad and liberal application (Watkinson, 1999, p. 14).

The main objective in creating increased human rights protections was meant to be remedial in nature. It was not intended to punish transgressors, but instead was designed to prevent discrimination against historically marginalized groups and counter the impact of discriminatory practices in the public sector. An important moment in the human rights movement in Canada was when the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was instituted. This important document was entrenched into the Canadian Constitution by the *Constitution Act* in 1982 (Watkinson, 1999, 22). As part of the supreme law of Canada, this document superseded all existing laws, and for the first time the rights of all persons to be treated equally was given constitutional status. Although public education is governed by provincial statutes, all publicly funded institutions must abide by the spirit and letter of the *Charter* (Watkinson, 1999).

The Trudeau government had a lasting impact on Canadian politics through the Charter: it sent an enduring message about the primacy of equality rights in Canadian public life. This new constitution guaranteed protections for many historically marginalized groups. Sexual orientation, however, was not initially included as a protected class for equality rights under section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.* The original language of this section reads as follows:

> Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability . ("The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (s. 15)", 1982)

Although the federal government wasn't willing to explicitly include the phrase, "sexual orientation" in the *Charter,* other provinces had already established human rights codes that included this language. In 1977, the Province of Quebec led the way in the equality movement for sexual minorities by adding *sexual orientation* to its Charter of

Human Rights and Freedoms. Ontario followed suit nine years later. These were the first legal protections that clearly included sexual orientation as a protected class(Hurley, 2005). Although equality cases supported by the *Charter* were enforced starting in 1985, sexual minorities were not recognized as a protected class until 13 years later, following a unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the landmark case of *Egan v. Canada* (1995). Although this case was not about discrimination in schools, it addressed the issue of access to public services. The ruling provided that discrimination based on sexual orientation was prohibited by s. 15 of the *Charter* and the justices observed:

> Sexual orientation is a deeply personal characteristic that is either unchangeable or changeable only at unacceptable personal costs, and so falls within the ambit of s. 15 protection as being analogous to the enumerated grounds("Egan v. Canada", 1995, para. 5).

This case established the precedent to include sexual orientation as a protected class and had *sexual orientation* read into the *Charter*. The decision established that every Canadian was guaranteed equal protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation. Though some provinces were slow to add the term *sexual orientation* to their individual human rights codes, this protection was federally guaranteed as a result of this important ruling.

Important legal decisions

Since the Supreme Court's 1995 decision in *Egan v. Canada,* various cases have come forward to test the interpretation and application of the equality rights extended in that case. In one case, Vriend v. Alberta, ("Vriend v. Alberta", 1998), a university employee was fired from his position as a lab coordinator solely due to his homosexuality. He initially brought forward a human rights complaint; however it was dismissed because the province of Alberta did not have sexual orientation listed as a protected class in its human rights legislation. The appellants (Delwin Vriend, Gala-Gay and Lesbian Awareness Society of Edmonton, Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton Society and Dignity Canada Dignité for Gay Catholics and Supporters) then argued their case to the Supreme Court where the judge reinstated the earlier decision by the Court of Queen's bench that not protecting individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation was an "unjustified violation of s. 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and*

Freedoms," and ordered that the words "sexual orientation" be read into ss. 2(1), 3, 4, 7(1), 8(1) and 10 of the *IRPA* [Individual Rights Protection Act] as a prohibited ground of discrimination ("Vriend v. Alberta", 1998, par. 2). This important decision relied on *Egan* to affirm that all Canadians are protected federally and provincially from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The next test came in May 2001 when the Supreme Court of Canada heard a case brought forward by Trinity Western University (TWU) a private, religious, institution against the British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT). In this instance, the B.C. professional teachers' organization had responded to a request from TWU to be fully responsible for its teacher training program, which it shared with Simon Fraser University. TWU wanted more autonomy in the program in order to reflect its Christian worldview. The BCCT chose not to accredit this institution because it believed the institution was discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation in its demands on its students. TWU required their students to sign a statement that asserted they would "refrain from practices that are biblically condemned," including homosexuality ("Trinity Western University v. British Columbia College of Teachers", 2001, para. 4)

In its decision, the B.C. Supreme Court found in favor of Trinity Western University, stating that teachers could hold "sexist, racist or homophobic beliefs" (para. 36). However, the Court also made the following distinction:

> Acting on those beliefs, however, is a very different matter. If a teacher in the public school system engages in discriminatory conduct, that teacher can be subject to disciplinary proceedings. Discriminatory conduct by a public school teacher when on duty should always be subject to disciplinary proceedings [and] disciplinary measures can still be taken when discriminatory off-duty conduct poisons the school environment ("Trinity Western v. British Columbia College of Teachers", 2001, at para. 37).

Although this majority opinion sided with TWU and allowed them to continue mandating anti-gay beliefs in their future teachers, the judges made the important distinction between publicly enacted discriminatory behaviors and privately held beliefs which is common in cases regarding religious freedom. The decision clearly states that teachers may not discriminate overtly against their students, but does not address the issue of the subtle and persistent homophobic behaviors that such attitudes engender and the impact it has on a

classroom or school community. How would teachers who graduated from this program treat a child of same-sex parents? How would they respond to a student who was being called 'fag' by his peers? If their anti-gay beliefs are so deeply embedded, would they be able to effectively teach all of their students about the Canadian values of multiculturalism, equality and democracy? These questions lead us to two cases that describe just that scenario.

Marc Hall was a student in a Catholic school board in Ontario that received public funding. His decision to bring his boyfriend to his prom in May 2002 was denied by his Principal (February 2002) and school board (April 2002) but with the support of the gay and lesbian community, he took legal action against his school. Since the prom was rapidly approaching, his lawyers asked for a temporary injunction that would prevent the school board from excluding Marc and his date from attending the prom(Cauchi, 2003). On the date of the event, the court granted the injunction based on the fact that "exclusion of a student from a significant occasion of school life, like the school Prom, constitutes a restriction in access to a fundamental social institution"(Mackinnon, 2002, par.1). Citing the Trinity Western case, the Justice MacKinnon asserted that the Principal, the Board and the Catholic Church may hold whatever religious beliefs they choose, but they may not use them as grounds for discriminating against homosexuals. The case was scheduled to come to trial in October 2005, but in June 2005, Marc Hall requested permission to set aside the proceedings ("Hall v. Durham Catholic District School Board", 2005). Although this case was never heard in court after the emergency injunction was granted, the amount of publicity it generated had a profound impact on public understanding of *Charter* rights and the protections it granted targeted minorities in publicly funded institutions. This impact was reinforced in the case of a teacher who was suspended for making public statements that were understood as anti-gay in nature.

In February 2004, a B.C. teacher, Chris Kempling, was suspended for one month for "conduct unbecoming" a teacher for publishing articles that were considered to be defaming of homosexuals in a local newspaper ("Kempling v. British Columbia College of Teachers", 2004, para.1). The Christian teacher appealed this decision to the B.C. Supreme Court, but the court held that the BCCT was within its jurisdiction to suspend the teacher. The court's rationale for its decision was based on the "wrongful public linking of his

professional position to the off-duty expression of personally held discriminatory views in order to lend credibility to those views," ("Kempling v. British Columbia College of Teachers", 2004, para. 2). This decision was heavily influenced by the precedent set in a similar case in New Brunswick in 1996. In *Ross v. New Brunswick School District no. 15*(1996), a teacher, Malcolm Ross, was relieved of his classroom duties after distributing anti-Semitic literature and making public statements that were hurtful and derogatory towards Jewish people. The Supreme Court of Canada wrote that the "anti-Jewish writings and public statements outside the classroom were found to contribute to a poisoned environment within the classroom" and that "the teacher's manifestation of freedom of expression and religion are incompatible with respect for dignity and equality" ("Ross v. New Brunswick School District No. 15", 1996).

The *Kempling* and *Ross* cases both demonstrate that regardless of an educator's personal religious beliefs, as government employees, they are required to uphold the spirit and letter of the *Charter*. This establishes a clear responsibility on the part of schools in Canada to create learning environments that are free from discrimination. The final case discussed here demonstrates what happened when a school failed to provide such an environment.

Azmi Jubran, a student in Vancouver, was repeatedly called 'gay', 'faggot', and 'homo' by his peers during his secondary schooling. In addition to these verbal taunts he was spit upon, shoved in class and the hallways, and even had his shirt burned. After repeated complaints to the school by Jubran and his parents with no satisfactory response, they filed a Human Rights complaint in November 1996. In April 2002, the Human Rights Tribunal of British Columbia found that the school board in Vancouver had contravened the *Human Rights Code*, "by failing to provide a learning environment free of discriminatory harassment" ("School District No. 44 v. Jubran", 2005, para. 2). This was an important decision because it affirmed the school's responsibility to protect students from discriminatory behavior and to respond effectively and consistently to incidents of homophobic harassment.

When this case was heard on appeal by the Supreme Court of British Columbia, the court adopted a much narrower interpretation of the provincial human rights codes. The majority found that Jubran could not have experienced discrimination based on sexual

orientation since *he did not identify as homosexual* (emphasis mine). This May 2003 decision was appealed, and in April 2005 the Court of Appeal for British Columbia applied a broader interpretation of the human rights codes and reinstated the Human Rights Tribunal's earlier decision("School District No. 44 (North Vancouver) v. Jubran", 2005). The fate of this case was decided on October 20, 2005 when the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal and effectively upheld the lower court's decision. This was an important decision as the court acknowledged that the school had made some effort to individually discipline the students targeting Jubran, but that the school had not done enough. The court stated that the school needed to have communicated its code of conduct to students and provided teachers with resources and training on how to deal with homophobia (CLE Staff, 2005). This case demonstrated to educators that they must mobilize multiple resources and be proactive when addressing issues of student safety that relate directly to potential human rights violations.

As the above listed cases demonstrate, there are legal precedents that exist to protect students from discriminatory behavior in schools. What these cases also show is the reluctance of schools to clearly and effectively implement school policies that endorse the intention of the human rights codes and the *Canadian Charter* with respect to sexual orientation. Many school boards and educators are not aware of their legal responsibilities and fail to effectively implement policies that support full equality rights. When they do implement inclusive policies, they are often empty promises. As Gerald Walton writes in his article, *Bullying and Homophobia in Canadian Schools: The Politics of Policies, Programs, and Educational Leadership*, "most school administrators heartily embrace 'safety' but avoid the more challenging but pervasive issues of homophobia, heterosexism, and heteronormativity…in this light, promoting school safety and preventing bullying is largely a public relations exercise" (2004, p. 29). Fortunately, there a few examples of urban school boards who have taken their legal and ethical responsibilities seriously and have implemented recent policy changes in order to provide more explicit protection for students and teachers who experience discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

School policies

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was meant to ensure basic human rights to all Canadians and to protect historically marginalized groups from unfair treatment in the public domain. It made important headway in changing cultural attitudes and behaviors to build a more inclusive and proudly diverse society. In *Canada's Legal Revolution: Public Education, the Charter, and Human Rights*, Terri Sussel (1995) asserts that the Charter's impact has led to major changes in the field of education. She highlights that case studies show that since the *Charter's* adoption in 1982, legal professionals and the general public have, "tended to have a much higher level of rights consciousness," and that within schools, new policies and practices that address student and employee rights have been adopted (164). In this section, I will examine the policies of two exemplary school boards: Vancouver School Board and Toronto District School Board and how they model positive steps towards the meaningful implementation of equality rights for sexual minorities in schools. I will also discuss how the language and culture established by these policies can have a positive impact on the education of all students in public schools in Canada. Based on the above analysis of recent cases, it is important to look at local school policy to understand if and how it reinforces Federal and Provincial protections.

Both the Vancouver School Board and the Toronto District School Board have implemented recent policy changes that make them leaders in providing protections and clear implementation steps for confronting homophobia in schools. In a recent report for the Toronto District School Board, University of Toronto researchers Goldstein, Collins, & Halder asserted that, "in June of 1999 the Toronto District School Board approved perhaps the most comprehensive anti-homophobia policy in North America" (Goldstein, Collins, & Halder, 2005). One of the most promising features of the policy that Goldstein, et al highlighted was its commitment that the "ideals related to anti-homophobia and sexual orientation equity be reflected in all aspects of organizational structures, policies, guidelines, procedures, classroom practices, day-to-day operations and communication practices" (Toronto District School Board, 2000). This policy is exemplary because it includes establishing accountability processes as well as allocating resources for policy implementation (Goldstein, Collins, & Halder, 2005). Goldstein et al. do acknowledge some weaknesses in the policy. The main criticism is that it is somewhat vague and not

effectively implemented. In their study, they learned that although all TDSB schools are mandated to do some form of anti-homophobia work, many are not doing so. In spite of these criticisms, they conclude that it is "still comprehensive and ground breaking" (Goldstein, Collins, & Halder, 2005, p. 13).

A second exemplary school policy is the one implemented by the Vancouver School Board in May 2004. This policy clearly enumerates the individuals protected and the goals of the policy in the following statement,

> The Board will provide a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, while also promoting pro-active strategies and guidelines to ensure that lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, bisexual and questioning students,(LGBTTQ) employees and families are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life and treated with respect and dignity. The purpose of this policy is to define appropriate behaviours and actions in order to prevent discrimination and harassment through greater awareness of and responsiveness to their deleterious effects. This policy is also drafted to ensure that homophobic complaints are taken seriously and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures. The policy will also raise awareness and improve understanding of the lives of people who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. By valuing diversity and respecting differences, students and staff act in accordance with the Vancouver district's social responsibility initiative (Vancouver School Board, 2004).

The inclusion of *gender identity* along with *sexual orientation* is of note as it serves to strengthen responses to all forms of gendered harassment which are not exclusively homophobic or sexual in nature. In addition to this clear language, the policy includes implementation features that demonstrate institutional support for its effective implementation through all aspects of the school communities. Some of these associated strategies include: educating school counselors on LGBTTQ issues, appointing a staff person in each school to be a "safe contact" for students, including curricular resources that positively reflect LGBTTQ individuals in the curriculum, offering ongoing staff development in anti-homophobia education, creating partnerships with inclusive organizations and LGBTTQ communities, having parent advisory councils that reflect the diversity of the district, and translating information for students and parents into the languages spoken in the home (VSB, 2004). In order for a new policy to be successful,

such clear steps must be enumerated and supported by all levels of the school board. It is too early to determine the success of this policy, but the intent and goals listed above give good reason to remain optimistic that it will help improve the experience of queer students and staff in that school board.

In contrast to these two school boards, many other Canadian school policies affirm their support of the Canadian charter, but do not specifically mention or name groups to be protected from discriminatory acts. The importance of including sexual orientation and gender expression as protected classes in school policies cannot be overemphasized. In the absence of this clear language, education professionals tend to err on the side of conservatism and do not effectively intervene in incidents of homophobic harassment. Ian MacGillivray (2003) speaks of the importance of this in his book, *Sexual Orientation and School Policy: a Practical Guide for Teachers, Administrators, and Community Activists.* In an interview with an American civil rights attorney, he asks, "So do you think it's important to spell out those specific classes?" And the lawyer replies,

> I think it's unfortunate that we've had to go to that length. I don't think anyone thinks it's a great idea that you have to be so specific. But you don't get the government to enforce rights, … unless you're more specific. We had equal rights for a long time but I'm old enough to remember when I was a little kid traveling in the south and there were black and white drinking fountains. They had the same constitution we did. We needed a civil rights act to be passed that you need to extend those equal rights specifically to certain categories and we now know that you can't just say that and have gay, lesbian, and transgendered people be respected because it just hasn't worked. (158)

The strengths of the Vancouver and Toronto policies lie not only in the language, but also in the steps outlined to implement the intent of the policy. Unfortunately, many school boards fall short in offering such protections and proactive strategies for its students, staff and administrators. This is overwhelmingly the case in English school boards in Quebec as will be shown in the analysis of five English school board's policies that will be presented with the study's findings in Chapter 6.

Implications for practitioners

From the standpoint of Federal and Provincial protections it would appear that students in Canadian schools are attending institutions that will protect them from

harassment based on sexual orientation (but not gender identity). As this paper reveals on closer examination, these protections are tenuous despite the fact that they are explicitly included in many school policies in Quebec and across Canada. Research indicates that homophobic name-calling and other related forms of harassment are prevalent in Canadian schools (Canadian Public Health Association, 2003; Smith & Smith, 1998). In an article by Michel Dorais (1999), *"Chasse ouverte aux garçons féminins et aux filles masculines"* (*Open season on feminine boys and masculine girls*, translation my own), he affirms that the situation for youth in Quebec who are perceived to be gay or lesbian as a result of their gender non-conformity is as dire as the statistics reported in the U.S. In his later work, *Dead Boys Can't Dance* (2004) he elucidates many of the troubles that gay youth face in Quebec schools which indicates that the existing legal and policy protections are not reaching their intended goals. There have been several studies in the U.S. detailing the hostile climate in schools for sexual minority youth (Bochenek & Brown, 2001; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Harris Interactive, 2001; Kosciw & Diaz, 2006; Reis, 1999), but very little research of this type has been conducted in Canadian schools. Preliminary investigation with educators and community activists indicate that the situation in many Canadian schools is no better than in the U.S. in spite of these protections, but further study is necessary.

We have reason to be optimistic that the social reforms that have secured greater equality for queer people in Canada will slowly trickle down into practice at the classroom level. Unfortunately, at this time it is only happening in isolated pockets in certain schools and classrooms. Urban areas generally demonstrate increased tolerance and support of sexual diversity and the Vancouver and Toronto School Districts have demonstrated leadership in this area. School districts across Canada should look to these districts in order to develop more inclusive policies and practices based on their models.

In studies on bullying and harassment in schools, it has been made clear that such behaviors can not be effectively stopped unless there is a commitment to a cultural change as well as a community-wide effort to write, adopt, and implement a policy and plan of action. In, *Towards Bully-free schools: Interventions in action*, the authors found that persuading teachers and administrators of the need for a cultural shift was crucial to the success of anti-bullying policies in the schools (Glover, Cartwright, & Gleeson, 1998).

They go on to emphasize that, "Where there is not a sense of whole-school ownership of anti-bullying policies, there appears to be less evidence of shared positive values" (58). This sentiment is even more important when addressing such a controversial and challenging issue as homophobia. Many teachers and administrators feel unprepared to address issues of sexual orientation and gender expression and as a result are often resistant to such major cultural shifts. In order to truly support equality for all youth in schools; school boards, superintendents, Principals, teachers, support staff, parents, and students all need to be included in a coordinated community effort to eradicate this form of discrimination. MacGillivray (2004) noted some of the obstacles one school board in the U.S. faced in effectively implementing such a policy. Some of these barriers include: lack of support from top officials, lack of enforcement and effective discipline from Principals, lack of knowledge by teachers and support staff of the non-discrimination policy, lack of time and money for publications and training, fear of being targeted for supporting the policy (70-73) These are all concerns that emerged as common themes in this study, and ones that schools must address when working towards successful integration of sexual orientation in their existing safe schools or non-discrimination policies.

Another lesson that can be taken from the United States is from the success stories in the state of Massachusetts. Some of the strategies for success that have been observed in the first state-funded safe schools program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth are shared in the book, *When the Drama Club is Not Enough: Lessons from the Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students*. Perrotti and Westheimer (2001) emphasize the following strategies when working to create safe and inclusive schools for gay, lesbian, and bisexual students: recognize the central role of students, collect and use data effectively, build on the core values of the schools, know the laws and policies that support equity, develop a broad base of support, and create visibility. (20-21)

These successes have been documented in the US where federal protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation does not explicitly exist and only 14 states have such protections (Cahill & Cianciotto, 2004, p. 14). Often times such changes require a large investment of time and money. Although this can significantly help such efforts, it is important to acknowledge that when there is a commitment from the institution and a clear position statement from the power structures guiding schools, behaviors will begin to shift

to align with those stated ideals. This commitment costs nothing and the benefits are multiple: teachers will feel supported when they send a student to be disciplined for making an anti-gay remark, Principals will be role models in keeping the hallways safe from such harassment, bus drivers and cafeteria personnel will help enforce policies effectively when they are clearly informed of their responsibilities. Most educators would agree that it is a priority for their students to feel safe, valued, and supported in schools. To achieve this, the first step that schools must take is to provide a safe learning environment for all students, and that costs nothing.

Conclusion

The current political climate in Canada lends itself to creating a more inclusive environment for all students in schools. The Federal and Provincial laws exist to support the implementation of effective school policies that address forms of gendered harassment in schools. Even though legal and policy documents promise a safe and equitable learning environment for all Canadians, preliminary investigation indicates that the reality is different for many gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and gender non-conforming youth and professionals in schools. In spite of this, educators and youth advocates must remain optimistic. There are signs of positive change: grassroots advocacy and public awareness around these concerns is growing. It is my hope that the findings presented in this study can contribute to this movement.

CHAPTER 4: BULLYING, HARASSMENT & HOMOPHOBIA: GAPS, OVERLAPS,
AND IMPLICATIONS FROM A DECADE OF RESEARCH

Scholarship investigating aggression between peers in school has been growing steadily since Dan Olweus published his seminal work on bullying, *Aggression in the schools: Bullies and whipping boys*, in 1978. Several studies emerged in the 80's and early 90's that replicated Olweus' work and established his terminology and methodology as the most influential in this field. The result of this dominant influence has been to establish a central body of research that is highly valid and reliable in certain areas, but one that perpetuates important omissions and silences in others. This literature review seeks to explore the knowledges presented in bullying and harassment studies conducted in the past decade (since 1995) through a critical lens in order to identify the gaps in existing research. This review and critique will explore how existing hierarchies in schools and related aspects of social power have been examined and note those that have not been addressed in peer aggression studies with the goal of identifying key areas for further study.

In order to situate this critical analysis of peer aggression studies in the context of existing knowledges, it is important to investigate three related but distinct areas of educational research: bullying, harassment, and homophobia in schools and to connect them to the concept of gendered harassment. These three fields have been selected due to their strong theoretical ties to the areas of peer aggression and bullying in schools. Questions relating to gender and sexual orientation will be central to this critique because this research is interested in exploring the relationships between gender, sexual orientation, and harassment in schools. As this review will demonstrate, there is a dearth of academic research connecting these areas. Although the issue of homophobia may appear to be linked solely to issues of sexual orientation, this article will argue that homophobic behaviors are often closely tied to the reinforcement of appropriate gender role performances (as constructed within a heterosexual matrix) in school. This is an important area of inquiry when studying bullying and harassment in the school environment.

Of these areas, bullying, harassment, and homophobia in secondary schools, the field of bullying research has the longest tradition and farthest reaching influences on investigations and interventions addressing aggression and the related physical and

psychological harms in schools. Bullying has been recognized as a problem in schools worldwide and, as noted earlier, has been strongly influenced by Dan Olweus' work in Norway. This research has had a strong impact on school practice as evidenced by the proliferation of anti-bullying policies and programs in schools today.

The second field of inquiry, harassment, is a more recently defined phenomenon and almost all studies have been conducted in secondary schools. The most prevalent theme of these studies is, with few exceptions, that of (hetero)sexual harassment towards women. The harassment studies that did not center on sexual harassment also offer useful methodological insights that are relevant to this investigation and therefore have been included for analysis and discussion. The third and final research area of homophobia in schools is central to this review of research. Homophobia and related forms of gendered harassment are clearly related to the fields of bullying and harassment but have been largely ignored in these bodies of research. The impact of this omission in the academic research will be discussed as well as suggestions on how to adapt further research to be more inclusive of the gendered dynamics of peer aggression.

This literature review will present information from 71 peer-reviewed journal articles and published reports to demonstrate how the current research in the field of student aggression has largely ignored important influences of social power such as race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation that are important to understand in order to reduce bullying and harassment in schools. This review will start by presenting the methodology of article selection and analysis and is followed by an examination of the past decade of bullying research. This body of research will be analyzed particularly in regards to how it relates to understanding the problem of intervening in issues of gendered harassment in schools. The third section will focus on harassment studies and how they will inform and influence studies of gendered harassment. The fourth section will present relevant reports and studies related to the question of homophobia in schools.   The final section presents summary conclusions and suggestions for future research.

Methods

An initial search was conducted in February 2005 of three different databases: PsycInfo, ERIC, and Wilson Social Sciences for articles from 1985 – present. The

following search terms and the number of articles found are demonstrated in the table below.

Search words:	items found	# included
homosexual$ and school? (data or case stud$) + youth	23	6
homophobi$ and school? + (data or case stud$)	49	5
harassment and secondary school	62	13
bullying and secondary school	100	32
Harassment and Canada and school	34	7
TOTALS	**303**	**68**
Non-academic reports		**13**

Figure 3.1 Literature search
there were some overlapping articles in categories which is why the total is greater than the actual number of articles included here

Of the 303 articles found, a preliminary round of content analysis was completed based on their abstracts in order to exclude articles that did not fit the scope of this review. The scope of this literature review is limited to articles in refereed academic journals that address issues related to bullying, harassment, and homophobia in Anglophone secondary schools. Although the search included sources from 1985 – present, only work from the past decade (1995-present) was included in order to do a more rigorous analysis of the current issues in the field. The main reasons for exclusion were that studies were not situated in the secondary school setting, or were not conducted in an Anglophone school.

Questions guiding the analysis of selected articles:

A thorough content analysis of each article was conducted using central guiding questions. These questions focused on the following ideas: What are the common elements in existing research on bullying, sexual harassment, and homophobic harassment in secondary schools? How can existing knowledge be used to inform future research? What socio-cultural dynamics are missing from this study? Whose perspectives are central and whose are not included? A complete codebook was constructed and each article was examined using the questions listed below.

Codebook
1.   Authors' names & institutional affiliation/location
2.   What type of article is this? (empirical study, theoretical paper, literature review, position paper, legal/policy analysis)
3.   How is bullying/harassment defined? Use the author's words to define
4.   What theorists/researchers are cited in reference to bullying/harassment?
5.   What theoretical frameworks do the researchers use in the paper? (list & cite)
6.   Who are the research population/participants?
7.   What is the ethnicity of participants?
8.   What is the grade level of the participants?
9.   What is the geographic location of the study?
10.   What is the context of the study? (community agency, media, school)
11.   What is the research question?
12.   How is the data analyzed? (statistical, qualitative, etc.)
13.   What data sources are used? (surveys, observations, interviews, field notes, case study, etc.)
14.   What is the role of the researcher? (analysis only, participant observer, etc.)
15.   What are the noted limitations ? (author's own words)
16.   What are the critiques of the work?
17.   How does this relate to other articles?

Once the coding was completed, excel spreadsheets of each category of article (bullying, harassment, homophobia) were printed out and color coded to identify theoretical, methodological, and geographical trends, as well as overlaps and gaps in the findings of these studies.

Bullying

Dan Olweus published his first study on the problem of bullying in Norway in 1978 and has consistently set the agenda for research in this field from defining *bullying*, to structuring how researchers study the problem, and creating interventions and evaluations of programs to reduce bullying in schools. The impact that his work has had influencing the direction of this field of study is evidenced in how regularly his studies are cited in other research. In an analysis of 32 bullying articles published since 1995, his work was cited in 24 of them. The eight articles that did not refer to his work approached various aspects of the bullying question but from new positions including issues related to truancy, victimization, sexuality, law, social work, and peer counseling frameworks. The perspectives offered in the articles that do not cite Olweus are important to consider, as

they offer an alternative point of view to understanding nuances of bullying in schools that have not been structured by Olweus' specific constructions and definitions of bullying and how to investigate it. This section will start with an examination of the studies that cite Olweus and will conclude with a discussion of the nine other articles and how they can help reframe research on bullying in schools.

The 24 studies that cite Olweus' work embrace his definition of bullying and apply his approach to quantifying the problem in specific contexts to varying degrees. In 19 of these studies, the approach was a survey instrument completed by students in their specific school communities: two in New Zealand (Adair, Dixon, Moore, & Sutherland, 2000; Coggan, Bennett, Hooper, & Dickinson, 2003), five in Australia (Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin, & Patton, 2001; Rigby & Cox, 1996; Rigby, Cox, & Black, 1997; Rigby & Slee, 1999; Slee, 1995), one in Malta (Borg, 1999), seven in the UK (Boulton, Bucci, & Hawker, 1999; Boulton, Trueman, & Flemington, 2002; Mynard & Stephen, 2000; Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Naylor, Cowie, & del Rey, 2001; Schafer et al., 2004; Sharp, 1995), two in the U.S. (Land, 2003; Pelligrini & Long, 2002) and one in Norway (Olweus, 1996). Two studies were aimed at understanding bullying in schools from the teachers' perspective: one with teachers in Malta (Borg, 1998), another with teachers in the UK (Boulton, 1997). The sample of articles was limited to English speaking countries with the exception of a study authored by Olweus in Norway due to his significant impact in influencing this field of study. Of the other four studies that cited Olweus, three were evaluating intervention programs (Boulton & Flemington, 1996; Cartwright, 1995; Cowie, 1998) and only one (Hepburn, 2000) used a qualitative form of inquiry to access deeper levels of understanding how bullying and power dynamics play out in the school. Hepburn's article offers some important insights and will be discussed in-depth later in this section.

These quantitative studies consistently rely on the following definition of bullying created by Olweus,

> A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students...it is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempting to inflict, injury or discomfort on another...Negative actions can be carried out by words (verbally), for instance, by threatening, taunting, teasing, and calling names. It is a negative action when somebody hits, pushes, kicks, pinches or restrains another -- by physical contact. It is also

possible to carry out negative actions without the use of words or physical contact, such as by making faces or dirty gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group, or refusing to comply with another person's wishes (1993, p. 9).

The one significant variation on this definition was offered in an Australian study by Phillip Slee: "Bullying behavior may be considered to represent the oppression of one individual by another individual or group of persons, where the behavior (psychological or physical) is typically repetitive and deliberate"(1995, p. 216). His use of the word *oppression* is unique as it implies that there are broader social forces at work that are reinforcing the power imbalance between bully and victim. Although the ramifications of using this word are not fully explored in his study, he does acknowledge how external influences of Australian macho values might impact addressing bullying in schools, "in the Australian context it is possible that the emphasis on male stereotypic values of 'toughing it out' and not 'dobbing' on your 'mates' accounts for educators [sic] reluctance to address the issue" (223). It is the sole example in all of the quantitative studies that offers any broader understanding of social contexts, identities, and gender and how they shape and reinforce certain power dynamics within schools.

The other quantitative study that is of particular interest to this research project is the Maltese research conducted by Mark Borg (1998). This study titled, "Secondary school teachers' perception of pupils' undesirable behaviors" is the only one that attempts to develop any understanding of the bully-victim problem from the teachers' point of view. A survey was completed by 605 teachers in secondary schools in Malta which asked them to rank in severity a range of 'problem' behaviors by students. Cruelty/bullying were ranked as the second most serious behaviors behind drug abuse. One interesting conclusion in this study that related to gender and aggression was that sex stereotypes had a strong influence in what behaviors teachers deemed as inappropriate. Female teachers were more concerned with "moral forms of behaviors" (such as masturbation, cruelty/bullying, obscene notes, and lying) whereas male teachers were more focused on "disruptive forms of behaviors (such as disorderliness, defiance/challenge, interrupting, restlessness)" (76). The gendered perceptions of behaviors and the policing of "appropriate behavior" by teachers has the potential to have a significant impact on students' experiences in schools – particularly

those students whose gender performance is not consistent with traditional notions of heterosexual masculinity and femininity, and is worth further investigation.

The main weakness in the current trend of bullying studies is that they fail to explore and acknowledge the influences of larger social forces such as racism, ableism, sexism, and homophobia in understanding relationships of power and dominance in peer groups. They recognize various forms of verbal aggression, but with few exceptions never explore the relationship they have with social biases and cultural norms. They address the issue of "name calling" but never explore what names are being used to hurt and insult students. As the harassment studies will show, many of the insults used by bullies reinforce dominant notions of white, masculine, heterosexual, able-bodied superiority. In the above articles, a few made mention of gender and how aspects of masculinity and femininity might alter how bullying is performed and experienced by each gender (Cowie, 1998; Naylor, Cowie, & del Rey, 2001; Pelligrini & Long, 2002; Slee, 1995) but only one by Deborah Land (2003) specifically looked at issues of sexual harassment and how it related to bullying.

In her US based study, "Teasing Apart Secondary Students' Conceptualizations of Peer Teasing, Bullying and Sexual Harassment," Land highlights the absence of the connections between gender and harassment in most bullying research. Her findings are interesting in that they indicate that students consider teasing mainly as nonphysical and that, "most students included physical behaviors in their descriptions of sexual harassment, suggesting that verbal sexual behaviors, though prevalent, may not sufficiently meet their definitions" (158). These are important findings to consider as the students play a central role in defining what behaviors are tolerated and acceptable within a school culture. If their experiences lead them to believe that verbal sexual behaviors should be tolerated then they will silently endure and fail to report incidents of verbal harassment. Sometimes they will even begin to engage in this behavior since it is viewed as acceptable in that school. This silencing and ignoring of verbal harassment perpetuates the invisibility of this behavior and the negative impacts it has on students. This theme of silencing and ignoring certain types of aggression in schools reemerges in harassment and homophobia research.

Finally, the one qualitative study that cited Olweus conducted by Alexa Hepburn (2000) in the United Kingdom. is important for several reasons. First, it is the only study

that acknowledges the importance of Olweus' work in influencing this area of research as well as introduces a new way of conceptualizing and approaching this problem. This is not said to diminish the importance of the earlier quantitative studies. These early works were important in that they gave legitimacy to investigating bullying as a significant problem worth studying in schools. Each of these studies were able to replicate central aspects of Olweus' work in Norway to indicate that bullying was also a problem in their countries and in their schools. But Hepburn takes the issue of bullying and moves beyond numbers, definitions, and evaluating isolated interventions. Her article, "Power lines: Derrida, discursive psychology and the management of accusations of teacher bullying" uses discourse analysis to understand how teachers construct their understandings of bullying in teacher-student relationships. This article is exciting as it offers an in-depth analysis of language and power and how it is used to understand facets of bullying in schools. Although it investigates the teacher in the role of the bully, and does not explicitly use gender as a tool of analysis, it presents a rich and detailed perspective on how to understand the use of language in exercising power within the normalizing discourses of the school.

Of the eight bullying studies that did not cite Olweus' work, two are of interest here as they focused specifically on issues relating to gender and sexuality. The first is a study by Vivian Ray and Robin Gregory (2001)on the experiences of children of gay and lesbian parents in Australia, and the second was one by Neil Duncan (2004) on popularity and sexual competition among girls in secondary schools in the UK. The other six studies included an examination of truancy (Irving & Parker-Jenkins, 1995), a legal analysis of administrator liability in addressing bullying (McGrath, 2003), two bullying prevention program evaluations (Bagley & Pritchard, 1998; Price & Jones, 2001), a survey of student victimization in U.S. public schools (Nolin, Davies, & Chandler, 1996) and the experiences of Chinese students in schools in the UK(Chan, 1997). Only one of these eight included any discussion or analysis of behaviors relating to race or ethnicity (Chan, 1997), and none addressed gender, disability, or sexual orientation . The two studies that did incorporate some of this analysis are discussed below.

Ray & Gregory (2001) examined important aspects of homophobia in the school culture and how it impacted the lives of students who had gay or lesbian parents. The three main questions in their study were: "to investigate: (a) whether children in primary and

secondary schools felt discriminated against because of their parents' sexuality; (b) incidents experienced by the children of lesbian and gay parents; (c) strategies used by the children, their parents and the school to deal with incidents that had arisen" (29). Their findings indicated that almost half of the children in their study were targeted as a result their parents' sexual orientation (45 %). The abuse included verbal teasing and joking as well as physical and sexual violence. It was also clear that schools often had inadequate responses to homophobic language or bullying and in some cases, teachers joined in with homophobic remarks along with their students. Many of these students reported feeling unsafe at school and that they did not feel confident in teachers' abilities to deal with the issues (34). This study shows how prevalent homophobia is in schools and that the mere association with a gay or lesbian family member is enough to expose students to schoolyard bullying from peers and teachers.

Duncan (2004) explored an important dimension of bullying specifically among girls in his article, "It's important to be nice, but it's nicer to be important: Girls, popularity and sexual competition." This project investigated the sexualized element of much of the bullying that goes on between girls in secondary schools, including accusations of being a lesbian or heterosexual promiscuity. The related power dynamic to this is that in every case, the harassers were described as 'popular girls' (137). What is most interesting about Duncan's use of the term 'popular' was that it is defined by his participants in a q-sort activity and the items that were most strongly associated with 'popular' were; 'is very loud', 'is very popular with boys', and 'is very fashionable'. These were all associated with high social status in the school and heterosexual attractiveness. He describes the girls' definition of popularity as "an ability to gather other girls around them and to manipulate and coerce social relations in their favour" (144). It was also identified that the factor, 'is a lesbian' as the one "least likely to be associated with being a popular girl" (146). This exploration of power and popularity among girls in secondary schools reinforces the notion of the centrality of macho heterosexuality in determining social hierarchies in school. The girls' internal hierarchies were being built upon 'boy centred' ideals and they never questioned or challenged the dominance of these patriarchal, heterosexist values in their social groups. Duncan articulates this in his conclusion: "the implication of competitive heteronormative school cultures is a continuation and consolidation of intolerance of

diversity, leading to bullying and oppression of minorities …the links between heteronormativity and social oppression will continue its manifestation in sexual bullying" (150).

As the analysis of the above studies has shown, bullying research has failed to adequately address issues related to gender, sexual orientation, and other related social oppressions. Although these studies provide a thorough picture of the problem of bullying in Anglophone secondary schools, none of these studies were conducted in Canada. In order to incorporate the findings of studies conducted in Canada, an additional search of the literature was necessary.

Bullying and Canada

The second search using the terms "Bullying and Canada" in the same three databases produced 22 matches. Of these 22 articles, I included the nine articles that had been published in peer reviewed academic journals. Every one of these articles cited Olweus' work and was based in elementary schools (Bentley & Li, 1995; Beran & Violata, 2004; Charach, 1995; Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000; Ma, 2001; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999; Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, & Charach, 1994; Rahey & Craig, 2002) with one exception which surveyed prospective teachers' attitudes to bullying (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000). The methodology of choice in Canadian studies was a survey-type questionnaire that was analyzed using quantitative statistics. Only two studies did not use this format and these are interesting in that they used video analysis of schoolyard incidents to explore peer processes in bullying episodes (Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). These projects fell into the same pattern as the other Olweus-inspired studies above: there was no exploration of larger socio-cultural issues and their impacts on the bully-victim dynamic with the exception of one article by Debra Pepler, Wendy Craig, Suzanne Ziegler, and Alice Charach (1994). This was an evaluation of an anti-bullying intervention in Toronto elementary schools where there was some mention of racially-motivated bullying as well as sexism in the context of this program. This was most evident in the list of the multiple approaches to this program implementation and evaluation. Two of the fifteen suggested interventions were: "13. Discussions about racism and how to avoid and/or combat it and 14. Discussions about sexism and how to avoid and/or combat it"

(101). There was no mention of homophobia or sexual orientation nor was there mention of how to educate around it. This was the only bullying study in Canada that specifically addressed underlying issues of bias, and the omission of homophobia could be explained by the fact that the study was conducted over a decade ago when there was very little discussion or awareness around addressing such issues in schools – particularly in the elementary context. Canadian researcher Gerald Walton has recently written about this omission and succinctly summarizes his position as follows,

> conceptualizations of bullying that are rooted in empirical approaches do not consider political, historical, cultural, discursive, and ideological threads that, woven together, make up the construct that is now widely know as bullying. Furthermore, analyses of bullying tend not to emphasize the ways in which markers of social difference – such as sexism, racism, homophobia, and class-based oppression, among others-inform the natures and reflect the characteristics of bullying among children (2005, p. 112).

In order to move beyond the basic understanding bullying studies have offered about violence and aggression in schools, it is important to explore related research that has been designed to explore issues of harassment in school. By definition, harassment studies have a different construction of aggression and social dynamics in schools that addresses bias-related issues that will contribute to a better understanding of gender and harassment in schools.

Harassment studies

     As this review seeks to explore the intersections of social power and bullying in secondary schools it is important to understand what work has previously been done in this area. Although I contend that bullying and harassment are intimately linked (as do other scholars such as Duncan, 2004; Renold, 2000; Stein, 1995) too few scholars, educators, and curriculum specialists decide to address these issues simultaneously. Only one harassment study overlapped with the articles found in the bullying search "The Effectiveness of Peer Support Systems in Challenging School Bullying: The Perspectives and Experiences of Teachers and Pupils" (Naylor & Cowie, 1999). By not integrating each others' work, they artificially create a barrier between these fields of inquiry that effectively limits the resources and approaches available to educators attempting to transform student behaviors

in school. The search for articles on harassment and secondary school yielded 20 studies in peer reviewed journals that addressed these issues.

Current harassment studies have primarily focused on the narrowly defined issue of (hetero)sexual harassment of females by males. Seven of these articles were presented from a legal perspective – mostly establishing the duty of school administrators and teachers to defend and protect students from harassment (McFarland, 2001; Roth, 1994; Sorenson, 1994; Wolohan, 1995). Other legal or policy analyses discussed issues related to school board liability (Howard, 2001), limitations of harassment policies (Reed, 1996) and human rights issues (Mock, 1996). The other 13 were empirical studies. Of these, eight focused on various forms of (hetero)sexual harassment in schools (Bagley, Bolitho, & Bertrand, 1997; Corbett, Gentry, & Pearson, 1993; Larkin, 1994; Lee, Croninger, Linn, & Chen, 1996; Miller, 1997; Roscoe, 1994; Timmerman, 2003; Whitelaw, Hills, & De Rosa, 1999). These focused on multiple gender and power dynamics in schools including teacher-student (2) (Corbett, Gentry, & Pearson, 1993; Timmerman, 2003), student-teacher (2) (Ferfolja, 1998; Miller, 1997), and student-student (6) (Lahelma, 2002; Larkin, 1994; Lee, Croninger, Linn, & Chen, 1996; Roscoe, 1994; Timmerman, 2003; Whitelaw, Hills, & De Rosa, 1999). Four articles addressed issues of race and racism (Lahelma, 2002; Lee, Croninger, Linn, & Chen, 1996; Phan, 2003; Ryan, 2003), and one article addressed the general concept of bullying. This was the one study that was found to bridge the two fields of bullying and harassment (Naylor & Cowie, 1999). Of these 13 empirical studies, only two (Ferfolja, 1998; Timmerman, 2003) linked the issues of sexual harassment and homophobia and will be discussed in more detail at the end of this section.

The first article that explored female students' experiences with sexual harassment was June Larkin's (1994) groundbreaking research titled, "Walking Through Walls: The Sexual Harassment of High School Girls". She worked collaboratively with her participants and collected data from a variety of sources including: participant journals, group discussions, and individual interviews. Her main goal was to understand young women's experiences of sexual harassment in schools and the way it interferes with their education. In addition to exploring verbal and physical harassment, she introduced the concept of "visual" harassment that included leering or "invasive watching" as well as sexual gesturing (273). These categories are important to add to investigations as they

expand how we construct our understanding of behaviors that create hostile environments for students in schools. This study also confirmed the pervasiveness of such behaviors and how it had been normalized in schools due to the frequency of incidents, responses by male peers, and the silence around it in schools (266). These are all relevant variables to consider when examining other normalized behaviors in school – particularly heterosexist ones in the cases of homophobic harassment.

In 1996, Lee, Croninger, Linn and Chen's study in the U.S. provided the first quantitative data presented in an educational journal on the frequency, severity and consequences of sexual harassment in American secondary schools. Lee and her team used survey data of a nationally representative sample of 1208 students in grades 8-11 collected by Harris Interactive for the American Association of University Women. Using a multivariate approach and causal modeling to analyze the statistics, they concluded that harassment was disruptive for all students but had more severe impacts on girls and Black students due to the context of the school. They also concluded that harassed students experience academic and psychological problems particularly those who are harassed most severely.

Bagley, Bolitho, and Bertrand's (1997) later study is also interesting as it explores the impacts of sexual harassment on female students in high schools in Alberta, Canada. This team employed a quantitative approach in its survey of 1,025 adolescent women in grades 7-12. They defined sexual assault as either: "indecent exposure; physical (unwanted sexual touching through to rape); and other (mostly verbal harassment)" (362). The researchers used a variety of mental health measures to conclude that girls who reported being assaulted "often" were more likely to report emotional disorder and were more than five times as likely to have exhibited suicidal behaviors than were students who were assaulted less frequently or not at all (363). They determined that males are also subjects of sexual harassment; but rates are "much lower and the connection with mental health problems is much weaker" (365). This study helps to establish links between some of the long-term harms caused to students when they experience harassment at school. Related to this deeply embedded sexism in schools is the issue of racism. Both issues are consistently silenced and ignored in spite of the documented negative impacts of them on students. The next two studies bring these effects to light.

In Tan Phan's (2003) study, "Life in School: Narratives of Resiliency Among Vietnamese-Canadian Youths", issues of race and racism were central in the experiences of his participants. He conducted a qualitative study of eleven academically successful youth who had been born in Vietnam and had later immigrated to Canada. All of his participants came from low-income neighborhoods in Vancouver. He employed a narrative form of analysis in order to help him sort and categorize while being "explicitly attentive to societal and cultural contexts in narrative data" (557). All of the students in this study perceived racism as a common problem in the classroom and had witnessed racist acts against their Vietnamese classmates. They had felt, "silenced, marginalized, or even criminalized, while others received privileged treatment" (560). Consistently, these resilient youths refused to be defeated by the racism and developed a "resistance stance" in order to succeed (565). Much of the racism they experienced came in the form of persistent stereotyping and negative assumptions on the part of their classmates and teachers. Many White Canadians would not recognize such acts as blatantly racist. This is a complicating problem that James Ryan investigated in his 2003 study of school administrators.

Ryan (2003) explains in his introduction that racism in education is often most evident at the school level. He clarifies by stating, "it is here that the various and complex forms of racism emerge in their obvious and not so obvious guises, in the name-calling, harassment and the interpersonal conflict, in the subtle stereotyping and taken-for granted understandings and practices, and in curricular and organizational patterns" (145). The purpose of his research was to, "explore the extent to which these administrators believe racism exists in their schools and the ways in which they understand it" (146). His research consisted of two phases. First, the team conducted open-ended interviews with 35 Principals from two large school districts: one urban, and one that had both urban and rural territory. With the exception of two, all were of Anglo or European heritage. In this first phase they identified common themes for the survey that was then distributed to 220 Principals across Canada of which 104 were returned. Results of this survey indicated that "many Principals were reluctant to acknowledge that racism occurred in their schools…and do not see racism as systemic" (149-150). They tended to minimize or justify students' uses of racist language by indicating that they didn't believe it was racially motivated. He also contends that, "most administrators are conservative in their practice. They tend to

orient their actions toward supporting and conserving the system in which they work and have difficulty when it comes to challenging or changing integral parts of it" (159). These findings are important as they relate directly to how many administrators respond to incidences of gendered harassment. Just as Ryan believes that Principals can have an impact on racist and anti-racist practices in their schools, they can have similar impacts on how sexist, heterosexist, and homophobic practices are challenged and transformed.

Of these 20 articles on harassment in secondary schools, only two made any specific mention of the potential links and impacts of homophobia and sexual harassment (Ferfolja, 1998; Timmerman, 2003). Most of the articles offered a feminist critique of power and gender roles in schools, but very few pushed this line of thinking to its logical next step of understanding heterosexism and how it connects sexual harassment and homophobic harassment. Timmerman's study in the Netherlands titled, "Sexual Harassment of Adolescents Perpetrated by Teachers and by Peers: An Exploration of the Dynamics of Power, Culture, and Gender in Secondary Schools" offered a unique theoretical framework for understanding this problem. She examined student-student harassment using a Culture Model that assumed that sexual harassment reflects the school culture due to the fact that it is a public phenomenon and occurs on a daily basis. She also investigated the related concerns of teacher-student harassment using a Power Model that argues that teacher-student harassment is restricted to isolated incidents and happens in secret, but is often more severe and has added negative consequences (233). Finally, she applied a third model, the Gender Model, to hypothesize that girls experience more incidents and more severe forms of sexual harassment than boys and that the great majority of perpetrators are male peers and male teachers. Her findings were startling because she found that the Culture Model was relevant in describing both student-student harassment as well as teacher-student harassment. This means that the culture of the school accepts the public and persistent sexual harassment of female students by teachers and peers. Male students and teachers comprised an overwhelming majority of the perpetrators. Although male and female students were both targeted, girls were the objects of more persistent and severe harassment. Timmerman did add that sexual harassment of boys, "tends to be more verbal and homophobic in nature" (242).

The last harassment study that I will discuss was conducted in Australia by Tanja Ferfolja (1998). Her study of six lesbian teachers in government high schools in Sydney includes clear examples of the negative impacts of the heterosexist structures of the school and the role hegemonic masculinity plays in teaching male students to disrespect women and gays and lesbians. She explains, "harassment is based on the need to maintain power through the maintenance of socially constructed gender roles…anti-lesbian harassment encompasses both [misogyny and homophobia], doubly oppressing women through its maintenance of heterosexist discourses and simultaneously assuring male power" (403). The teachers talked about their challenges facing "underhand harassment" which Ferfolja explains includes whispers, jokes, or comments about lesbianism in the teacher's presence without directing it at the teacher. Even when students were disciplined for their behavior, in none of the cases was it defined as homophobic harassment. The teachers spoke of taking stress leave, feeling sick and depressed, and "under siege" as a result of their students' behaviors. This harassment had negative long-term effects on their teaching styles and attitude to teaching. This research shows how teachers as well as students are harmed when a school allows such harassment to continue. The fourth section of this literature review includes articles on studies that explicitly explored the prevalence and impacts of homophobia in schools.

Homophobia

   Peer reviewed articles

As the methods table indicates, there were very few articles in peer-reviewed journals that met the inclusion criteria for this literature review. The articles presented here are empirical studies that explicitly addressed the issue of homophobia in schools. Due to the limited number of sources found using academic search engines, the search was broadened to include empirical studies conducted in K-12 schools that included reports by advocacy groups such as the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, the American Association of University Women, and the Human Rights Watch. These studies were located using referrals from other scholars in the field, and internet searches.   This search yielded twelve additional empirical studies that provide useful information in understanding forms of bullying and harassment in schools.

The seven articles published in peer-reviewed journals were primarily qualitative studies aimed at describing the problem of homophobic harassment in schools and the impacts on targeted students. Of these articles, one study was conducted in the U.S. (Sears, 1991) three in the U.K. (Phoenix, Frosh, & Pattman, 2003; Renold, 2000, 2002), and one in Canada (Smith & Smith, 1998). The remaining two articles addressed issues of policy in one U.S. school district (Faulkner & Lindsey, 2004) and youth violence in Europe (Junger-Tas, 1996). The common thread in these studies was the recognition that homophobia is prevalent in schools and that it has a variety of negative impacts on all students. I will now focus on the four studies that explore the multiple dimensions of gender and sexual orientation and how they influence students' experiences in school in greater detail (Phoenix, Frosh, & Pattman, 2003; Renold, 2000, 2002; Smith & Smith, 1998).

The first of these studies was George Smith's 1998 article, "The ideology of 'fag': The school experience of gay students." Using institutional ethnography, Smith explores how speech (graffiti, verbal abuse, antigay activities, etc.) informs the experience of gay teenagers in school. He concludes that, "the social relations of heterosexuality and patriarchy dominate public space. Being gay is never spoken of positively (in these informants' experiences)" (309). His use of discourse analysis and the way it influences how gay students construct their understandings of their school settings illustrates how language shapes our experiences. He describes how the institution of the school "often gives tacit approval" (321) for anti-gay activities as well as how gender relations are experienced within the heterosexist context of the school. He concludes his article with a harsh condemnation of North American schools: "the experiences of gay students as they have spoken them in the 'exhibits' recorded in this article show schools as complicit in the everyday cruelties of the ideology's enforcement of heterosexist hegemony. This is a school-created environment and an act of government" (332). This study offers a detailed description of how homophobia is used as a tool of aggression and how schools consistently ignore and allow the persistence of this form of bullying.

Emma Renold's ethnographies conducted in primary schools in the UK discuss similar concepts outlined by Smith. In her two articles, "'Coming Out': Gender, (Hetero)sexuality and the Primary School" (2000) and "Presumed Innocence: (Hetero)sexual, heterosexist and homophobic harassment among primary school girls and

boys" (2002), she explores similar practices and their impacts on all students in the final year of primary school. Her studies are the first to explicitly link homophobia and (hetero)sexual harassment in primary schools and explore how they influence young students' construction of their gender and sexual identities. She writes that her participants revealed, "how homophobic performances are more about gender than sexual practices and are a means of regulating and policing the boundaries of hegemonic heterosexual masculinities" (2000, p. 322). In her later article she explains that these practices, "provide ways of resecuring gender dichotomies, creating and maintaining dominant masculinities and passive subordinate femininities, and policing heterosexual hierarchies" (2002, p. 429). She also discovered variations in how this policing differed for boys and girls. "Girls who transgressed dominant femininities were not homosexualized. Derogatory terms such as 'dyke' and 'lesbo' had not entered the verbal repertoires of pupils from the two research schools. They were, however, masculinized and called 'boys' and were routinely labeled 'weird'" (2004, p. 431).

The fourth and final study to examine the intersections of homophobia and gender issues was Phoenix, Frosh & Pattman's (2003) "Producing Contradictory Masculine Subject Positions: Narratives of Threat, Homophobia and Bullying in 11-14 Year Old Boys". This study, conducted in the UK, was aimed at understanding masculinity and how it related to bullying and homophobia through group discussions and individual interviews. This approach helped them to understand "the ways in which the participants experienced themselves and constructed their identities as young men in talk" (181). They concluded that their participants constructed masculinity as, "synonymous with 'toughness,' physical aggression and homophobia and antithetical to femininity and compliance with teachers" (184-185). They also found that their participants constructed different versions of themselves in the group interviews than in the individual ones – they tended to be more "stereotypically boyish" when surrounded by their peers (187). Phoenix, Frosh & Pattman also point at the connections between homophobia and misogyny. This link is important to understand as it lies at the heart of the concept of gendered harassment, or any behavior that acts to police traditional gender norms. They explain that, "boys labeled as gay were seen as possessing the same characteristics that were denigrated in girls. Hence, homophobia was intertwined with misogyny" (188).

This study was also interesting because it explicitly examined the links between racialized identities and gender and sexuality. Asian boys who were constructed as "not powerful or sexually attractive" or Turkish boys who "work hard and spend all their time together" were targets for homophobic name-calling. In contrast, black boys were less likely to be called "gay" and were seen as "strongly heterosexual" and "super masculine" (190, 191). Finally, the conclusion of this article offers an insight that can inform future examinations of bullying and harassment in schools. The authors write that, "Boys in this study reported that teachers in the schools in which we worked did not define homophobic name calling as bullying and so did not impose sanctions on those who engaged in it" (193). This analysis of how boys position themselves and experience their identities in schools provides useful insight to this research on how educators see and respond to gendered harassment in schools. Now the discussion will move to thirteen non peer-reviewed empirical studies and explore how their findings are important to consider in constructing this study on gendered harassment.

Reports

The earliest published report that began documenting incidents of homophobic harassment in schools and its impacts on the targeted students was the groundbreaking study, "Hostile Hallways" conducted by Harris and Associates for the American Association of University Women(1993). This was a study aimed at understanding the prevalence of sexual harassment in schools. It included a question that asked if participants had ever been called gay or lesbian in school. This was the first quantitative data available on the prevalence of this problem. What is interesting about this study is that is was followed up eight years later (Harris Interactive, 2001) and they found that the one form of harassment that had increased since the previous study was calling another student gay or lesbian. Boys reported this occurred twice as often, and girls three times as often as they had a decade earlier, whereas most other forms of harassment had remained constant or decreased (21). This study also showed that harassment was occurring in public, in the presence of adults. The three most common sites where harassment was reported were: hallway (64%), classroom (56%), and gym or playing field or pool area (43%). This contradicts many bullying studies that indicate bullying happens where there is minimal

adult supervision and shows that forms of sexual harassment may be more public and widely accepted in schools.

In 1995, the first study that made central the issue of homophobia in schools was published by the Safe Schools Coalition of Washington, U.S.A. (Reis, 1995). This was important work as it broke the silence around this problem and provided data for advocates who were working to improve the learning environment for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth. They documented 50 different incidences of anti-gay harassment ranging from name-calling to beatings and rape (15). This study also confirmed several of the findings from the AAUW study including: harassment is usually a public event, most harassers are fellow students, most harassers are male, and in most cases adults do not take appropriate actions against the offender(s) (20). Adults responsible for ensuring a safe learning environment for students are consistently shown in these studies to fall far short of this duty and we need to better understand why this happens.

Following Reis' groundbreaking study, several similar reports were issued four years later in 1999: the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) first National School Climate Survey (GLSEN, 1999), as well as two more studies from the Safe Schools Coalition of Washington: a meta-analysis of eight population based studies representing the experiences of 83,000 youth (Reis & Saewyc, 1999), and a follow up study on incidents in Washington schools (Reis, 1999). These three studies added to the understanding of the negative impacts of homophobic harassment in schools. The meta-analysis highlighted the fact that gay, lesbian, and bisexual students were at higher risk for several dangerous behaviors as compared to their heterosexual peers. GLB youth were over four times more likely to have attempted suicide, were three times more likely to have been injured or threatened with a weapon at school, and were three times more likely to miss school because of feeling unsafe (Reis & Saewyc, 1999, p. 9). Reis' (1999) follow-up study provided greater detail by conducting in-depth interviews and having larger number of participants than the original study. This report explored how adults' inaction impacted targeted students. She explains:

> These cases of apparent neglect by adults were very troubling to
> respondents. They spoke about months of verbal violence and public
> humiliation by peers that preceded a young person's resorting to fists or
> dropping out of school, or, in one instance, committing suicide. In each

instance, adults had multiple opportunities to put a stop to the very public abuse of a child or teen and failed to do so (20).

GLSEN's first study also highlighted the problem of adults failing to intervene effectively. Every two years they have conducted follow up studies (GLSEN, 2001; Kosciw, 2004) and the most recent report shows that 64% of GLBT students report being verbally harassed at school. 83% also reported that faculty or staff rarely or never intervened when present and homophobic remarks were made (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006, p. 4). This lack of intervention by educators in incidents of verbal harassment is a recurring problem in studies on sexual and homophobic harassment. In order to reduce incidences of bullying and harassment in school, the problem of ignoring, and therefore accepting, certain forms of aggression needs to be addressed.

In 2001, Human Rights Watch published a study called, "Hatred in the Hallways: Violence and Discrimination Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students in U.S. Schools," that critiqued U.S. schools and the federal government for violating its obligations under international law to provide protection from discrimination. This national qualitative study exposed the prevalence of the problem in U.S. schools and is the first one to explicitly address the related issue of students targeted for gender non-conforming behaviors. The authors asserted that:

> It quickly became obvious from our research that the abuse of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth is predicated on the belief that girls and boys must strictly adhere to rigid rules of conduct, dress, and appearances based on their sex. For boys, that means they must be athletic, strong, sexist, and hide their emotions. For girls, that means they must be attentive to and flirtatious with boys and must accept a subordinate status to boys. Regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, youth who violate these rules are punished by their peers and too often by adults (Bochenek & Brown, p. 49).

This report also noted the repetitive "official inaction" by teachers and administrators (81). Participants repeatedly told stories of teachers and administrators ignoring their reports of harassment and being blamed for bringing it on themselves. Students also reported harassment and anti-gay jokes from these adults (83). Although this study offered several reasons why professional educators would act in such a way, teachers were not interviewed as part of this project.

Many of these early studies, with the exception of the AAUW studies (Harris Interactive, 2001; Louis Harris & Associates, 1993) and the Oregon Safe Schools Meta-Analysis of youth studies, (Reis & Saewyc 1999), focused primarily on youth who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender and therefore missed the experiences of students who did not identify as such; including youth who were "closeted", those currently questioning their sexual orientation, and heterosexual youth. In the past five years, more studies have emerged that have a more inclusive participant pool. In 2002, The National Mental Health Association conducted a phone survey with 760 randomly selected youth ages 12-17 to determine their experience with and opinions about anti-gay bullying in their schools. They found that if a student was identified as "gay" they were perceived to be twice as vulnerable to bullying as students who were "fat" or "dress differently" and were more than three times more likely to be targeted than students with disabilities, or for one's racial identity (2002, p. 2).

Another later study conducted by the California Safe Schools Coalition included a large population based sample for its data. This report had a large random sample of students (n=230,000) and its attention to issues of homophobia and gender non-conformity, as well as its exploration of how teacher responses affect students' experiences in school was innovative. This report supported the findings of earlier studies on the prevalence and negative impacts of sexual and homophobic harassment in schools and added to them by exploring the related pervasiveness and impacts of students who are targeted for being "not as masculine as other boys" or "not as feminine as other girls." In this respect, it is the first study to identify and include all aspects of gendered harassment: sexual, homophobic, and for gender non-conformity. In regards to teacher response, students reported that teachers or staff were "unlikely to intervene" to stop bias-motivated comments, particularly related to sexual orientation and gender presentation (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004, p. 14). The most encouraging finding from this study is the fact that where students see teachers stop negative comments and slurs based on sexual orientation, they report less name-calling and stronger feelings of school safety (19). These are important findings as they demonstrate the impact that effective intervention can have on the experiences of students in schools.

The last two articles are ones that evaluated school-based interventions that were developed specifically to reduce incidents of homophobia in schools. In 2003, Laura Szlacha published the first article that evaluated the effectiveness of the only statewide initiative in the U.S. (Massachusetts) to address homophobia in schools. This study identified key factors that improve the "sexual diversity climate" in schools for all students. The three major recommendations of this program were: a) having a clear school policy that included sexual orientation in its non-discrimination statement, b) staff training on issues related to homophobia and sexual orientation, and c) having a student Gay-Straight Alliance. This last recommendation, "is the aspect most strongly associated with positive sexual diversity climates"(p. 73). Unfortunately, the reported implementation levels of the Safe Schools Program were quite low. Although this program was initiated in 1993, by 1998 only 21% of the schools had implemented all three recommendations (64). This indicates that even when there is strong policy support and institutional resources allocated for anti-homophobia programs, there is much resistance on the part of the educators who are responsible for implementing it.

The last report for analysis was completed in 2005 by a research team headed by Tara Goldstein at the University of Toronto. Her team compiled a report for the Toronto District School Board called, "Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism in Elementary and High Schools: A Research Report to the Toronto District School Board." In this report, they investigated the process of developing an anti-homophobia equity policy at the TDSB as well as how several schools began to implement this policy. Important findings included in this report addressed the constraints and conflicts that professionals had working on anti-homophobia initiatives. Goldstein, Collins, and Halder identified the following obstacles to this type of equity work: time restrictions, limits on language peer educators could use, lack of ongoing institutional support and follow up to anti-homophobia education, fear of being reprimanded for conducting anti-homophobia education, fear of being harassed or threatened by parents, colleagues and school administration, fear of not being able to respond to student queries about homosexuality, conflicts between educators' commitment to equity and personal religious beliefs, and issues with students not being prepared for an anti-homophobia workshop so they entered hostile and unreceptive (p. 4). These factors are important to understand and explore at

greater depth in future research projects. This study provides a detailed analysis of one Canadian school board's policy and lessons that other school boards can take from the TDSB's initiatives.

One new area of investigation worth noting that emerged in the latest GLSEN National School Climate Survey was that of cyber-bullying. This was the only document in this entire literature review that included any mention of the use of new technologies to bully and harass classmates. In this report cyber-bullying was defined as "using an electronic medium, such as emails or text messages, to threaten or harm others" (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006, p. 27). According to their research, 41% of LGBT students had experienced this type of harassment in the past year. This is four times higher than the national average of 9% reported in a recent large scale study conducted at the University of New Hampshire (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006, p. 10). This area of bullying research is highly relevant to issues of gendered harassment as Shariff & Gouin (2006) argue that cyberspace is becoming an increasingly hostile environment particularly for young women who are targets for sexual harassment online. Further, they explain that schools are often "reluctant to carry out their responsibilities to protect and educate students in inclusive electronic discourse" (21). The emergence of new virtual spaces such as discussion groups, blogs, Instant Messaging programs and social websites such as Friendster, Facebook, and MySpace have created new arenas in which youth interact and inevitably harass (Jenkins & Boyd, 2006). This does not necessarily mean that this is outside the realm of educators' interventions. Danah Boyd, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California, Berkeley, argues that the visibility and public forum of internet interactions can actually "provide a window through which teen mentors can help combat [bullying, sexual teasing, and other peer-to-peer harassment]" (Jenkins & Boyd, 2006, p. 5). This related field of study is an important one for educators and researchers to consider as youth interactions spill out of the school yard and into cyberspace.

Conclusion

There has been a significant amount of research related to issue of bullying, but less so regarding gendered harassment in schools. The bulk of the bullying and harassment studies discussed here do not consider the work done by scholars in parallel fields which

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has resulted in studies that do not fully apply or build on the findings of earlier studies. The majority of bullying and harassment studies have focused on either quantifying or qualifying the problem from the students' perspective. This has been an important first step in order to bring attention this problem in schools. Bullying research has been conducted for over 20 years and has identified and quantified bullying, as well as evaluated education and intervention programs for effectiveness. These studies miss an important aspect of life in schools since they have not considered the impacts of race, disability, gender, sex, and sexual orientation on the power dynamics present in bully-victim relationships. Although a few of these studies explore how boys and girls bully differently, these studies overwhelmingly ignore the larger socio-cultural influences of sex, gender, and sexual orientation on students' lives and how students exercise power within their school communities and peer relationships.

On the other hand, many of the harassment studies are framed with a feminist lens and have a central focus on power dynamics organized along gender lines, but most frequently are constructed along the male-female heterosexual matrix. The inability of these studies to acknowledge or even mention acts of homophobic harassment or the racialized influences on these behaviors is disheartening and exemplifies the white heterosexual bias embedded in much research that uses feminist methodologies.

The most recent wave of research related to gendered hierarchies and harassment in schools, studies on homophobia, did not emerge in academic journals. The studies that clearly explore issues of gender, sexuality, and power in schools were conducted by independent advocacy groups such as: Human Rights Watch, the American Association of University Women, the California Safe Schools Coalition, and the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network who strive to make their findings widely accessible in a timely manner. This could be one of the main reasons why they do not seek to publish their research in academic journals. Readers of refereed academic journals comprise a very small audience in relation to the population of students, parents, community activists and educators who are involved in school communities. These reports are the ones that have documented the problem over time and have provided the foundation for this investigation of gendered harassment in schools. These studies have created a detailed picture of the obstacles faced by students who are targets for frequent harassment based on their

perceived or actual sexual orientation and gender expression. Since the majority of research conducted on homophobia and heterosexism has not been published in academic journals it is under utilized in University-based research projects. Conversely, the reports that focus on homophobic harassment tend not to refer to any existing studies on bullying and lose valuable insights as a result. It is my hope to better integrate these areas of study and make explicit the connections that a few other researchers such as Neil Duncan and Emma Renold have begun to explore. Future studies exploring how teachers see and respond to acts of homophobia, sexism, and heterosexism will build on the work of these earlier researchers with a view to challenging and contributing to the ongoing conversation on how to make schools safer and more equitable for all.

CHAPTER 5: METHODS OF FIELDWORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter will present the reader with a detailed explanation of the methods used in this study to collect and analyze the data.   I will start out by introducing the reader to the primary methodology guiding this study, phenomenology, and the central principles of this approach. The rest of this chapter will present how this methodology was applied in practice during each step of the research process. The methods that I will describe in this part of the chapter are: participant recruitment, participant selection (including the demographics of the participants in this study), interviews, research memos, data analysis, and document collection and analysis. Each section will provide an explanation of why these steps were conducted as they were and explanations for key decisions made during the research process.

Phenomenology

In this dissertation, I studied the phenomenon of gendered harassment and how teachers construct their understandings of and relationship to it. This question is suited for a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology views the world as interconnected and multidirectional and pays attention to the complex relationships between individuals and their reality (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Teachers work within school cultures that place specific expectations on them to enforce social codes that can vary between schools. In order to understand what factors impact how educators view and respond to various forms of bullying and harassment, it is important to contextualize their experiences and learn what personal and professional factors shape their perspectives, attitudes and consequently, their behaviors. The importance of exploring the interaction of external and internal experiences was addressed by Edmund Husserl in an early work on phenomenology when he stated: "what is experienced as external belongs not to the intentional 'internal,' though our experience of it belongs there as an experience of the external"([1929]1986, p. 659). The objectives in this study are grounded in the phenomenological task of examining experiences and identifying intentions which then

allows one to better understand the nature of the psychical, or internal, experiences of teachers.

In order to access the internal experiences of teachers, most of the primary data for this study was collected through a series of three in-depth interviews using Seidman's (1998) model of life-history interviewing. This approach enabled me to establish a rapport with the participants and to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence their responses and attitudes towards various forms of bullying and harassment. By placing participants' comments in context and building on information discussed in previous interviews, participants are able to understand and make meaning of their experiences. If their statements have deep emotional impacts as well as connections with the experiences of other participants, then validity, or trustworthiness, is achieved (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This structure works well in phenomenology as it places participants' comments in context and builds on information discussed in previous interviews. This allows participants to reflect on and better articulate how they make meaning out of their experiences with this phenomenon. More details about the interview process are provided later in this chapter.

This study has a strong emphasis on intersubjective understanding. An emergent design was used as new questions and directions evolved as data were collected and interpreted. In order for this study to effectively describe the experiences of the participants this flexible and open-ended approach was necessary. As of this writing, there have been no studies that have examined these three forms of harassment from a teacher's point of view, therefore this study is exploratory and seeks to uncover common themes between experiences that will help inform future studies and school interventions.

Through my attempts at intimately understanding the educators' views of the world, or the nature of the psychical, I hope to discover the central themes of this experience. By choosing this method, the assumption is that there is commonality in how all these members experience this phenomenon. According to Eichelberger, phenomenologists are careful in their analysis of the experience so that basic elements that are common to members of a specific group can be identified (cited in Patton, 2002, p. 106). By better understanding the concerns and issues that teachers face, we will be able to more effectively prepare them for the challenges they encounter in their schools.

Van Manen describes phenomenology as "the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience" (1997, p. 10). How teachers make meaning out of their experiences with gendered harassment will shape how they interpret and apply school policies and respond to incidences that they witness. The goal of this inquiry is to explore,

> how human beings make sense of experience and transform experiences into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning. This requires methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon – how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others (Patton, 2002, p. 104).

In this study, I asked participants to speak openly about their experiences with gendered harassment and how they make sense of this complex issue in schools. I approached this question with the intent of exploring the interactions of external and internal forces that act on how teachers construct their understanding of the phenomenon. In addition to phenomenology, I use additional qualitative research tools to triangulate and strengthen the findings. Document analysis, narrative analysis, and the use of found poetry provided additional ways of interpreting and representing participants' experiences. Kincheloe refers to this process as *bricolage*, "a multimethodological form of research that uses a variety of research methods and theoretical constructs to examine a phenomenon" (2005a, p. 8). By drawing on multiple tools of inquiry I aim to construct a rigorous and nuanced understanding of the problem of gendered harassment in schools. The following sections outline the steps I took to gain access to the participants in this study and draw conclusions from the data they helped provide.

Research project approvals

Before recruitment of participants began, I secured approval for this project from the Faculty of Education Ethics Review Committee. The committee met on March 14, 2004 for a full review of the research project and granted the "Certificate of Ethical Acceptability" on April 19, 2004. A complete copy of this application is available in the Appendix. Once this certificate was secured, I made arrangements to present my research to the Research Committee at the School Board. I met with the Research Committee on

September 2, 2004 and received confirmation by letter on October 7, 2004 that my research project had been approved. It is the policy of this school board to not allow any recruitment or initial contact with schools to take place until this approval has been secured.

Participant recruitment

Once permission was obtained from the school board's research committee, letters were sent to Principals informing them of the study's goals and asking for their assistance in distributing information to their staff. Letters were sent to all eleven Principals of mainstream secondary schools in the board. Eight Principals did not respond to this letter, or declined to distribute the information on this study. Principals in this school board have complete discretion to decide whether or not to participate in a study even if it has already obtained the approval of the school board.

Some of the reasons given by Principals for choosing not to assist in the recruitment for this study include: their school was already involved in other research projects; they felt that their staff was already overworked, and in one case there was turnover happening in the administration and the outgoing administrator did not want to commit to something when a new leader would be arriving in a few months. Three Principals agreed to distribute letters to their teachers and administrators and a packet of letters were sent to the school for distribution to all teaching and administrative staff to solicit volunteers to be interviewed. No participants responded to this form of outreach. After six months of follow-up emails and phone calls, I began using a snowball method of sampling starting with personal and professional contacts. This process was informed by maximum variation sampling to ensure a wide variety of perspectives and experiences from this small group of teachers. I recruited participants who offered the greatest possible diversity in age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and teaching experience. This diversity is essential since random sampling was not the goal, but rather selecting participants who represent the broadest possible range of experiences on the phenomenon being examined (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 57).

Self-selection influenced the pool of participants. This was important for this project because the people who chose to participate in this study had some awareness of

and experiences with incidents of bias, including bullying and harassment, in their schools. These teachers all spoke about their commitment to student safety and creating supportive learning environments, and spoke from experience about their various efforts to attain those goals. These perspectives contributed greatly to the objectives of this study. Originally, I had planned to interview both teachers and administrators for this research, and although I had initially located two Vice Principals who were interested in participating, they never replied to subsequent requests to schedule interviews. As a result, the findings in this study only present the phenomenon as experienced from a classroom teacher's perspective. Interviews were conducted between May – October of 2005.

Participant selection

Participants were chosen using a combination of maximum variation and snowball sampling. Snowball sampling was useful in this study as it helped address the problems of access to participants. It enabled me to locate participants who were able to speak in-depth about the issue of gendered harassment by getting referrals from colleagues and participants who were familiar with the research project. It also contributed to the trust-building process with participants. They appeared to be more trusting of me as a researcher as a result of the personal referral. The potential downside of snowballing is that it may provide a participant pool that shares similar views and experiences and may not locate teachers with vastly different views and experiences.

Once the initial participant was located through a professional contact, the snowball sampling could begin. After each interview, I would ask participants to consider referring one or two colleagues. I made specific efforts to request referrals to teachers of color, heterosexual teachers, and teachers with over ten years of experience in the classroom. The resulting group of participants represented a demographically diverse selection of secondary school teachers. In order to protect their identities, they will not be individually profiled with their complete demographic information. Instead, the numbers of teachers who self-identified with each given descriptive category are presented in the table below (Figure 4.1).

Gender	3 men	3 women
Sexual Orientation	3 heterosexual	3 gay or bisexual
Ethnicity	3 Euro-Canadian	1 Indian 1 French-Canadian/Métis 1 Arab
Religion	3 No affiliation	1 Christian 1 Muslim 1 Bahai
Languages	1st (Native) 4 English 1 French 1 Hindi	2nd (Fluent) 3 French 2 English 1 Arabic
Citizenship	3 - 1st generation Canadian	2 - 5th+ generation Canadian 1 - 2nd generation Canadian
Average years Teaching	5.6	1-5 years:3 5-10 years: 2 10+ years: 1
Average Age	31	Min: 27 Max: 39

Figure 4.1 Participant Demographics

Not surprisingly, the participants who were most accessible and keen to contribute to this study were teachers who either identified as gay and/or were teachers with an expressed interest in human rights and social justice issues. The only area where the desired amount of variation was not achieved was in age and years of classroom teaching experience. Due to the limitations that I faced in recruiting participants, most of the teachers were relatively young with an average of 5.6 years of classroom teaching experience. Although I made repeated efforts to locate and invite more teachers who were older and who had been in the classroom for over ten years, I was unable to do so. This challenge could be explained by the fact that more experienced teachers were perceived by younger teachers as less likely to intervene in cases of gendered harassment. This perception is consistent with a bullying study that showed that more experienced teachers become "progressively more tolerant of most undesirable behaviors" (Borg, 1998, p. 77)

Interviews

Each participant was contacted initially by email to set up the first interview and was sent an informational letter about the study. A copy of this letter is included in the

Appendix. The first meeting was scheduled for a two hour period in order to allow adequate time to discuss the details of participating in this research project and obtaining informed consent. Once participants had agreed to participate in the project and signed the consent form, the first interview began and lasted 90 minutes. At the end of this first meeting, the following two interviews were scheduled and ranged from 60-90 minutes each. The series of three interviews was conducted within a one month period with at least two days and no more than seven days passing between each interview. Seidman advocates for this schedule of interviews for several reasons. First, it allows time for the participant to reflect on the content of the preceding interview, but not so much time as to lose the continuity between them. Second, it reduces the impact of possibly "idiosyncratic interviews" caused by someone having a bad day, being ill, or other outside influences. Finally, it helps develop a positive relationship between participant and interviewer and allows information to unfold more naturally over time (1998, pp. 14 -15).

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Interviews were transcribed into a word document by the author and two student research assistants hired to expedite this process. The research assistants each signed confidentiality agreements to ensure the anonymity of the participants in the project. The author provided the assistants with training and model transcripts to ensure consistency amongst transcribers. Each transcript was then verified by the author by listening to the cassette and reading the completed transcript to check for accuracy and consistency. Transcribers noted nonverbal signals such as laughs, pauses, outside noises as well as degrees of emphasis and meaning conveyed by tone of voice. This was to ensure that the written transcript was the most authentic representation of the actual interview as could be achieved in this medium (Seidman, 1998, p. 98). Once the research assistant's transcripts had achieved the required level of accuracy, subsequent transcripts were no longer verified.

The interviews were conducted by the author in a mutually agreed upon location that was a private room to enhance the privacy of the interview and reduce noise interference on the recording. They consisted of open-ended questions in order to allow the participants to explore the issues as they understand them. The first interview provided an opportunity for the teachers to reflect on their life histories that brought them to teaching. They first were asked about their education and career experiences. They spoke about their

studies in university, other work experiences, and the choices they made that led them to choose teaching as their profession. This then led to discussions of their teacher education program, their own philosophies of teaching, and how they viewed their responsibilities in the classroom. These first interviews covered low-risk topics that teachers spoke about with no hesitation. They offered information on what guided these individuals to choose their career in education and explored aspects of their identities and educational biographies that influenced their decisions and their current classroom practices.

The second theme explored in the first interview was about general problems and challenges that they saw in their schools. At this point, many participants brought up the problems of bullying and/or homophobia and talked about the frustrations they had and challenges they faced dealing with these issues. The rest of the first interview allowed the participants to think and talk about what constituted bullying from their point of view and to give examples of bullying incidents in their school and their experiences addressing it. The first interview ended with a discussion of racial harassment and how the teachers defined it and if they saw it occurring in their school. A few sample questions from the first interview are:

a) Tell me about your education and teacher training.
b) Can you talk about your career path & other professional experiences?
c) What do you see as important problems in your school? Why?
d) Can you describe an incident of bullying in the school where you became involved?
e) Do you see racial or ethnic harassment at your school? Could you define it?

The second interview started with a reflection on questions or issues from the first interview that needed clarification or further exploration. Once these were covered, the rest of the interview focused on the concept of gendered harassment. Participants were asked to define and give examples of sexual harassment, homophobic harassment, & harassment for gender non-conformity. Each was explored separately, in that order, to determine if definitions and examples varied or overlapped and to learn about how teachers responded to each of these types of harassment. These interviews provided detailed descriptions of specific incidents and cultural factors that they viewed as significant in shaping students' behaviors in school. A few sample questions from the second interview are:

a) How do you define sexual harassment/homophobic harassment/harassment for gender non-conformity?
b) Tell me about an incident in the school where you became involved.
c) Tell me about what the role of the school is in responding. Do you have policies? How are these implemented?
d) How do you feel about school-based responses to [x] harassment?

The third and final interview asked questions about the links between various forms of harassment as well as institutional responses to various forms of bullying and harassment. Teachers spoke about the tools they used to address gendered harassment and how they developed these tools. The questions were formulated so as to allow the participant to speak freely about what was most relevant to his/her understanding of the question. These questions were then followed up with various prompts to explore the themes introduced by the participant. The third interview provided time for participants to reflect on their practices and the phenomenon of gendered harassment in the context of their schools. Many participants had epiphanies that they articulated during this interview. They also were more open and talked about the challenges they experienced and shared some of their own inconsistencies in trying to intervene in cases of bullying and harassment. A few sample questions from this interview are:

a) Can you tell me how you understand the phenomenon of bullying and harassment in your school? Similarities/differences? Is one form viewed more seriously than others?
b) Tell me about the core values at your school.
c) Where do you get the most institutional support? Where do you need more?
d) Tell me about the tools you use to address forms of gendered harassment.

During these interviews, I felt as if these participants were grateful to have someone to talk to about the challenges they experienced in their schools. Also, several of them experienced epiphanies about their schools or their practice that they had as a result of the reflection they were doing in the interviews. As the interviewer, I felt a strong bond develop between each participant as I listened to each teacher talk about his/her life in the classroom. I also got the impression that many of these teachers felt somewhat isolated in their careers and appreciated having the opportunity to talk with another professional and reflect on their practice in this safe and confidential setting. The commitment and passion these teachers have for their work came through in their interviews, and I feel fortunate to have had the

opportunity to listen and learn from them. A complete copy of the interview guide with prompts and potential follow up questions is available in the Appendix.

Each participant was also asked to provide a pseudonym for use in the study. These pseudonyms are only used with the data poems so as to better protect the anonymity of their statements included in this study. Instead, their participant identification number is used throughout the data. These ID numbers include two letters and two numbers. The two letters identify the participant as male or female (M or F) and as a teacher (T). This code was used in the event that administrators (A) participated as well. The number indicates the order in which they were contacted and began the interview process. Decisions about such details of the project were documented throughout the process in my research journal. The next section presents the way this tool was used.

Research memos

During the research process I maintained a research journal. In this journal I wrote memos that were designed to help clarify ideas, tie information together, and differentiate ideas from existing categories of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As Miles and Huberman explain, this process helps move the researcher from the empirical data to a deeper understanding of the connections between themes and issues addressed in the interviews. This process helps refine and expand thematic codes, showed emerging relationships, and helped build a more integrated understanding of the events and perceptions of the study participants (1994, p. 74). By keeping a research journal I was able to refine and sort through my thoughts as I was engaging in the data analysis process. One of the key roles these memos played was in tracing the development of a theoretical framework that was emerging as I reflected on the interview data. The following entries illustrate this process:

> Friday, August 11, 2006, 1:10pm
> I have just finished distilling down FT-03's narrative down to 10 pages, so I have 5 teacher narratives ready to be "crafted". Before I start doing that I am going to re-read them and look at the theoretical model I drafted based on my preliminary analysis (just from conducting the interviews and reading them through doing the initial coding) to see if it still fits and if I can find quotes and examples to illustrate how this model works. I still need to do MT-06's narrative, but I need to take a break from the computer, so I'm

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taking my hard copies to the dining room table with my diagram to see what emerges.

2:45 – After coding the first narrative I thought what will be interesting is if I can create a diagram for each teacher showing examples of how each of these external influences interacted with their individual influences…it could make a good visual and an easy way to represent a good amount of data in a way that demonstrates the theoretical model.

Sunday, August 13, 2006
3:00pm
This visual analysis is great – it's really starting to move things along.
Some major themes that I notice emerging among these teachers include:
- being a role model
- creating safe spaces in their classrooms
- the importance of consistency or being "fair"
- not being your "average" teacher (having more awareness, training, or personal experience in addressing/living with various issues)
- taking things "personally" or being unable to "detach" one's self
- vulnerability of young/inexperienced teachers
- older teachers being 'lazy' or 'desensitized'

The process of writing memos has allowed me to keep an audit trail of my work so that readers will be able to follow the processes that led me to the conclusions presented in the following chapter (Anderson, 1998, p. 134). Selections of raw data from three thematic categories: sexual harassment, homophobic harassment, and harassment for gender non-conformity are included in the appendix for the reader.

Analysis of interview data

Each interview was read and manually coded by the researcher. Each transcript went through two different processes of analysis: contextualizing and categorizing (Maxwell & Miller, 1992 cited in Butler-Kisber, 2002). Contextualizing approaches of analysis have as a goal to locate the individuals' narratives in the texts, whereas categorizing is the search for patterns or themes in the data. I first undertook the process of categorizing. I assigned thematic codes that were used to organize concepts to look for similarities and differences among how participants talked about the issues addressed in the study such as bullying, racial harassment, sexual harassment, homophobia, and harassment for gender non-conformity. Excerpts of data were then copied from the transcript and pasted into a new

word document for each code. Some of the categories were clear and pre-determined due to the fact that all participants were asked to provide their understandings of and experiences with various forms of harassment in school and included: bullying, racial harassment, sexual harassment, homophobic harassment, and harassment for gender non-conformity. Other categories were more organic and emerged from the data and included discussions about swearing, perceptions of administration, and the school culture as well as subcategories for bullying and harassment. The coding tree that was developed during this process is also included in the Appendix.

After the initial thematic coding was completed, I moved on to the contextualizing forms of analysis. The three interviews for each participant were re-read and excerpts were selected to construct a profile for each participant (Seidman, 1998, p. 103). Profiles are designed to allow the participants' own words to tell the story of their experience with the phenomenon. Approximately 50-60 pages of interview transcripts were distilled down to an average of six pages of personal narrative. The guiding question that informed this process of editing down the participant's narratives was: "What are the individual and cultural influences that are shaping and impacting how teachers' construct their understandings of the problems?" Selections were included when the participant spoke about his/her personal experiences, educational biography, teaching philosophy, and identities. The following excerpts are examples from two teachers' interviews that became part of their narratives:

> The biggest challenge probably was…and all of this is about who I am, and how I work as a teacher. Having my lessons put together so that I know exactly how I'm gonna follow through the next day. So, absolutely the top thing for me was…an overload in terms of preparation.(FT-04)

> When I was a student I think about the times when I got called fag. It's not a healthy way but I think that's what happens to kids like that who feel like they're being harassed, they'll turn around and do something bad and I think it has a big impact on kids, a huge impact. Because I had memories of that when I was growing up and they're probably the most poignant memories of my high school and elementary career when I got publicly pointed out as being gay. (MT-05)

In order to represent this data in a way that conveys the emotions and values behind participant's words, I crafted each profile into a poem using Butler-Kisber's method of found poetry (2001; , 2002).

Found poems, also known as data poems, were created in order to convey a large amount of information from the interviews in a concise manner that gives the reader a clear window onto the teachers' identities and values. This form of arts-based research aligns with the feminist and queer theories informing this study as it disrupts traditional ways of understanding data and values the unique perspectives offered by these teachers. It also allows for the expression of distinct identities and experiences that have helped shape each participant's view of the world. Sullivan describes the power of using data poems due to their ability to "compress and render accessible the results" and to merge data and interpretation into a "single act, a single form"(2004, p. 34). She explains the strengths in this method by explaining how the detailed attention to the data necessary to construct such poems can lead to new insights about the data and can deepen the understandings generated from the study.

I shared a similar connection with my participants that led Butler-Kisber to this form of data representation. In her first article on the subject, she shared, "I wanted to try to write for, rather than about, these young, capable research participants by disrupting some of the more conventional boundaries of representation, while attending to their gendered world"(2001, p. 34). I also wanted to "re-create the poignancy of their quiet message" (2001, p. 35) and to honor the voices and experiences of the participants in this study. By presenting information about the participants in this form, I hoped to "concretize the feeling and experience evoked" and "make meaning emotionally clearer for the reader" (Feldman, 2004, p. 12). By distilling their words down into these poems, I hope to share with the reader the respect, care and emotion that I felt as I listened to each participant talk about his or her experiences.

To construct each poem, I started with each teacher's shortened narrative and highlighted "nuggets", or short chunks of data that captured something about the teacher's identities, philosophy, or educational biography (Butler-Kisber, 2002). These nuggets were usually "I" statements such as: "I love kids," or, "I was always afraid." Sometimes they were general "you" statements such as: "You get desensitized," or "you worry until your

job is secure." To preserve the strength of these words, qualifiers such as "sort of" and "a little" were removed from these statements. Once these nuggets had been selected, they were grouped into the following themes: why I got into teaching, my values and teaching philosophy, memorable school experiences, and personal identity. Duplicate statements were removed and a poem was constructed with the remaining nuggets.

These much shorter data poems were then sent to all participants for their response and feedback. The objective is to have the participants feel that the data authentically represents their experiences and by engaging them in this part of the analysis process it improves the internal validity of the conclusions. Participants were sent a description of this form of data analysis with a copy of their poem. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive with a few participants making minor changes that then led to an iterative process of revision. Revisions of the poem went back and forth between the researcher and the participant until both were satisfied with the final product presented in the following chapter. This was a rewarding process that allowed me to reconnect with the participants a year after the interviews had been conducted and provide them an update on the project.

In addition to interviewing teachers, I collected documents to better understand the culture of each school. In order to examine more fully how the formal, official structures of the school influenced the perceptions that the teachers had of their schools' cultures, official school documents and policies were collected and analyzed. The next section describes that process.

Document collection and analysis

In order to better understand the institutional context within which these teachers were constructing their experiences, a policy and document review was conducted. School board policies that addressed issues of bullying and harassment were obtained by an email request to the school board. I examined the policies of five English school boards in Quebec in order to contextualize the documents studied in this particular board. The other documents that were included in this phase of the study were teachers' handbooks, student agendas, school mission statements, and codes of conduct. These documents were provided by the teachers during the interview process.

Each of these documents was read and analyzed for any discussion of safety, violence, inclusion, diversity, multiculturalism, bullying, and harassment issues. Particular attention was paid to definitions and whether they included the following terms: *racism, homophobia, sexual orientation, sexual harassment, gender identity/expression* and response protocols for various infractions. These artifacts were also consulted during the data analysis process to determine the level of teachers' knowledge about their own schools' policies and the extent to which they felt they had been informed about such policies, protocols, and codes of conduct.

Conclusion

As a queer feminist researcher engaged in a qualitative research project, it is important to situate myself in relationship to the study and make explicit my positionalities and the multiple subjectivities I bring to this project. By including excerpts from my own teaching journal in the preface, I wanted to give the reader a window for understanding how I, as a white, middle-class queer woman experienced certain aspects of my life in the classroom. I have lived with the tensions and the challenges outlined by the teachers in this study and have felt the backlash of conservative administrators personally. These experiences offered me the ability to empathize with and support participants during their reflections in the interviews. It also provided me with insider knowledge of some of the more complex and delicate issues that might be impacting teachers' perceptions and behaviors in schools. As a scholar engaging in a critical research project, my objectives are clear: this is a problem in schools that needs addressing. The outcomes of this study are intended to provide support and information that could contribute to a positive transformation of school environments for students, teachers, administrators, and other community members.

The methods outlined in this chapter include a *bricolage* of research approaches used in order to achieve a full and detailed understanding of the phenomenon of gendered harassment in schools. Through the combined use of narrative, document analysis, contextual and thematic coding, this project's findings are strengthened. The following chapter presents an overview of the major findings of this research.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH FINDINGS: TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

The main question guiding this study is "How do secondary teachers perceive and respond to incidents of gendered harassment?" In order to contextualize the participants' approaches to types of gendered harassment it is important to understand how they respond to other student behaviors and acts of bias in their school. This is done by talking to teachers about incidents of bullying and racial harassment as well as asking them about cases of homophobic harassment, sexual harassment, and harassment for gender non-conformity. These five forms of peer aggression were investigated together in order to understand if teachers see these as related behaviors and if their perceptions of and reported responses to the various behaviors differed. In this chapter, each of these behaviors are defined and examined in-depth with a particular emphasis on how the participants themselves understood these terms.

The main difference between behaviors defined as bullying and those that are harassment is whether an element of bias is involved. In order to clarify these terms for the reader, I have provided a diagram to show the definitions of these terms and how they relate to each other (Figure 6.1). For example, an act of bullying can quickly become an act of harassment based on the words being used. If an aggressor bumps another student in the hall and calls him a 'loser' and repeats this sort of behavior several times, that is an act of bullying. Whereas if in the same scenario, the aggressor uses a biased term such as 'paki' or 'homo' then the behavior is harassment. Harassment is different from bullying in that it does not have to be intentional or aimed at a specific individual as defined by Slee (1995) and Olweus (1993), it can be any behavior that "negatively impacts the target or environment" (Land, 2003). An example of this would be a group of male students looking at female models in a magazine and loudly and publicly rating their physical traits. Another common form is the use of the expression 'that's so gay' to refer to something in a negative light. This popular youth expression communicates an agreed upon social norm that homosexuality is bad. The persistent use of such language and the tolerance of it by teachers sends the message that these norms are accepted and the assumptions underlying them should not be questioned. This creates a hostile environment for students and other

members of the school community who are not heterosexual, and communicates to others that anti-gay language and behaviors are acceptable in this school culture.
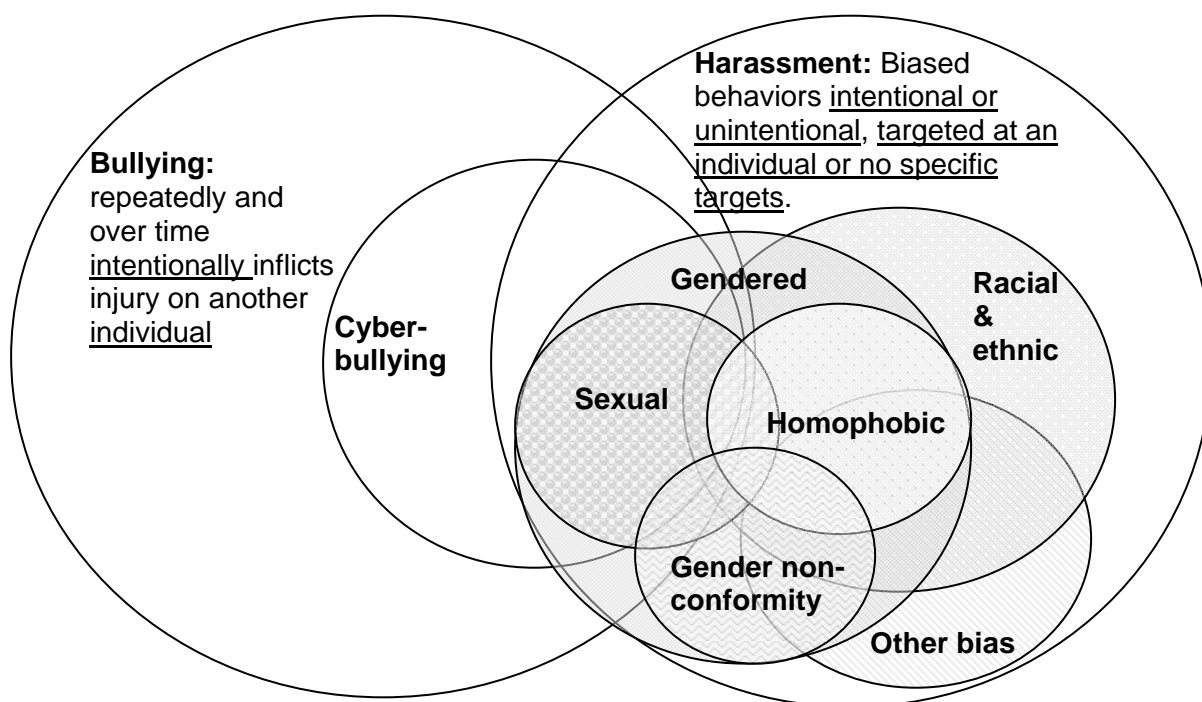
Figure 6.1 Forms of bullying and harassment

The forms of gendered harassment under investigation were defined in the first chapter and will be revisited later in this chapter along with definitions of bullying and racial harassment. The following chapter presents a framework that emerged from the study and is used to analyze and conceptualize the data. The framework offers an approach for understanding how the teachers in this study experienced the phenomenon of gendered harassment in their schools and how these experiences shaped their perceptions and responses to different incidents of peer aggression. This framework will act as a roadmap for the reader and a structure for this chapter. This chapter will first outline the *external* and *internal* influences that shape how teachers view and respond to bullying and harassment in their schools. The *external* influences include *institutional* (formal) and *social* (informal) factors. These interact with the teachers' *internal* influences to shape the experience of their school culture. The interaction of these three influences is explained with specific regards to how it shapes their *perceptions of* and *responses to* student

behaviors. Each of these categories is defined in this chapter in order to demonstrate how teachers talk about these factors and how they shape their classroom practices. The final chapter will include a discussion of potential applications of this model and how the use of this framework can assist educators working to create more inclusive school climates.

External influences

In the interviews with teachers, school culture emerged as a dominant theme that impacted their experiences in schools. School culture is created by many factors that fall into two categories: *institutional* and *social* influences. In this section, I present the sub-themes in these categories and provide samples from the data that illustrate how teachers talked about these influences. This will offer the reader an understanding of how teachers experienced their schools' culture.

Institutional influences

Formal structures within the school had a significant impact in creating and sustaining school cultures. The formal structures that participants discussed as impacting their perceptions of their school culture include four main aspects of the institution including: a) administrative structures and responses, b) provincial curriculum demands and teacher workloads, c) teacher education and training, and d) written policies. Through the course of the interviews it became clear that these formal aspects of the school interacted with the informal aspects of the school culture to shape teachers' experiences and interactions with their students.

The first sub-theme in this category, administrative structures and responses, elicited discussion about not feeling supported by their administrators and believing that oftentimes the discipline meted out for instances of sexual or homophobic harassment was not sufficient:

> If there's an incident in my classroom I have to seek out the administration to get the follow-up on it. You just have to get to know the system and know what the expectations are 'cause they're stretched. They don't have any time…I personally had a few issues during the year with discipline and the VP wasn't there, and the Principal dealt with it, and I always felt the same, the he just wasn't firm enough. (FT03)

> The thing with administrators [is that] they're really, really busy. You use them for discipline problems as a very last measure. (FT02)

As far as discipline, how it's handled, I had to push for action when another kid called a kid 'faggot'. However, I know that in my school a racist comment was certainly not tolerated and it was dealt with immediately. (MT05)

These comments show a trend of teachers not trusting their administrators to support their actions and the feeling that they have to handle most non-violent discipline issues alone. They spoke quite consistently about their schools' strong and clear response to any kind of physical violence, but in terms of verbal harassment or other forms of psychological torment, they felt that the administration did not want to be bothered with these issues. This is important in light of the findings of other studies that have found that antisocial behavior in students increases when administrative support is inconsistent and when there is an absence of follow-up from school leadership (DiGiulio, 2001, p. 81).

The second theme brought up by all the teachers was the challenge they faced meeting the curricular and workload demands of their jobs. This was one of the most common obstacles that teachers talked about that prevented them from acting as consistently as they would like towards various forms of verbal harassment. Many teachers felt great pressure from their administration to cover the required amounts of curricular material and the stresses placed on them by large classes and demanding course loads caused them to ignore certain behaviors.

[I don't stop name-calling] if I'm too tired, if there are set things I need to get through in a lesson. I know my lesson is going to take 60 minutes, I've only got 70 minutes to deliver it, I've got 10 minutes to waste. Right now my job is being a teacher and I have to get through the math before the end of the year. It's not on my priority list. (MT01)

It takes a lot of time out of the classroom when you're constantly dealing with these things. If you are going to give a student a detention, then, as a teacher, you're the one who has to stay at lunch or stay after school in order to enforce these rules. It does take a lot of time to deal with these issues. (FT02)

Sometimes as a teacher I just want to ignore it. There are times that I ignore it. I'm not perfect. There's so many times when I have TOO much to do, like we gotta get through this lesson. (FT03)

You're running all the time, you're pretty well tired constantly and you don't sit. You let stuff slide sometimes. (MT05)

A lot of teachers feel as they're overwhelmed by these topics, because we have to correct [assignments], they have to teach, they have to maintain control in their classroom. Now they have to deal with the social problems of students. I just don't think there are enough minutes in the school working day to deal with that kind of situation. (MT06)

These teachers are exhausted and overwhelmed with the professional demands placed on them and do not feel as if they are given the necessary support or resources to deal with everything that they would like to address. They expressed frustration when talking about the limitations they felt, but very few of them offered any critique of the formal structures that caused them to feel overwhelmed. They spoke as if it were simply the reality that must be dealt with and when asked to suggest changes that could improve how they address bullying and harassment, no teacher gave any that included reducing class sizes, limiting the number of class preparations, or adding educational assistants to alleviate some of these demands on their time and energy. This may suggest that teachers have a very limited sense of efficacy, or control, over their environment in schools. By only acting within the micro-structures of their classroom when dealing with behavior issues rather than addressing the macro structures of the school, they are extremely limited in what they can do to improve student safety and school climate.

Education and training was the third theme. Most teachers felt that their teacher education programs did not sufficiently prepare them to address incidents of harassment, bullying, or homophobia. Additionally they did not feel that they had many opportunities to pursue additional training in this area as they were encouraged to do professional development primarily in their area of instruction.

I've had no training [on how to address bullying]… The educational degree was really worthless. I felt that we didn't really get that kind of necessary education. How to deal with certain issues like [bullying]. We were just told, "avoid this and this"…We're constantly being told how to protect ourselves. We're not constantly being told how to protect these young people from other young people. (MT06)

[I never got any] training in school [on] bullying. I do not think that we ever studied anything related to that…I don't know if I was really attuned to [sexual harassment] – to be quite honest. Maybe that's why I wasn't so aware that it was going on because as a part of my training it had never really been brought up as an issue to be concerned with. (FT02)

I don't remember ever specifically talking about sexuality or sexual orientation…it was never a specific topic that we were asked to discuss. (MT01)

These quotes indicate that teachers are emerging from teacher education programs with no preparation on how to understand and prevent various forms of bullying and harassment. As noted in Chapter 4, forms of gendered harassment are often ignored in discussions around bullying and this contributes to teachers' inability to intervene in these incidents effectively. These teachers' experiences reflect the findings of other research done with teachers in a school leadership program. In a study conducted in Texas, Stader & Thomas found that 50% of future school administrators reported that in-service training on sexual harassment did not include information on issues related to sexual orientation (2006). Other teachers had taken their own initiative to pursue additional studies that had exposed them to issues of gender, sexual orientation, and race, and they spoke about the importance of these opportunities in improving their practice as teachers:

That was a [graduate] course that really opened my eyes to my own sense of my own prejudices; my own narrow thinking in terms of who makes us female and who makes us male. It helped me go back when I was in the classroom and think that, 'oh my gosh, what kind of things have I let pass just because I didn't have the clarity of vision or the language or the understanding of what was going on?' the bottom line is that, you know you have to learn to respect people for who they are. (FT04)

I've been to a few different workshops, and I went to a lot of conferences where we spoke a lot about gender issues and we got into bullying…for me it was just one of those issues that is always important and its not going to go away, so the more I know as a teacher, the better. (FT03)

I'm not the average teacher or the average individual coming in on the issue. I received a lot of training on gender harassment and bullying and sexual orientation and identities, multiculturalism and racism. All of that was part of my training [as a student leader in university]. I have other personal issues that have challenged me through the past couple years that I've had to deal with, but in general I've got the artillery behind me if I want to use it. I was involved in giving workshops in a lot of these areas to the other student leadership groups …I've done a lot in the area, compared to a lot of other people. (MT01)

The teachers who did get some education in this area are ones who took it upon themselves to seek out these opportunities. Oftentimes this is shaped by their intrapersonal influences such as their personal identities and educational biography. A discussion of how these internal factors shape teachers' perceptions and responses in schools is included in the next section of this chapter.

The final theme in this area was that of written policies and how teachers' knowledge of their schools' and school board's policies influenced how they addressed various forms of bullying and harassment. In this section, I will examine the policies of the Quebec Ministry of Education, Leisure, and Sport as well as five English school boards in the Province of Quebec to determine if they include the language *sexual orientation* and/or *gender expression/identity*. I will also discuss how the language and culture established by these policies may impact how teachers respond to various forms of bullying and harassment in public schools in Quebec.

Based on the analysis of recent legal cases discussed in Chapter 3, it is important to look at local school policy to see if and how it reflects Federal and Provincial protections. There are nine Anglophone school boards in Quebec. Most of these are found in the Montreal region and the five selected here for analysis were chosen because their policy documents were made publicly available through their websites. These five school boards service approximately 75% of the Anglophone students in the province.

The Ministry of Education of Quebec's (MEQ) now renamed MELS for Ministry of Education, Leisure, and Sport, *Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education* does not mention *sexual orientation* or *gender identity/expression* anywhere in the document. The focus of this document is on immigrants, as well as ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity in Quebec. Although the *Strategic Plan for 2000-2003* of the MEQ (2000) includes in its "context and issues" section the goals of "providing equal opportunities to all young people" and "teaching values, particularly the values of democracy and values that foster openness," there is no clear mention of specific minority groups that have historically been excluded from this process. The MELS also published a report entitled *Sexual Harassment in Schools* (1996) in which they rely on *The Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* to frame the importance of addressing this issue in schools. This policy cites the *Quebec Charter* to provide a legal basis for its

importance: in Chapter I. 1. s. 10 that "Every person has a right to full and equal recognition and exercise of his human rights and freedoms, without distinction, exclusion of preference based on race, colour, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation,…" and goes on to state that, "discrimination exists where such a distinction, exclusion or preference has the effect of nullifying or impairing such a right." It also highlights s. 10.1 which was added in 1982 to explicitly prohibit harassment, "No one may harass a person on the basis of any ground mentioned in section 10." Even though this document does mention sexual orientation, the rest of the accompanying materials are specifically geared to address the issue of (hetero)sexual harassment by males towards females. It includes a brief mention that male students can be victims too, but it never specifically addresses the issue of sexual harassment that is homophobic in nature or based on gender non-conformity or how educators should address it.

These documents from the MELS only include *sexual orientation* when citing the provincial human rights codes and do not include it in any further discussions of implementation and approaches to addressing this level of diversity and associated forms of harassment in schools. By not explicitly including homophobic or transphobic harassment as issues to be addressed, the Ministry is sending the message that addressing homophobia and transphobia in schools is not a priority and it is a form of discriminatory harassment that is tacitly condoned in its schools.

In November of 2001, the President of the Quebec Human Rights Commission, Pierre Marois, sent a letter to all schools in Quebec asking them to implement an "Awareness and Action Plan" for addressing homophobia. He wrote, "The *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse* encourages institutions that have already moved in this direction to keep up their work, and invites all other institutions that are somewhat behind in this respect to speed things up. Implementing practical ways and means absolutely requires such a plan" (p. 2). Informal conversations with current practitioners and school board administrators indicate that many have no knowledge that this letter had ever been sent.

For example, the Lester B. Pearson School Board's policies were drafted to include multiple forms of harassment and they pre-date this letter. The Lester B. Pearson School Board does explicitly assert its support of the *Canadian Charter* in its *Safe School Policy*

by listing all protected classes, including *sexual orientation*, but not *gender identity or expression*, and states that "everyone in our community is entitled to a safe, secure and respectful environment free from all forms of harassment and violent behavior" (2000). This school board's *Intercultural Policy* also explicitly includes *sexual orientation* though this policy is written primarily to address issues of ethnocultural diversity. A second school board, New Frontiers, has included *sexual orientation,* but not *gender identity or expression*, in its harassment policy, but solely under its section on sexual harassment.

In contrast, the English Montreal School Board's *Safe School Policy* affirms its support of the Quebec and Canadian *Charters*, but does not specifically mention or name the protected classes. It indicates that incidences of "racial harassment" are explicitly included in the policy, but does not include any clear statement on issues of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression (English Montreal School Board, n.d.). In a fourth school board, the Western Quebec School Board's *Race Relations and Intercultural Understanding* policy statement clearly asserts, "the Board sees as its role the safe-guarding of the learner and employees on its premises or at school sponsored events and does not tolerate: …expressions of racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual prejudice or harassment"(Western Quebec School Board, 2001) It goes on to enumerate "Unacceptable Behaviors" which include "Overt Bigotry – written or verbal comments which insult others because of their gender, racial origin, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation." This policy is the most inclusive in its explicit mention of sexual orientation and gender in its language. This document leaves no question that administrators and teachers in this school board are expected to treat issues of gendered harassment as they would any other form of discriminatory behavior. Finally, the most extensive policy that also includes an action plan is the Central Quebec School Board. This policy explicitly lists *sexual orientation* in a section titled "Other forms of harassment (discrimination)", but not *gender identity or expression*. Included with the policy is a table entitled "mechanisms of intervention" indicating different levels of intervention, as well as report forms, responsible personnel, and suggested items for discussion in meetings with alleged victims and perpetrators(Central Quebec School Board, 1998).

Four out of the five school boards examined did include the phrase *sexual orientation*, but only one included a mention of *gender* in their safe schools or related

policies. Unfortunately, without a system-wide effort to raise awareness and gain community support around these policies, teachers and educators are left to rely on their own skills and interpretations of how to implement and support such protections. This is evidenced in how the teachers spoke of their school's policies during interviews. One teacher did voice a belief that his school's policy on bullying was clear, yet he spoke at other points in the interview about his frustration with colleagues for their lack of awareness of and attention to the issues of racism, sexism, and homophobia in his school. He said, "[Bullying]'s not tolerated at all. We have strict guidelines by what we describe as being bullying" (MT06)

The rest of the participants did not share the belief that they had a clear understanding of their school's policies:

> There is supposed to be a zero-tolerance policy [for bullying] so that means that any sort of physical violence or physical abuse or even threats could and should result in suspension…so there are some deterring or education programs there as well, but as far as actual punishment we are really limited to what can happen. (MT01)

> I'm not aware of any [policies]. If there [were], it was never brought to our attention. There was never a policy that was given to us: this is what you need to do about bullying. There are SO many policies that you're not going to know them unless someone makes a point of saying 'this one's important.' (FT02)

> I just think it's so interesting that I could walk into this board and not be informed of specific things that I need to follow. Nothing was verbally gone over with me. I did all the research on my own, the handbooks, all that stuff. I just think it's really unfortunate that there are not specific policies or regulations that we follow when it comes to verbal harassment. (FT03)

> There was apparently a zero tolerance [for bullying] that was going to be put in place with the school board. I wasn't quite sure what they were doing. Within our school and our administration there was no definite policy. (MT05)

This lack of familiarity with school policy was also reported by Sarkar & Lavoie in their examination of Quebec teachers' integration of the Ministry of Education's Intercultural Education Policy (2006).

This lack of awareness and understanding of current school policies and related laws is significant in shaping how educators act. In a study on sexual harassment in the U.S.,

Gloria Jones found that an understanding of Title IX legislation in the U.S. was an important factor that caused educators to take on an activist role in regards to cases of peer sexual harassment (2005). These teachers' statements indicate that even in the presence of clear policies and procedures, many teachers are not aware of their existence, or their role in implementing them. Their use of terms such as "supposed to be" or "apparently" indicate that there was some awareness of existing bullying policies. This awareness did not translate into consistent action in schools since these policies were not clearly communicated or systematically implemented in the school. The perceptions that teachers shared about their experiences with the formal structures of their schools present a clear description of some of the structural obstacles that exist and prevent educators from responding consistently and effectively to incidents of gendered harassment. In addition to structural barriers, teachers also experienced informal barriers to intervention.

Social/Informal influences

It quickly became apparent that the informal structures of the school, or the social norms and values, exerted the most powerful influence over teachers' behaviors. The three most prevalent themes were: a) perceptions of administration, b) interpersonal relationships, and c) community values. These will be addressed in this order to explore how these factors impacted teachers' experiences in their schools.

a) Perceptions of administration

The first area is teachers' perceptions of their school's administrators. Under this theme, participants spoke of issues such as: leadership style, personal values, professional priorities, and policy implementation. The following excerpts demonstrate how the teachers perceived their administrators, and how these perceptions shaped their actions in the school.

> Our administrator who dealt with disciplinary problems was a real jock and the real 'man's man' and he'd sit the boys down and say, 'what the hell do you think you're doing?' I think that he gave them the old football huddle, sit down and I'm gonna tell you how to act in the classroom. And I think that's as far as it went…I feel that the administration didn't want to get involved because they were these [SEE][5] men and, if they were to come into a staff

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[5] SEE: A "southern European ethnicity" that can not be identified to protect the identity of the school and teachers in this study. This refers to a particular immigrant group from a southern European country.

meeting and say, 'we need to address some of the homophobic attitudes,' I could never hear them talking about something like that. So maybe that's part of the problem; even the administrators had that [SEE] kind of mentality…The image of the Principal was very important. It was very much about the school's image that the Principal is behind everything…I don't think [he] ever left his office. (FT02)

I always find that when I'm working with Principals and vice Principals that its their own morals and their own beliefs that come through and if its something that they don't really think's a big issue, then why are they going to be proactive about it? Or just the gender of the administrator, I think that plays into it as well. (FT03)

Generally, the administrators at [poor] schools are not the best ones…I usually handle things pretty independently because I find administratively they really just don't get it. What it's taught me is: don't involve the administration…I think the school's approach was pretty weak. I don't think it was something that our Principal liked to deal with. I think he'd rather the whole thing go away.(MT05)

I think Principals…the more that you bother them, or the more you send them problems downstairs, the more they will cause problems for you. So, the less problems you send, the less problems you have with them. It works both ways. They're not there to pick up after you. You're here to work on your own, and they're here to support you as long as you don't rock the boat too much. (MT06)

These perceptions reported by teachers demonstrate how powerful an administrator's style is in shaping the culture of a school. Teachers get clear messages from their school leaders about what they personally value and what issues they feel are important to address. Whether it be through official communications in staff meetings, or more typically through observed patterns of behavior and advice from more experienced teachers, a Principal's priorities and attitudes towards issues permeate the school and shape the culture. In the case of gendered harassment, teachers don't see their administrators making a priority of addressing this problem, and as a result feel limited in their abilities to interrupt these behaviors patterns among students.

Another area of administrative influence is that of policy implementation. The way administrators interpreted and applied various school board and school-wide policies sent clear messages to teachers about how they should enforce and apply those policies. Some teachers felt there was a clear expectation communicated about bullying policies, whereas

others believed that very little had been done to inform teachers about how certain policies should be interpreted and applied. One teacher felt his school had a clear policy on how to address bullying, but he also had the narrowest definition of bullying behaviors. He only viewed acts of physical violence to be examples of bullying. He felt as if his school was almost too sensitive to certain acts of covert aggression among students:

> There's no tolerance whatsoever [for bullying] in the school. In fact, in another school, if a kid pulls off another kid's mask [at a Halloween dance], they're not going to get pulled into the Principal's office and almost get suspended. (MT06)

Other teachers had different perceptions of their school's policies. One spoke about how certain types of harassment are addressed in his school more severely than others. A second teacher addressed the challenges he felt in enforcing school policies when administrators would not support punishments meted out by teachers and often bow to parental pressure if they disagreed with a punishment.

> The kids are astute enough to see that when they use the word faggot they won't get sent to the office and when they use a racial slur, they get sent to the office. It's a very quick connection to make…I had one kid call another a faggot. I hauled him to the Principal; I asked for a suspension, the Principal didn't want to suspend him. It was one of the Vice Principals and they saw that I was about to blow my top so they suspended the kid. But I really had to push for it. (MT05)

> If our hands are tied with enforcement, you can only do so much role modeling. When there are no consequences, then who becomes the role model? The person who's role modeling the positive behavior or the person getting the biggest laugh with no punishment? I'm no comparison to a 17 year old in the eyes of my students. (MT01)

One teacher reviewed her school agenda after our first interview and came back to talk about a critical reflection she had on her own practice at the beginning of the school year:

> The section [in the agenda] that I highlighted in terms of what I need to focus on with the students: have I highlighted anything in students' rights and responsibilities? No. And their code of behavior? No. Tons of highlights on how I expect them to behave. Tons of highlights on examination and marking policies. Lots to say on uniform regulations. I've highlighted pretty much every other thing, but how I should be treating them and what they expect when they come to school. (FT04)

This discussion shows how teachers emphasize certain rules and policies that have been set out as important to enforce, and as a result other guiding principles may go unaddressed with students. This tendency to focus on the micromanaging of student behavior can prevent teachers and administrators from enacting a consistent philosophy that is infused through all facets of life in school. The last two excerpts on policy implementation reflect how an administrator's personal style and beliefs have a significant impact on the culture of the school and influencing what teachers will take action on and what they are willing to ignore.

> In the two high schools I've been it really depends on your Vice Principal. They basically set up according to their beliefs. Their policies reflect a lot about them and how they deal with it. (FT03)

> If its just four teachers who are interested in implementing some type of policy, it's not going to be effective, unless all the teachers do it. (FT02)

The lack of consistency and the lack of clear guidelines or suggestions on how to respond to bullying and harassment left teachers feeling isolated and unsupported in their efforts to address various forms of non-physical aggression. This lack of support can lead to burn out and reduced efforts in areas of school life that are crucial to student engagement, safety and success.

b) *Interpersonal relationships*

A second area that was discussed was the role of interpersonal relationships in shaping the school culture. Personal relationships with their administrators were a significant influence in how they perceived their ability to act in the school. Teachers in two of the three schools did not speak highly of their administrators.

> Eventually I told [my Principal] that I was going to tell the kids [that I'm gay]. She said, 'if you come out to those kids I will not guarantee your safety at this school'. I had to make a decision at this point. She was tough. I couldn't stand working for her…She didn't like me because I was gay. That was clear." (MT05)

> If there's bullying going on in your classroom, then you must be a bad teacher. You don't feel like you can go to [the administration] because it reflects badly upon you as a teacher, because it's like saying to them, 'I can't handle my classroom. I need your help.'…You play the game because the Principal decides what you're going to teach the following year and if he

doesn't like you then he gives you the worst classes and five different
subjects to teach and everybody knows it works that way. So if you don't get
along with the Principal and you don't kiss butt a little bit then you'll pay for
it the next year. That's the power that they have. (FT02)

Each teacher has their own relationship with the administration as well and I
know for me, there are certain ways that I deal with the administration
depending on what I want to have happen….Our Principal is someone who I
actively do not want to come out to. I don't think our Principal is someone
who would respond positively to me being gay. (MT01)

The perceptions of administrators varied significantly from school to school, but were
consistent within the two teachers at each school. For example, FT02 and MT01 worked in
the same school and had similar perceptions of their Principal as noted above. Also, MT06
and FT04 worked in the same school and had very positive things to say about their
Principal. Finally, MT05 and FT03 worked together and both spoke of their dismay with
the lack of leadership they felt from their Principal. This is interesting to note because
although each teacher has his or her own individual relationship with the administration,
there are certain messages that Principals and VPs send to their staff through their
leadership style and personal philosophy that influence those interpersonal relationships.

The working and personal relationships with colleagues also had an impact on their
experiences in their schools. The participants in this study spoke regularly about their
struggles and alliances with other members of the school staff. Two teachers gave a clear
explanation of how they observed the behaviors of their colleagues and adjusted their
actions accordingly,

Teachers are educated the exact same way students are, you're observing
everything around you. As the new teachers, that's your job, to keep your
eyes and ears open, and usually, what I do, is for the first month, I just do a
lot observing, and I do a lot of talking to teachers, and seeing what's
acceptable, what's not, and how we deal with things here at that individual
school. So, you're learning everything from the environment around, which
is what we do everyday. Unfortunately, that's how you pick up bad habits.
(FT03)

I eventually started coming in late to school. [After being reprimanded by the
Principal, I said] 'Tell the other older teachers [to start being on time]. I'm
doing it 'cause I see them'. (MT06)

They also complained about a lack of consistency in enforcing certain school rules and policies. Many felt that they could not defend taking certain actions against students if other teachers were not also addressing those same issues.

> I spent the first couple months enforcing all of this [uniform policy, swearing, and name-calling] and there are some teachers that just never enforce it and so you realize that out of 20 teachers, we have about 5 who do all the enforcing and you just can't anymore. You can't do it. (FT03)
>
> In my classroom I can deal with it and give my students a thousand detentions, but if they go into another classroom and they're allowed to bully then they'll come back into my classroom the next day and I'll be dealing with the exact same issues. (FT02)
>
> Consistency was probably the biggest problem at that school. (MT05)
>
> What happens if three other teachers have already had tired days and overlooked the same situation that you're getting? My kids see me 75 minutes 6 days out of 9. Once it happens in my classroom, am I to assume that it's already happened 8 other times with the 8 other teachers that they have? Or do I assume that it's the first? And if I thought about it that way, would I deal with things differently? I think I've just realized that right now. A lot of the things I do deal with, I assume that if I see it, its happening elsewhere, so I need to do something about it. (MT01)

As the last teacher noted, the prevalence of these behaviors is most likely greater than most teachers realize. Since they have limited contact with a group of students during the school day, their awareness of the behaviors in this group might be limited. He also points out how the variety of responses by different teachers can impact how students learn about what behaviors are tolerated in school and which ones are not. This lack of consistency can contribute to greater problems with behavior in the school. Other researchers have found that inconsistent responses by the school results in inconsistent follow-through by staff which often results in more behavior problems (Mayer 1995 cited in DiGiulio, 2001, p. 81).

The influences of co-workers on teachers who are new to a school cannot be overstated. It is clear that new teachers have to learn the hidden curriculum and unwritten rules of each school they work in. Unfortunately, these unwritten rules that get taught in the staff room and through informal interactions, oftentimes lead to teachers learning bad habits and accepting lower standards of professionalism than they would otherwise set for

themselves. Teachers' interactions with and perceptions of their colleagues are also factors that shape how they will act in various situations. The following excerpts highlight moments when teachers spoke about behaviors of their colleagues that the participants found troubling, but indicative of the culture of the school. One teacher spoke of a conversation she had with a colleague where she learned of this person's homophobic attitudes in a conversation about her son.

> [A colleague] was overly upset because she had noticed that this was homosexual porn [that her child had been viewing] on the internet, and I remember having this discussion with her: why is it that much more shocking that it's homosexual, why is it so disturbing? (FT04)

By questioning her colleague's behavior, she is pointing out the bias inherent in it and may have an impact in reshaping that person's attitudes and perceptions. At the very least she is telling this colleague that she doesn't share her opinion. Two other teachers gave examples of incidents when they witnessed discriminatory behavior on the basis of race or ethnicity by their colleagues. These incidents were illustrative of some of the challenges they saw of teaching against many forms of bias in their school.

> Each teacher has a reputation of what they'll stand for in their class and what they won't and students are very good at knowing their limits with each teacher. Certain teachers see more of it and other teachers wouldn't and other teachers would respond to different levels of student behavior…Our teaching staff is largely [SEE] and from [the same community] themselves. [A student] was actually told that Chinese people aren't creative and so he can't expect to do well on creative assignments. And he was told that by a member of the teaching staff. (MT01)

> The people you work with are the people that you reflect…There are male teachers here that are so inappropriate…one even talks [to his students] about the fact that he had an STD from a previous girlfriend…I see teachers saying things to students about the way that they dress: their shirt's unbuttoned, they call them whores. Teachers have said inappropriate [things] like there was a young [teacher] that was using the word 'nigger' constantly in his class. (MT06)

This last example combined examples of sexual bias as well as racial bias by teachers at his school. A fourth teacher told a more detailed story of a male colleague who students had reported to her was sexually harassing them. Her

frustration and perceived powerlessness in addressing the situation was an example of how more experienced teachers pass on accepted attitudes and behaviors in the school.

> I went to the head of my department and spoke to him about [accusations of sexual harassment by female students against another staff person]. They said, 'yeah, we know, we've spoken to him about it, we see it too.' But then it never went to the administrative level...the administrator and the head of my department happened to be very, very good friends, so I felt like I don't have a place to go in there…I didn't see any of the teachers that had been there for a while necessarily trying to make changes. The new teachers would get upset about things but then they would be a little bit afraid to go speak to the administration. (FT02)

The frustration FT02 felt with the more experienced department head not taking further action against this known harasser was echoed by a fifth participant. This teacher spoke about her frustration with the lack of awareness or action by her more experienced colleagues and the dismay she felt because they are tenured and will continue to teach and reinforce the status quo at the school.

> There's a lot of ignorance. There's a lot of staff that have no idea about [bullying and harassment] – including myself—no idea how to deal with [it]...They just don't know how to enforce it. And they don't know because it doesn't apply to their own personal life…I just feel like some teachers just don't really have a clue. It's really scary. It's generally the ones who have been around forever and they can't do anything with them 'cause they're safe when it comes to employment. (FT03)

The stories that these teachers shared about the frustration they felt and the difficulties they faced due to colleagues who acted in irresponsible or oppressive ways were troubling. It is not surprising to see how challenging it is to work against various forms of bias and harassment when professional educators and employees of the school are modeling the exact behaviors these teachers are trying to prevent.

Teachers' relationships with students and parents also had an influence on their responses to various forms of bullying and harassment. The participants in this study spoke mostly of a high respect and a deep level of care for their students and their overall well being. The following excerpts point to moments when the teacher was struggling with some aspect of his/her relationship with students or reporting on how they felt they were

perceived by their students. These are included here to demonstrate how teachers'

perceptions of these interpersonal relationships influence their actions.

> I had a great relationship with my students. I've always had a good rapport with my students and generally I was able to engage them. (MT05)

> I don't want to engage in that power struggle with [the students]. I feel very strongly about saying that this is what I won't put up with. (FT04)

> I used to feel badly for this poor boy who was being picked on, but then when the student turns around and tells you 'F- off' or tells you that you're a bitch, your sympathy starts to run very dry. …One time I kept three students after class [for bullying]. I said to them, 'how would you feel if someone was treating you this way?' [They said,] 'Oh, we wouldn't care.' They were really defensive. I'm making the problem worse by dealing with it, but if I don't deal with it, it persists, so it's tricky. (FT02)

> I feel that I'm mostly respected by a lot of the students, so if I say something, they'll respect the fact that that's how I want my classroom to be. I think that students in general respond well if they feel like you're going to be consistent. As soon as you show a little bit of inconsistency that's when they jump all over it…I don't tell my students that I'm gay. I've been asked twice…And I think with the students almost there's a certain line that, in some ways they might be happier with the idea of thinking that I am gay, but not knowing. Because then they don't have to deal with the fact that I am. (MT01)

These teachers talk of avoiding power struggles by setting up clear expectations, and

working to develop a strong rapport with their students including keeping aspects of their

identity hidden to protect their students from potentially uncomfortable knowledge. They

also articulate the struggles they face in trying to deal effectively with bullying. They

worked very hard to have positive relationships with their students and often made

themselves available during their own free time to provide homework assistance,

extracurricular supervision, and opened up their classrooms for students to hang out during

lunch periods. They felt that these extra efforts made them more approachable than other

teachers, and allowed them to develop more meaningful connections with certain students

so they could provide them additional support. Several teachers (FT02, MT06, MT01)

spoke of special relationships with certain students that had resulted from these extra

efforts. It was clear that these connections were quite meaningful to the teacher and were

most likely of significant positive impact to the students and their perceptions of their school community.

The fourth area of interpersonal relationships that shaped teachers perceptions and responses is interactions with parents. This was not a prevalent theme through all teachers' experiences, but the teachers who did address the issue of parents, indicated that it had an impact on how they felt they were able to work in the school community on addressing certain behaviors in the school.

> [I've] sat there and watched parents literally fighting with teachers because they're so upset about the stupid [mark]. Rather than looking at the fact: what is really the situation going on with the child? (MT06)

> I was getting called faggot and parents were calling, were coming onto the property to harass me while I was doing yard duty. (MT05)

> You're not able to enforce the policy because your hands are tied or parents just won't go along with it. What I feel more than ever is a shift where parents are trying to have control over what doesn't happen to their student – more so than what does – sort of enforcing schools saying 'you can't do that' …we don't have the support of the parents… There's a different culture now with parents not backing up the behavior or a student that you're punishing for a certain word that they used in class and then the father comes into the school for a meeting and says "Well, what the f**k are you doing suspending my son?" to the Vice Principal….in some ways, parents don't necessarily help with the solutions. (MT01)

These examples show that the participants feel that parents are often working against what they are trying to accomplish with students. Whether it is modeling disrespectful behavior towards teachers, targeting them for homophobic harassment, or flaunting the rules of the school, these parental behaviors often actively work against the possibility of reducing gendered harassment in school. It seems evident that the accumulation of these interactions with administrators, colleagues, students and parents convey clear and consistent messages to teachers about which behaviors are tolerated in a school and which ones are not. These social norms do not emerge in a vacuum, but are often a reflection of the community in which the school resides.

c) *School community*

Each of the three schools in this study were in the same school board, but were situated in very different communities. The dominant cultural group and socioeconomic

status of the students in the school communities varied significantly. Teachers in two schools described their students as privileged and teachers in one school talked about the multiple oppressions the majority of their students face in Canadian society. In all three cases in the conversations with these teachers, it was clear that the values and expectations of the community were significant factors that shaped what could and could not happen in their school. Their interpersonal relationships with colleagues and families are created in this context and are often actively transmitting the values of the broader school community. These, in turn, influenced the school culture. The following excerpts provide an overview of some of the community influences the teachers felt impacted the school culture.

Victoria Secondary
I think [the homophobia] must have been coming from the community, from outside the school. (FT02)

With my [SEE] students the boys had such big egos, and they thought that they should be waited on basically by their teachers, by their fellow girl students, they thought that they were really, really important and they were obviously led to believe that by their families. (FT03)

Only the Best Academy
In a school like ours where we have kids that are coming from good homes in many cases – their parents are teachers and professors and stuff like that. We should be having a [gay-straight alliance] at our school, but mind you, I haven't done anything about starting it up either. I'd be happy to, but part of me wonders as to how that would be accepted. (FT04)

We don't have any black students in our school and nobody else seems to care. We're becoming a way for very elite families to avoid paying big bucks for private education, and I don't think our school wants to discuss that. (MT06)

Exodus High
Many of our students came from single family homes and homes that were certainly socio-economically disadvantaged. A lot of kids had jobs at night and their main focus wasn't always school. I think a lot of our kids didn't come from safe places. Their homes weren't safe, they weren't fed…The community didn't like the school because it was ethnically different from them. The police were at the school often and if ever something was happening in the neighborhood it was our school that was blamed. (MT05)

Although these teachers make some broad generalizations in their descriptions of the school communities, these generalizations give us an understanding of how the teachers

framed their experiences with their students. Educators rarely have the luxury of working with students as individuals and often construct lessons and interactions based on what they know about their students as a group. This can be problematic as it may contribute to stereotyping and glossing over the individual differences that exist between students, but the current structure of schools offers teachers limited opportunities to challenge these practices and the notion of "the way things are done" in schools. These statements also show how progressive educators who have demonstrated their commitment to social justice and human rights can be influenced by oppressive dominant discourses in their school communities and may fall back into familiar discourses of bias that prevail in their work environment.

Teachers saw how external influences from students' families, community values, and out-of-school time played a role in shaping the climate and priorities of the school. In one school, Only the Best Academy, an entrance exam paired with the high expectations of families placed an extraordinary emphasis on students' grades and extracurricular involvements. In another school, Victoria Secondary, the values of one dominant European ethno-cultural group heavily shaped students', teachers', and administrators' behaviors. In the third, Exodus High, the teachers spoke of a regular police presence, the importance of their breakfast program, and how the realities of poverty, violence, and ethnic tensions shaped their experiences of the school. In order to protect the identity of the schools, I am unable to give more detail about these demographics. Although all of these schools had very different cultures and social realities, the participants' spoke of very similar obstacles to addressing forms of gendered harassment.

The factors described above shape how teachers read and respond to cues in their schools. The participants also offered explanations of how they perceived incidents in their schools. In order to give a sample of how teachers read and understood their school cultures, a few excerpts from the interviews where the teachers speak specifically about the broader issues they have seen in the school with respect to bullying and harassment are included below. They are preceded by excerpts from the school's philosophy to demonstrate how the formal and informal structures interact. The entire philosophy is not presented here so as to protect the identity of the schools.

Victoria Secondary:
School philosophy: Victoria Secondary is "committed to academic excellence... in a supportive environment…students are taught respect for individual differences and for the rights of others."

In our school there was a really big problem with, I don't know if I want to say bullying, but there was a lot of homophobia in the school…It happens on a daily basis. It happens in your classroom, in the hall, it happens ALL the time…It would be difficult to respond to [verbal harassment] because it occurs so much – it's almost like it's a part of the school culture. It's tolerated within the school and there are so many things that contribute to it: you have a dominant ethnic group that gives them a sense of power and if not all the teachers are dealing with it then students think, 'sometimes I can do it, sometimes I can't.' (FT02)

Every period, every day. [homophobic name-calling] has actually become a part of the culture of the school. Certain comments that you could consider bullying…its just not even noticed. It just happens. (MT01)

At Victoria Secondary, sexism and homophobia were common occurrences and every teacher who had worked at this school spoke about the significant challenges they faced due to the powerful influence of the values of one dominant European ethnic and religious group. These teachers all spoke about feeling as if they were outsiders in the school because they were not members of the dominant ethno-cultural group and felt powerless to change these behaviors because they were so deeply embedded in and tolerated by the school community.

Only the Best Academy:
School philosophy: The school's mission is to "foster academic achievement, … an understanding of social issues, and a sense of community responsibility." We encourage students "to develop self-discipline, interpersonal skills, and self-esteem." (Admission is by application and entrance examination)

I think student performance in academics, community, cultural, sports activities, are the top priorities of the way our school runs…as long as the kids are doing well, the school goes on and we can justify our position in the public school system…Here there's a perception that it's perfect when it really isn't. We've got good kids, but they have lots of problems too. (FT04)

The very first thing that these students will see at this school is a test. That gives them a clear indication; a clear impression of what this school is all about…At this particular school bullying has taken on a different

perspective. It's not physical, its much more mental, its much more verbal…I don't find our school is very warm. I find our school is very safe, because the last thing a lot of our students want to do is fight…I haven't seen very much racism here. It's a very white school. (MT06)

The teachers at Only the Best Academy voiced frustration about the high demands on students for academic success and the elitism of the families and students in the school. They spoke of the school as a place where students are physically safe, but the psychological pressures to compete and succeed are great and have harmful impacts on the student body. They also spoke about how difficult it was to witness and intervene in covert acts of bullying and harassment that seemed to prevail in this school community.

Exodus High
School Atmosphere: Exodus High's goal is to "promote a positive attitude for social and emotional learning…foster a more positive atmosphere and … increased academic achievement."

The culture of the school was homophobic. Its what kids call each other now, 'fag' and 'gay' and that seems to be the bottom of the rung and I find that kids, especially poor [racialized group] kids, are very homophobic…We did have a multicultural day which was great. That day allowed all the kids from different cultures to come forward and present something. That was a good day because that was inclusive but generally it was mostly focused on the [racialized group] culture of our school. (MT05)

The teachers at Exodus High expressed feeling very little support from their Principal and that the police presence and conflicts with local residents were regular concerns. Although they felt that homophobia was a significant problem that was important to them personally, they spoke about larger concerns that often took priority such as nutrition, physical safety, and working to emphasize the positive aspects of the multicultural school community.

These descriptions of the schools provide a glimpse of how they perceived their work environments. These perceptions were created by the myriad of external influences detailed above. External forces interacted with the teachers' own experiences and philosophy to shape how they chose to act towards bullying and harassment in school. As other scholars have found, school culture is much more likely to determine and support what it is that students, teachers, and others say and do than is the formal management system. This means that teachers are more inclined to act in ways that reflect shared norms

and values of other teachers than in ways defined by school policy (Stader & Thomas, 2006, p. 16). The next section offers an explanation of the internal, or intrapersonal, influences of the teachers in this study.

Internal (Intrapersonal) influences

Each individual brought a specific set of identities and experiences to his/her teaching as well as the research process. What quickly became evident in the interviews was the significant influence of their personal identities and their own experiences in school (educational biography) on shaping how they perceived the culture of their current school. To give a fuller picture of the teachers and how they constructed their identities, I created found poems (Butler-Kisber, 2002) using methods described in the previous chapter, to present some of the key intrapersonal factors as described by each participant. These poems are included to share with the reader key aspects of the teachers' identities that shape their views on gendered harassment. These poems share how the teachers construct their identities and provide the best format to introduce the participants to the reader in their own words.

Steve Pyre (male, age 28, 3 years teaching)

> Teaching was something
> I always wanted to do.
> You are a
> role model.
> You have to be
> consistent.
> You've got to set
> the tone.
>
> I'm not the average teacher.
> I've got the artillery behind me if
> I want to use it.
> Am I more vigilant because I'm gay?
> Probably.
> It's the right thing to do.
>
> The reason I got into teaching is
> to be a mentor.
> I don't fear being exposed.
> I know it's a reality.
> I have a responsibility.
> I'm willing to deal with
> the backlash.

Steve spoke articulately about his role in the classroom and the challenges he experienced as a gay teacher. This aspect of his identity appeared to be a strong motivating factor for his ongoing involvement in social justice issues in his life. He spoke about choosing not to come out to his students and his Principal because he was aware of the extreme homophobia in his school community. This poem shows his dedication to creating safe spaces in his classroom and challenging homophobia and other forms of bias. He also acknowledged that he did not intervene as consistently as he would like because of the pressures he felt to get through his curriculum. During the interviews he talked about wanting to leave his current school because he did not feel supported in developing student leadership and other extra-curricular activities. He has since left secondary education and is now working in the field of student leadership at a Canadian university.

Jessica Crosby (female, age 28, 1 year teaching)

> I wanted to make
> a difference.
> I was interested in
> social change.
> My job is
> to teach students
> to help them become lifelong learners
> to teach them about the type of people they want to be
> citizens they want to be in their communities.
> Consistency.
>
> I felt like an
> outsider.
> I was a woman.
> These [SEE] boys wouldn't listen to me.
> You don't want to
> rock the boat.
>
> I was nervous. It's controversial.
> It's a human right.
> You're a new teacher.
> You worry.
> Until your job is
> secure.

Jessica talked about her struggles as a woman and an outsider in her school community. She was not a member of the dominant ethnic group and due to its macho values often had a hard time working with her male students. She spoke about her attempts to address homophobia and sexual harassment, but also described feeling vulnerable and not wanting to "rock the boat" as a new teacher. Her outsider status made her feel vulnerable, but also gave her the ability to critique some of the biased attitudes and practices in this school community. Her passion for social justice and human rights education has led her out of the secondary classroom and back to graduate school.

Sam Kaye (female, age 27, 2 years teaching)

> I've always been a teacher.
> I just kind of fell into it.
> This is me.
> This is what I want to do.
> Be a role model.
> Have my students be in a safe spot
> for a change.
> I still remember having someone as your best friend
> and the next day you're
> enemies.
>
> I'm vulnerable.
> When you yourself are gay,
> you're even more scared.
> You think you're going to be
> attacked.
> You know its going to be
> personal.
>
> I want to make a difference in
> The public school system.
> It's going to beat you up and
> give you the minimum of everything.
>
> I'm so sensitive.
> Someone who's being picked on
> sends my stomach into
> tumbles.
> I'm sensitive to more than
> your average teacher.
> It gets neglected.
> It pertains to me.

Sam had a well developed understanding of school policies and social structures and as a teacher with a temporary license felt vulnerable and did not want to take risks that might cause her to lose her job. Her experience providing workshops to schools before becoming a classroom teacher gave her useful tools that she continues to draw from. She spoke about creating alliances with other teachers and taking small steps to confront the biases she observed in schools. Her passion for working with youth led her to return to school to get her permanent teaching license and is back teaching in public schools.

Anita Day (female, age 31, 7 years teaching)

> I can't say I've always dreamt
> of being a teacher
> that would be a lie.
> I could do two things which I enjoy:
> work with young people and teach math.
> The most important thing is
> to create
> an environment where they feel
> safe and respected,
> building that trust.
> You stand up there and
> lead by example.
>
> It's tough as a teacher of color.
> I have to be very careful.
> It really hits me personally.
> It's hard to not let my emotions get all
> tangled up in there.
> I have very little room
> to slip up.
> Is this because I am a woman of color?
> Is that really about race?
> Yeah, maybe.
>
> You get immune.
> You get desensitized.
> I consciously make an effort
> to get at my own prejudice.
> How much work this has been
> frightens me.
> The kids need to see you
> being firm, being fair.
>
> When we moved to Canada,
> my dad was outright discriminated against,
> to his face.
> Words,
> behaviors,
> are very hurtful.

Anita is a dedicated teacher who is passionate about her work in the classroom. She cried at times during the interviews as she reflected on experiences she has had during her time in the classroom. The challenges she faces as a teacher of color and the individual

work she has done to unlearn her own cultural biases impact her work in education. She acknowledges how teachers who have been in the classroom longer can get desensitized to student behavior and how she actively works at being firm and fair. She also spoke about her own experiences with discrimination and how they make her sensitive to the damaging effects of words and behaviors. Anita has taken a sabbatical from teaching to return to graduate school full-time.

Pierre LeSage (male, age 39, 14 years teaching)

> I love kids.
> Teaching meshed with my personality.
> To make them learn something.
> To touch success.
>
> I think about the times
> when I got called fag
> They're the most poignant memories of
> my high school and elementary career.
> I made sure my students knew
> I didn't tolerate any of that stuff.
> It's the one that I hear the most.
> It carries the least consequence.
>
> I looked for schools that were disadvantaged.
> It's there that I do the most good.
> I've never been able to put a picture
> of my partner
> on a desk.
>
> I was always afraid.
> The lack of respect
> from the kids.
> Being a gay man,
> I'm more sensitive.
> I can't detach myself.
> Having experienced harassment,
> made me define my role
> as a teacher.

Pierre is an experienced teacher who spoke of many difficulties he faced in his career as a gay man in schools. His experiences being targeted as a student, and being harassed as a teacher by students, colleagues, and parents, have caused him to develop a deep awareness of how sex, gender, and sexual orientation shape people's experiences in schools. In addition to graduate coursework on the topic, he has been involved in a harassment case from an earlier position. He talked about his struggle to stay in the field of education in spite of the severe discrimination he has faced. At the time of this writing, he has left public education to become an administrator at a private school.

Homer (male, age 35, 7 years teaching)

I was searching for myself.
I wasn't happy.
I needed to reorganize my life.
I decided to get a teaching degree.
I'm here to make the students
happy.
I want students to feel
welcome.
I want to push the envelope.
It's hard every year.
After the tenth time of hearing the same thing,
you lose that sensitivity.

I came from a high school that was
very very violent;
lots of knives,
lots of guns,
lots of drugs.
We were the only minority group
I got incredibly bullied.
I was called everything:
Black, Jew, Vietnamese.
I got into fights every single day.

When I started teaching
I started remembering all those horrible things.
When I was young, I was using that word
quite a bit,
'you're a fag.'
I have to tell the other kids,
stop using these words,
they're hurtful.

I don't necessarily agree with homosexuality.[*]
I catch myself sometimes saying,
'oh that's so gay,'
What did I just do?
I'm conscious of what I'm doing,
I'm trying to correct myself.

---

[*] *one year after the interviews, this teacher wrote me after reading his poem and said:* "I know that I said that but at the same time I don't feel it reflects my view on the matter. I would prefer to say that homosexuality does not make anyone less of a person. My student who was openly gay and a recent documentary on homosexuality have really helped me in my views on this topic."

Homer was the only straight man who participated in this study, but his experiences being bullied in school and a target for racial harassment also made him sensitive to the concerns in this study. He talked about how more experienced teachers may lose their sensitivity to certain issues and spoke freely about his own process in learning to confront sexism, racism, and homophobia in his school. At the time of the study, he had the narrowest definitions of bullying and harassment but was a vocal critic of the racist and sexist practices he observed in some of his colleagues. The footnote to his poem shows an interesting development from his earlier statements in the interviews. Homer continues to teach in public schools.

These poems give us a glimpse inside the hearts and minds of these teachers and how certain experiences and aspects of their identity profoundly shaped how they perceived and responded to incidents of bias and harassment in their schools. The trends in the poems indicate that these teachers view themselves as different from the average educator. The fact that four of these participants have left the public school setting is also of some concern. It may indicate that more progressive or social justice-minded educators feel that they are not able to work effectively within the current structures of public schooling. As traditionally conservative institutions, it is not surprising that schools may force out more critical and progressive thinkers who are unable to make their personal and professional philosophies work within the current structures of schools. Another common theme was that aspects of the teachers' identities that have caused them to feel marginalized in society such as their ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, have impacted how they construct their responsibilities in the classroom and how they relate with their students, colleagues, and administrators. This theme supports a similar finding in work done in the area of educator activism around peer sexual harassment.

In a study of eleven educators in the Southern U.S., Jones concluded that victimization emerged as a significant impetus for educator activism and intervention regarding sexual harassment in their schools (2005, p. 26). This is an interesting finding as there was not a single volunteer in this study who identified as a white, heterosexual male. As several teachers pointed out, it is their personal experiences with discrimination and marginalization that made them particularly sensitive to these issues in schools. The challenge that these findings present is how to raise the awareness of educators who have

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not personally felt the impacts of discrimination or exclusion from dominant culture, as well as how to retain passionate and critical thinking educators when certain structures of education seem intent on forcing them out.

Perceptions

 In order to understand how teachers perceived certain student behaviors, it is important to clarify how they defined them for themselves. The participants in the study offered broad, yet consistent definitions of bullying, racial harassment, sexual harassment, and homophobic harassment. They regularly gave examples of homophobic harassment when asked about bullying and also connected racial and sexual harassment as forms of bullying. Although one teacher limited his definition of bullying to acts of physical violence (MT06), the other participants included verbal and non-physical actions in their definitions and acknowledged how power and intimidation were important factors that defined bullying. The definitions they offered that were the clearest and well thought-out were for bullying, sexual harassment, and homophobic harassment. This indicates a higher level of awareness about these forms of harassment and a greater comfort level with the language and the concepts involved in teaching about them to their students. Here is how they defined bullying:

> There's obviously the very overt type of bullying where kids are physically, aggressively fighting, but you don't see that very often in the school. With girls its sometimes they'll exclude one girl from their group or they'll make fun of her hair. It's this strange power dynamic that goes on between kids. Like they want to be at the top of that hierarchy and they try to exclude each other from their circles. (FT02)

> Any sort of intimidation from just verbal bullying and name calling to students who actually get punched out at noon. (MT01)

> Anything that would make another kid feel unsafe or threatened, whether it be verbal or physical or shut out from a group for being different. It can be more insidious than that. (MT05)

> Bullying as power struggles, size can come into play. Young people who haven't matured are really vulnerable. It's always about power. (FT03)

> For me it would be intimidation, harassment, that is physical, emotional, mental, whether it's as simple as writing something, vandalizing somebody's desk or just for fun because it's accepted within certain circles. (FT04)

> Having four or five kids put you on the ground and beat the crap out of you until you're bloody, that to me is bullying. (MT06)

These excerpts indicate that the participants in this study shared a fairly broad and consistent view on what constitutes bullying, with the exception of MT06 who limited his definition to acts of physical violence. Although they do not use the same amount of detail offered in Olweus' definition as presented in Chapter 3, their perceptions and definitions are consistent with his,

> A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students...it is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempting to inflict, injury or discomfort on another...Negative actions can be carried out by words (verbally), for instance, by threatening, taunting, teasing, and calling names. It is a negative action when somebody hits, pushes, kicks, pinches or restrains another -- by physical contact. It is also possible to carry out negative actions without the use of words or physical contact, such as by making faces or dirty gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group, or refusing to comply with another person's wishes (Olweus, 1993, 9).

Sexual harassment was also a well-understood term among the participants in this study. In this definition, they tended to give more examples of types of sexual harassment they have witnessed rather than giving a broad explanation of the phenomenon. What is interesting is that only three of the participants gave examples of behaviors mainly by males towards females. This indicates that these teachers have a more inclusive and broad definition of these behaviors than others which would cause them to view a greater variety of behaviors as sexual harassment (such as homophobic name calling between boys or rumor spreading and name calling between girls). But as one teacher pointed out, these same-sex behaviors may not be responded to with the same severity or attention as opposite-sex behaviors because they are not as widely understood as forms of sexual harassment.

> It happens a lot with young girls calling them sluts, or harassing them because of their sexual behavior. It would happen also with people who are homosexual. (FT02)

It can be anything from verbal comments on putting down someone because of their sex, or making sexual innuendoes that are unwanted…which makes the recipient of those comments feel uncomfortable. All the way up to physical touching or behavior for sex…. there's a whole range. It is a form of bullying. The goal of any of those comments is to make someone feel inferior, so that would be bullying. (MT01)

Anything that a person would perceive as harassing that has a sexual nature to it, it could a sexual approach or a touch, it could be an insult or words based on sexuality or gender – things that somebody finds undesirable of a sexual nature. (MT05)

Guys towards the girls oftentimes, they get touched inappropriately or, name calling based on the sexual attributes of their body, or a guy getting perceived as effeminate gets treated as gay. Or girls on the opposite ends, too masculine being called, dykey or lesbian. (MT05)

I immediately think of it being gender-based. I usually think of it as male-female, like sexual abuse, male figures overpowering female figures. I think sometimes even among boys, like boy to boy there's sexual harassment. Primarily I would think of it as male-female, and that's because those are the relations that are detected right away by teachers if there's something going on and the ones that are taken really seriously at the office. The other ones aren't as defined, they're not necessarily always reflected on as sexual harassment. (FT03)

Sexual harassment is whenever a student feels that their personal space is being intruded upon in a manner that they don't feel comfortable…an intention of the boy liking the girl. (MT06)

It could be any sort of intimidation, either if it's mental, or physical, or verbal, and specifically addressing aspects of, feminine behavior or masculine behavior, homosexuality or heterosexuality…bisexuality or whatever. (FT04)

The legal definition for sexual harassment includes two different forms: *quid pro quo* and hostile environment sexual harassment (Lee, Croninger, Linn, & Chen, 1996, p. 384). The teachers in this study did not mention a single form of *quid pro quo* harassment, which means being coerced to provide sexual favors in exchange for some desired outcome such as a promotion, a better grade, or other external rewards. Instead they spoke entirely of forms of sexual harassment that created a hostile environment in the school. The creation of a hostile environment is the key difference between a behavior that is defined as

bullying and one that is harassment. Bullying behaviors are intentional and targeted at an individual whereas harassing behaviors also include actions that may be unintentionally biased and not directed at a single individual.

Such forms of sexual harassment appear to be much more prevalent, and have been defined as, "unwelcome behaviour that can include both physical or verbal conduct and that has a sexual or gender component" (Reed, 1996, p. 21). The Quebec Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport's guide to understanding sexual harassment gives the following definition from the *Commission des droits de la personne du Quebec*,

> a form of behaviour characterized by repeated and unsolicited sexually connotative acts or gestures that could either undermine the dignity or the physical or psychological well-being of the individual or lead to unfavourable working conditions or even dismissal …generally, sexual harassment consists of repeated acts… [but] a single serious action that results in a continuing harmful effect can also be considered to be sexual harassment. (cited in Gouvernement du Quebec, 1996, p. 7)

Although this policy document does not limit its definition of sexual harassment to behaviors by males towards females, the rest of the document and accompanying pedagogical resources focus exclusively on relationships between boys and girls and completely ignores dynamics of sexual harassment between same-sex peers which often include homophobic language. On the other hand, many of the teachers in this study did view homophobic harassment as a form of sexual harassment. Some of the definitions provided by the participants to describe homophobic harassment include:

> Name-calling, and it could get physical as well, like bullying. Excluding people because of their sexual preferences, this would all be sexual harassment and homophobic. (FT02)

> Any comments that portray same-sex relationships in a negative connotation. It could be comments, it could be acts, it could be suggestions, could be touching between same-sex…whether it's directed at someone who's gay or not. (MT01)

> Any kind of derogatory comment that insults somebody's sexual orientation. (MT06)

> The intimidation either verbal, or physical or, emotional, based on how a person looks or behaves, based on very superficial things targeting very personal aspects of who a person is, jokes and language that kids use. There's more of a sensitivity towards race[-related insults], even though it

still happens and it's still unacceptable. But there seems to be more acceptance to be able to be verbally abusive using terms ascribed to homosexuality and homosexual behavior. (FT04)

The participants had a harder time defining racial harassment even though they felt that it was more readily addressed in their school than homophobia. This could partially be attributed to the influence of self-selection on the participant pool. Since the recruitment information for this study specifically mentioned issues of sexual harassment and homophobia, it is likely that teachers who were more aware of these issues would volunteer to participate. The way these participants defined racial harassment is given below.

Any type of harassment related to at somebody's culture and their practices and poking fun at those, or excluding people from your circle because they're different. (FT02)

Any type of racial slur, verbal or – and oftentimes it's nothing physical… excluding a kid, like I said from a group because they're a different colour not integrated. Anything that insults another kid based on their race would be a racial bullying. (MT05)

Racial harassment would be targeting somebody based on how they look or how they speak. So it's a very superficial in the sense of getting at someone… wanting to be in a sense of power, but racial harassment at the school it's mainly been verbal. (FT04)

The working definition of racial harassment used in this study is derived from Reed's definition for sexual harassment: unwelcome behaviour that can include physical, verbal, or psychological conduct that has an ethnic or racial component.

Teachers also struggled initially with defining harassment for gender non-conformity and when asked to define it they spoke more specifically about the types of students who might be targeted for this kind of harassment, rather than a definition of the behavior.

People who aren't conforming to the traditional or stereotypical gender roles would be harassed because they don't fit into that stereotype. (FT02)

I'll use the word stereotype, assigning masculine behaviors to men and feminine behaviors to women, gender non-conformity would be a male student displaying what would be considered feminine characteristics or vice-versa. (MT01)

This pressure to be "female" or feminine or be masculine … is there just one way of being a girl, is there just one way of being a boy, [that is] my understanding of conforming to a particular gender. (FT04)

In this study, harassment for gender non-conformity is defined as any behavior that insults or demeans gender identities and expressions that vary from the expectations of behavior framed within a gender binary of hegemonic masculinity for males and femininity for females and may also be referred to as transphobia. Transphobia is not limited to attitudes towards individuals who identify as transgender or transsexual. It refers to the group of attitudes and behaviors that privilege 'typical' or normative gender role performances over all others.

The participants' awareness of and definitions of these forms of bullying and harassment has a significant impact on if and how they would address them. For example, in the instance of racial harassment, two participants spoke of how their understandings of it have shifted recently, and how their lack of attention to these dynamics previously had prevented them from addressing it in clear and consistent ways.

I was kind of struggling with that question [about defining racial harassment] before because our school was predominantly white [and] I never really at that time thought of it as really being ethnic, or racial discrimination, but it did happen, this rivalry between people based on their backgrounds and where they came from. There definitely would have been discrimination against people who were not from that dominant group and even though it isn't traditionally how you think of [it] due to color or something like that, it was still prominent within the school. (FT02)

You have to talk, but I'm much more in tune to it and I'm much more willing to talk with these kids about this, which I didn't in my first five years of teaching. (FT04)

As the above definitions indicate, the teachers in this study were aware of issues of bullying and harassment in their school. Even in the absence of clear policies and official definitions, they had constructed broad and useful understandings of these behaviors that led them to act more proactively towards reducing these behaviors than the majority of their colleagues. This awareness and willingness to name such incidents as harassment is an important first step to corrective action. As Uggen and Blackstone point out in their study on sexual harassment, males who were targeted for harassing behaviors such as offensive jokes, intrusive questions, and invasion of personal space were much less likely

than females to call this behavior sexual harassment. They assert that "males lack a clear cultural reference point to translate the constellation of behaviors they report into a perception of sexual harassment"(2004, p. 80). This may indicate that consciousness raising and educational activities for educators are a crucial first step to reducing all forms of biased harassment in schools. This leads us to a discussion of their responses to these incidents.

Responses

The most consistent response that teachers described was to turn incidents of verbal bullying or harassment in the classroom into teachable moments. They tended to prefer a more humanistic, educative approach to a punitive one although they did apply punitive measures such as detentions and suspensions in extreme cases and in incidents of persistent repeat offenders. Many of the examples teachers gave included leading discussions about appropriate language and behavior in the classroom setting. In a similar study conducted in Saskatchewan, "inappropriate language" was one of the main reasons why teachers intervened in cases of homophobic harassment (Jewell, Morrison, Chinnery, Wimmer, & Cochrane, 2006).

One teacher gave a detailed explanation of an approach he took to address verbal harassment with his students. He decided to commit a full class to the issue after he had been personally targeted with anti-gay slurs at his school. He explained his lesson as follows:

> I decided to review school policy with the students as it was previously encouraged to take time out to discuss class discipline. I discussed all issues and how they are related to prejudice. I explained to all classes why words like faggot, nigger, paki and dyke were all equal in impact and would not be used because of the potential dangers that these words carry when used. We talked about how these words can escalate into violence and that they can eventually compromise the safety of everyone. I explained how all cultures contribute to who and what we are, and that all are important and valuable. Some found it difficult to understand how being gay can be called a culture. I explained the contributions made by different cultures citing for example that my life had been enriched by Black and Asian cultures. I then made reference to the clothes that many of them wear, Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, and that these people are gay designers whose talents we respect. I spoke about how diversity is what makes us unique and beautiful. I explained that regardless of our personal beliefs, religious and otherwise, that

Canada gives equal rights to everyone and that we must respect it. I explained how many fled their own countries to come to Canada to flee persecution. Some people are persecuted for their religion (for example in Ireland), and ethnic origins (Kosovo and Sri Lanka), colour (South Africa), gender or sexual orientation. I then read a newspaper article from the Toronto Star dealing with homophobia. I spoke about the origins, about the above words of hate. I talked about activism, citing examples of the emancipation of women and apartheid, and how it was, if it were not for Nelson Mandela and Nelly McClung blacks and women would still not have equal rights. I explained that strong positive voices make changes for the better. I told them that all people, gay or straight, Black or White, man or woman, deserve equal rights. (MT-05)

Unfortunately, after this lesson, he was reprimanded by his Principal for taking time away from his curriculum to address the issue of name-calling and harassment. This is an example of how teachers felt that their actions to reduce such behaviors in their school were not supported by the administration or their fellow colleagues.

Another important tool that the study participants talked about was the importance of setting up clear expectations at the beginning of the school year and enforcing them consistently. One participant stated,

Well I think in setting the tone you kind of close the door for that type of bullying to happen in your classroom, so I mean it really has to do with being vigilant and speaking up immediately. …you hear the language, you respond to it, and you let students know that its not acceptable in class. (MT01)

The value in having a clear and consistent approach to classroom behavior has been documented by researchers (DiGiulio, 2001). Most participants talked about making a concerted effort to intervene whenever they heard harmful insults being made. They often expressed frustration that other staff members were not also intervening, and this sometimes resulted in them limiting their efforts to their classroom because they felt that was their only sphere of influence (FT02, FT03). Another teacher talked about the importance of authentic consequences and spoke of the following example from her class,

There was a writing on a table, "so and so is a homo" And this was like, "I'm sorry but this is totally offensive. I find it really offensive. We're going to have to clean our tables." So everybody has to… I don't know if anybody's gonna own up to it, so we're all gonna clean. (FT04)

The teachers did feel as if there was a hierarchy of behaviors that were more acceptable in their schools. They perceived physical bullying and racial harassment at the top of the list

as forms of peer aggression that get responded to strongly and were most consistently intervened in by the administration and other staff. They also felt that homophobic harassment was at the bottom of the list of priorities in terms of awareness and institutional support. Interestingly enough, harassment for gender non-conformity was often not ever mentioned again in the third interview unless it was asked about specifically. This may indicate that it is a category of harassment that is not widely discussed or understood, even among educators who have a heightened awareness of issues relating to bullying, harassment, and homophobia in school.

Conclusion

Most teachers spoke of their personal desire or commitment to challenge issues of gendered harassment but felt limited in their actions due to a perceived lack of support from the administration and their colleagues. They felt isolated in addressing the problem of homophobic name-calling in particular, and that it was too prevalent an issue in their school for them to tackle alone. The lack of intervention by colleagues and the lack of demonstrated support from the administration resulted in many of these teachers giving up and limiting their interventions to only the most severe offenses. The lack of consistency in reporting and response to such incidents among colleagues and the lack of a clear policy and definitions to guide teachers in the classrooms and hallways were significant obstacles these teachers faced in their school cultures.

On the other hand, every single participant spoke of a personal commitment to challenging bias in the classroom. This was often paired with an articulation of a marginalized aspect of their own identity: woman, gay, or ethnic minority. Each of these teachers had a political consciousness about social inequalities that had been shaped by their own education and personal experiences. This consciousness influenced their teaching philosophy and how they perceived their students and school cultures. They were articulate in critiquing issues with the social structure of the school and the impacts of other cultural factors that influenced students' experiences in their schools.

These findings offer us a deeper understanding of how various forms of bullying and harassment are perceived by teachers who are already somewhat attuned to them in secondary schools. This data offers scholars, educators, and school leaders a clearer

picture of some of the challenges that exist when trying to confront such behaviors schools. The final chapter is a discussion of these structural obstacles and ways we can work to reduce them and improve the climate for all students and teachers in schools.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Understanding aspects of bullying and harassment in schools has been the subject of educational research for almost 30 years. This shows that it is a prevalent problem that has persisted in the face of international scrutiny and multiple intervention efforts. Unfortunately, as Chapter 4 indicated much of this work has been done without examining the various forms of biased harassment that are used to bully kids in schools. The lack of discussion of and attention to issues of race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation and in understanding acts of peer aggression and its relations to social power in schools is a significant oversight in this body of research. Also, the tendency to look at bullying as isolated acts by pathologized individuals diverts the focus from the external socializing influences that have shaped that individual in the first place. In order to develop effective strategies for intervention in schools, we must pay attention to the larger socio-cultural forces that are at work. This final chapter will present a summary of the major findings of this research and their implications for practice and further investigation. I will begin with a summary of the findings presented in the last chapter that will be followed by a discussion of the main obstacles that are preventing teachers from intervening effectively and consistently. The third section will discuss the limitations of this study and will lead into a discussion of future areas of investigation that can be informed by this work.

Summary of findings

The data presented in Chapter 6 offer us a framework through which we can better understand the ways in which teachers experience the phenomenon of gendered harassment in high school. There are many complex variables that shape how teachers view and respond to the many types of bullying and harassment that occur. Although there were only six teachers participating in this study, these educators already had some awareness of and sensitivity to most of the forms of harassment discussed. This was a result of the self-selection of participants in this study. These teachers are canaries in the coalmine who are providing us a valuable warning about the dangers of this phenomenon in schools. Their increased sensitivity to and awareness of issues relating to gendered harassment enabled

them to offer valuable insights that can improve the practice of all educators. In order to understand how teachers perceive and respond to incidents of gendered harassment in secondary schools, I have developed a theoretical model that emerged from the interview process (Figure 7.1).
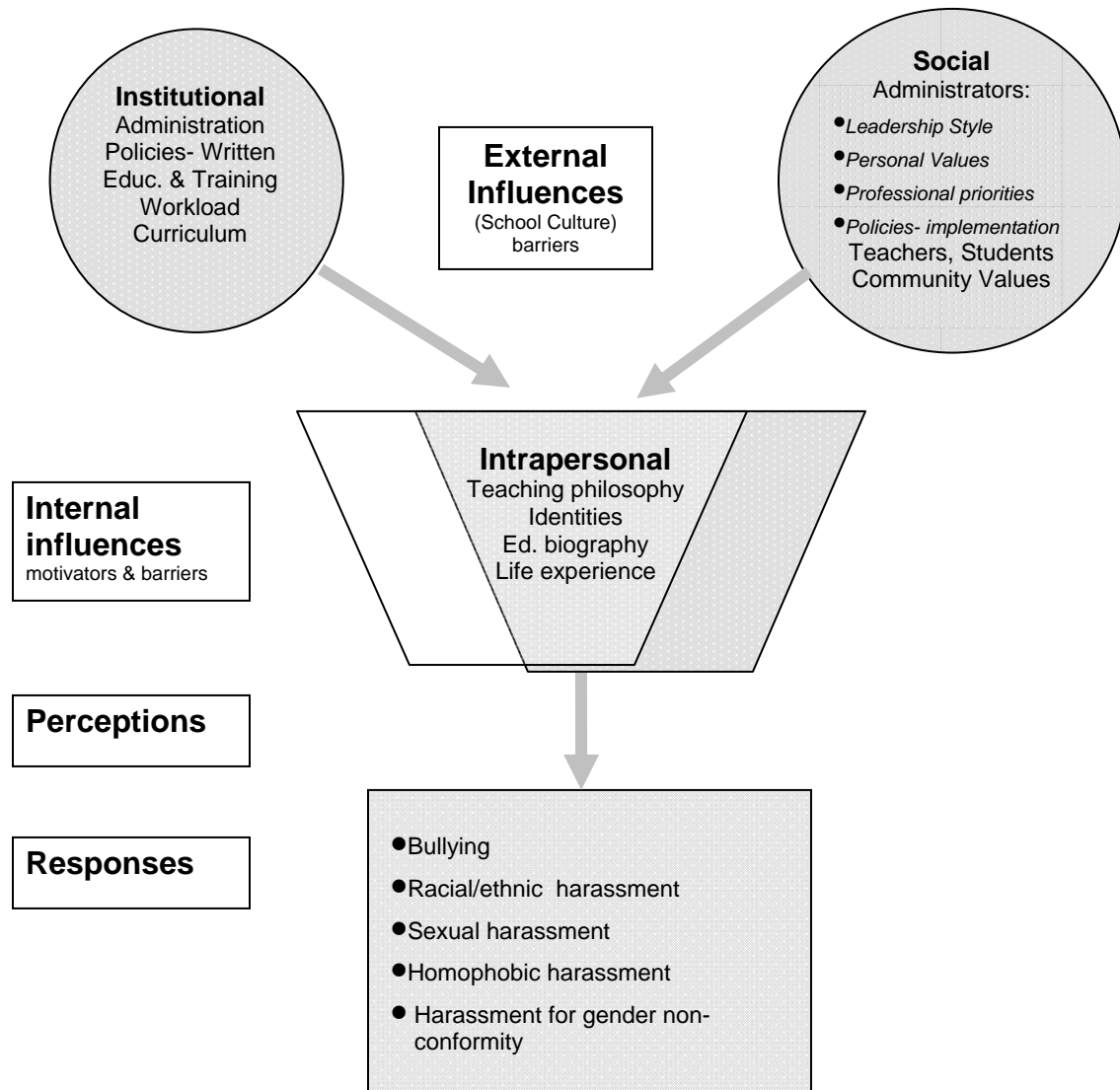
Figure 7.1 Influences that shape teachers' perceptions and responses

There are four tiers to this model that demonstrate the relationship between the main factors that influence how teachers perceive and respond to bullying and harassment in school: *external influences, internal influences, perceptions* and *responses*. As the diagram shows, there are two categories of external influences (circles) that get filtered through the teachers' internal influences (trapezoid) and this process shapes their

perceptions of (arrow) and responses to student behaviors (square). The two categories that form the external influences are: a) institutional (structural-formal) and b) social (structural-informal). *Institutional* influences include factors such as: administrative structures, school policies, teacher education and curriculum and workload demands. These factors interact with *social* influences to shape teachers' experiences of the school culture. *Social* factors include the accepted norms and values in the school community. These influences came from superiors (administration), peers (colleagues), students, and families/community members. The influence of superiors was significant and included several aspects of school leadership including administrators' style, personal values, professional priorities, and policy implementation. Other aspects of the informal school culture included colleagues' approaches to teaching and enforcing rules as well as the values embraced and endorsed by the student body and the surrounding community that were prevalent in the school. The interaction between the external influences and internal influences can explain the wide variety of perceptions of and responses to gendered harassment by secondary school teachers. Both external and internal influences present *barriers* and *motivators* to teachers' interventions. These influences vary based on teachers' identities and experiences in their school cultures, but in most cases in this study, the barriers outweigh the motivators for intervention. This imbalance creates a constant struggle for the teachers who are trying to reduce such behavior in their classrooms and schools.

To illustrate the potential of this model to be used by other educators and scholars involved in this work to identify the external and internal influences that shape their behaviors in schools, I will offer myself as a case study for the application of this framework. I will start with an examination of external influences in the two schools where I worked. As my diary entries from the preface show, I didn't feel as if I had any institutional (structural-formal) support from the schools to address gendered harassment. There were no existing policies, nor was there any staff training or discussions on how to handle such issues. There was also active resistance to my efforts to work on diversity issues and gender equity issues in the school. I was repeatedly told to "choose my battles" and I was specifically directed to limit myself to approved curricular materials when making recommendations to students for additional reading and extra-curricular interests.

In my second school I was offered an opportunity speak to my colleagues about homophobia, only to have it cancelled at the last minute. The workload in boarding schools is also extreme and prevents most teachers from doing anything beyond meeting their minimum job requirements. It is a six day work week that includes coaching or other extra-curricular responsibilities at the end of the academic day. The third aspect of our job included dorm supervision which meant quite late nights one day a week (I would leave the dorm just before midnight) and a full weekend of work each month. This schedule left very little time for connections outside of the school community whether they were personal or professional. The staff was highly dedicated and did much for the students, but had limited time to reflect on their practice and deal with additional issues that didn't relate to academics or athletics.

The social (informal) culture of the schools also provided resistance for any positive work on issues of gender and sexual orientation. They were both male-dominated schools (enrollment was 60% male) with three hockey teams for male students and not one for the female students at the first school. The second school did have more female sports teams, and was better in this aspect than the first school. This imbalance contributed to the macho jock culture of the school where the hockey (and in the second school, basketball) coaches and players had extraordinary social power and teachers who didn't coach or students who weren't competitive athletes were seen as less important or less valuable by the school community. This was made apparent by the headmaster going golfing regularly with the head hockey coach, as well as the school housing provided to the coach and his family. Their homes were significantly larger than the typical staff housing provided to the majority of the teaching staff. They were also given a reduced teaching load. I learned through other teachers that this was "the way things were" at this school and was specifically told by a female dean that "feminist teachers didn't last very long" at that school. Finally, the fact that I worked in private boarding schools that relied on tuition dollars for their success meant that wealthy parents and board members had a strong influence on the decisions made by the Headmaster and Deans. Just one concerned phone call from an important donor could cause severe negative repercussions. In my experience, this external influence from families and community members led to the loss of both of my teaching jobs.

In spite of all of these external barriers, my internal influences continued to push me to try and make a difference in the lives of my students. I attended conferences during my vacation and paid my own way, I subscribed to periodicals and read books to expand my understanding of the issues and got involved in community organizations to connect with like-minded individuals. My own personal coming out journey and experiences with sexism and homophobia at the schools provided me with strong motivators to work actively to reduce these forms of discrimination. My educational biography also included a private boarding school education, and the approach to learning at my alma mater was quite progressive and critical. It is where I first was exposed to the importance of including diverse voices and developing critical thinking in education. Although it was an elite school that reinscribed many layers of social privilege, the instruction and climate that I experienced as a student was extremely challenging, supportive, and transformed my understanding of the world. We studied literature by Ralph Ellison, Walt Whitman, Willa Cather, Alice Walker and Zora Neale Hurston. Some courses were interdisciplinary so we learned about art and literature alongside politics and religion in History and English courses. Classes were quite small (average size of 15 students) and involved student-centered debates and thought provoking discussions. We had internationally recognized guest speakers on HIV/AIDS, portrayals of women in advertising, and apartheid in South Africa. This is what led me to teach in private boarding schools. I had such a powerful three years of personal and intellectual growth that I wanted to be a part of that positive impact on someone else's life.

These internal factors acted as strong motivators for my actions as an educator, but also made me vulnerable in schools that were quite sexist and homophobic institutions. I believe it is my strong sense of entitlement that results from the privilege that I have as a white middle class woman with a private education that continues to push me to take action on these difficult issues in the face of significant institutional resistance. My internal influences are so powerful that I am driven to continue working through the external barriers that continue to present themselves in this work. The development of this model through my interviews with the participants in this study have helped me more clearly identify the factors that shaped my experiences as a classroom teacher and become an advocate against gendered harassment in schools.

The data collected in this study reflect Britzman's (2000) notions of the three forms of resistance to sexuality in schools: structural, pedagogical, and psychical. The findings show that the external factors create a majority of the barriers to effective intervention in cases of gendered harassment. Both formal and informal structures work together to prevent effective education and response to bias around issues of sex, gender, and sexual orientation. Sources of *structural* resistance identified in this study include administrators' style, policy implementation, and teacher work load demands. *Pedagogical* barriers include teacher education and training and provincial curriculum demands. *Psychical* barriers were found in administrators' and other teachers' personal values. Conversely, the teachers in this study had internal influences, such as their educational biographies, personal identities, and teaching philosophies, that motivated them to do their best to challenge gendered harassment in spite of the many formal and informal barriers in their schools.

The teachers in this study were self-selected and all spoke of a deep awareness of and commitment to addressing incidents of bullying and harassment in school. Due to this unique population who spoke of their own histories of being harassed or marginalized in schools and Canadian society, one might conclude that educators who do not share these types of internal influences might be less likely to challenge incidents of gendered harassment when they occur. This may be one of the most significant challenges for transforming teachers' understandings of and interventions in these episodes. For example, if teachers do not have educational biographies or teaching philosophies that helped them gain an awareness of sexism, transphobia, and homophobia, they would have fewer internal motivators to induce them to work proactively against such behaviors. Additionally, if teachers hold personal values that do not support equality rights based on sex, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression then their internal influences would act as additional barriers to confronting acts of gendered harassment when they occur. It is for this reason that teacher education programs must work to include a deeper understanding of diversity and equity issues related to sex, gender, and sexual orientation in future educators so that they may increase their awareness of and attention to these issues in schools.

Implications: Transforming school cultures

Through the process of listening to teachers talk about their experiences with gendered harassment in schools it became clear that it would not be possible for them to intervene effectively in incidences of gendered harassment until a shift in the entire school culture occurred. They spoke about how the formal and informal structures of the school reinforced the (hetero)sexist, transphobic, and homophobic attitudes and behaviors that confronted them in their classrooms.

Although I will make several recommendations for improving school cultures, it is important to acknowledge that every school is unique and that what may work in one school community may not be successful in another. Therefore when trying to initiate any sort of school change, educators and community leaders must first evaluate their own school communities before making decisions about what changes are necessary and possible and adjust these recommendations to their unique situation. This approach should improve the chances of successful and long-term change.

School culture

The theoretical model presented above can be a useful tool for analyzing and transforming school cultures. The school culture is a product of the institutional structures (formal) and societal norms and values (informal) that work together to privilege certain behaviors and experiences over others. These are shaped by directives and decisions made at the school board and ministry level, but the individuals who spend every day together in the school buildings are also implicated in creating and sustaining these environments. As other bullying and harassment scholars have pointed out (Cartwright, 1995; Duncan, 2004; Eder, 1997; Olweus, 1993), in order for interventions to be effective, a shift in the culture of the school must occur.

School cultures in many ways privilege and teach the value system that encourages bullies as well as sexist, transphobic, and homophobic behavior. In her study in the UK, Carter explains how the school ethos in an all boys' school was maintained through: "explicit encouragement of aggression and authoritarianism, implicit and subtle encouragement of attitudes and behaviors which support the explicit encouragement, and

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non-intervention in inappropriate behavior compounding assumptions of acceptability" (Carter, 2002, pp. 33 - 34). The macho values of aggression and competition that she reported in her study are present in many coed schools in North America as well. Recognizing students with higher grades "defines school and learning as a competitive game in which some win and others lose" (Maehr & Buck, 1993, p. 48). This zero-sum game of education leaves little room for diverse learners and identities to be supported and valued in schools.

As researcher G.R. Mayer found, there are three social-context factors that appear to be related to student antisocial behavior: clarity, support for teaching staff, and allowance for student differences (cited in DiGiulio, 2001, p. 80). Allowing for differences is important to reduce anti-social behaviors, including bullying and harassment. By rewarding only certain kinds of students for specific kinds of school performance – usually academic or athletic – schools create only limited definitions of success. These typically demand conformity to dominant values and allow little room for creativity and diverse expressions of competency and mastery. One school documented its transformation to be a more respectful and caring school community by using student leaders and addressing issues of harassment and community. This project showed improved attendance, fewer dropouts and expulsions and a rise in GPAs over a four year period (Kneisler, 2001). The success of this school in creating a new school culture can provide an example of what is possible when all stakeholders in a community get involved and are committed to the project.

The schools in this study had created and sustained cultures that support gendered harassment. This was demonstrated in teacher reports of: lack of support or leadership from administrators, lack of intervention by other more experienced teachers, sexist and homophobic behaviors being modeled by colleagues, sexist and homophobic language being accepted parts of school & youth culture, lack of policies or awareness of policies addressing gendered harassment, and the prevalence of patriarchal values and hegemonic masculinity in the students, staff, and community of the school. These factors must each be addressed if any intervention program is to succeed. As there are multiple stakeholders who have influence over creating and maintaining the values and norms in a school

environment, each will be addressed separately in order to identify the contributions they can have in creating positive change in a school community.

I will begin by making recommendations for administrators as it has been repeatedly acknowledged that school leadership is a key factor in creating and sustaining the culture of the school. Next I will offer strategies for teaching staff that includes building relations between colleagues. Third, I will make suggestions that incorporate youth culture and the role students play in shaping the school environment and finally, I will address the role of families and community members to participate in these efforts.

Administration

Leadership

The teachers in this study spoke extensively about their Principals and Vice Principals and how the identities and leadership styles of these administrators impacted how individual teachers would respond to different situations. Many teachers perceived their Principals and Vice Principals as being somewhat sexist and homophobic. These were offered as reasons for not being able to more effectively reduce the amount of gendered harassment occurring in their classrooms and school community. The power that administrators have to shape and influence their school environments has been widely documented (Carr, 1997; Dinham, Cairney, Craigie, & Wilson, 1995; Fullan, 2000; Riehl, 2000). Administrators' actions are grounded in subjective interpretations that arise from their own personal biographies which are situated within collective histories of their cultural groups (Dillard 1995 cited in Riehl 2000). This means that education leadership programs need to be infused with critical pedagogy to assist these administrators in developing a more critical eye and approach to understanding bias in their schools. School boards also need to place a higher priority on diversifying the demographics of who they are hiring as school leaders. As Carolyn Riehl points out in her article, *The Principal's Role in Creating Inclusive Schools for Diverse Students: A Review of Normative, Empirical, and Critical Literature on the Practice of Educational Administration*, "If practice is connected to identity, then it matters who administrators are" (2000, p. 70). If Principals and Vice Principals refuse to recognize biased and discriminatory acts when they occur, then these behaviors will persist in schools and society. As the Jubran case

discussed in Chapter 3 has shown, the refusal of school administrators to take an all-school approach to biased acts of intimidation and bullying can lead to successful human rights complaints in Canadian courts. One formal tool that school leaders have to reshape school cultures is revising and implementing school policies.

Policy

Many of the teachers in this study professed to a lack of knowledge of their existing school policies and the feeling that the policies that were in place were not supported consistently. These critiques point to important areas where schools can improve their environments in regards to gendered harassment. In order to be effective, school policies must be revised so that the following five elements are included: a) community consultation, b) clear language, c) implementation plan, d) procedural guidelines, and e) an evaluation phase. Community consultation is an important step to work towards developing a broad base of support for policy changes and allowing members to voice concerns early in the process. By including various stakeholders in the policy revisions, leaders can anticipate opposition and find ways to work and learn from it creatively to meet the objectives of a more inclusive school environment. Clear language is a second important element so that all members of the community understand who will be affected by the policy. Including a complete list of protected groups as well as guidelines regarding prohibited language and behavior are ways to make existing policies more effective. Though some may argue that adding a "laundry list" of marginalized groups may weaken or limit a policy, history has shown that full equality and protection is not granted to oppressed groups until a list of protected classes is established.

The implementation plan is also crucial to meaningful success of a new policy (Sharp & Smith, 1991). If members of the school community are unaware that a policy change has happened or don't know how it affects their roles, then changes will not come about. Plans are most effective that include three main points: a) list the roles and responsibilities of students, families, and staff, b) include an education and awareness campaign to inform all members of school community of the new policy, and c) provide financial and administrative support for staff development. If school staff don't feel that

they have the tools to implement a new policy, then it is unlikely that they will support it in meaningful ways. One way to guide school staff in effective implementation of a new policy is to provide them with suggested procedures to follow when responding to incidents of gendered harassment. Response protocols will vary depending on the population and the setting of the school, but they are useful tools for educators to refer to when a shift in school climate is underway. As Ian McGillivray points out in his book on sexual orientation and school policy, "the way in which the policy is implemented has direct bearing on how the new policy is received and perceived by the teachers" (2004, p. 63).

Finally, an evaluation phase is a valuable step for schools to determine where they are succeeding in policy implementation and where they need to focus more determined efforts. It is advisable to evaluate policies within two or three years of first implementing them to ensure that the steps outlined in the policy are being followed consistently throughout the school or school board. This is an area where many policies fall short but holds great potential for lasting success in reshaping school cultures.

Teaching staff

Many teachers expressed frustration with the barriers they felt prevented them from addressing cases of gendered harassment. The three most common barriers were: a) a limited sense of efficacy, b) a lack of education and training, and c) excessive workload demands. All of the teachers complained about their limited sphere of influence, or efficacy, in school. They wanted to be able to respond to student behaviors in all parts of the school, but felt as if they could only have a meaningful impact in their own classroom areas. This intersects with their concerns about lack of consistency with enforcing school policies and their relationships with their colleagues. As noted above, in order to truly reshape a school culture, there must be clear guidelines for all stakeholders in the community and leadership from the administration that will improve teachers' feelings of efficacy and expand the areas of the school that they can keep safe.

The participants in this study also explained that they were not provided with the education and training that they need to recognize biased behaviors and then to respond to them in consistent and meaningful ways. The fact that educators on the front lines are not provided with the knowledge, tools, or the support they need to create safe learning

environments for all students in schools is a matter of significant concern to the educational community. This places a burden on teacher education programs to include information about addressing bullying and harassment as well as other issues of diversity and bias in order to better prepare teachers for the realities of the schools in which they will be working. Critical pedagogy is one approach to teacher education that can improve how prepared teachers feel to address such complex issues. By incorporating a more critical approach to teacher education, these programs can provide future teachers with a better foundation for understanding and working through incidents of bias and gendered harassment in schools.

Current educators also need to take responsibility for their own ongoing professional development. As professionals, teachers must recognize their own blind spots and take proactive steps to improve their own understanding of issues that they find challenging. Although much of this is a teacher's own responsibility, it can only be effective and sustainable with the support of the school. Schools can support this work by paying for conference fees, offering comp days to attend workshops, and creating a culture that values ongoing development in its staff.

Related to issues of professional development are those of work load. Many participants listed this as the primary barrier to their lack of response in cases of gendered harassment. There are several ways that school administrators and school boards can alleviate some of the work load that may limit teachers' effectiveness in dealing with issues of gendered harassment and bullying. Although many of these measures may require additional resources that are scarce in schools, it is hard to place a price tag on students' emotional well-being. Instead of investing in metal detectors and security guards, as many schools are now doing, school boards should consider re-allocating such resources to hire educational assistants and reduce class size to alleviate teacher work loads.

Another approach would include limiting the number of different course preparations that teachers are assigned. This would free up their out of class time to follow up on behavior issues and meet with students involved in cases of bullying and harassment. Finally, the extreme emphasis on "covering material" and preparing for high-stakes exams forces teachers to attempt to teach large amounts of curricular content and ignore student misbehavior and other issues of community and citizenship in the school. Creating an

educational system that allows for many ways to assess academic success while also teaching about community and democratic values would alleviate some of this pressure from teachers. Unfortunately in the climate of high-stakes testing and exit exams, and growing resistance to Quebec's pedagogical renewal (the official term for its Province-wide curriculum reform) it is unlikely that this approach will have the potential to be implemented in the near future.

Students

Students are often overlooked when policy changes are made. They are viewed as passive participants in the institution of the school rather than the active creators of the school culture. Students comprise the largest percentage of a school community and are the trend-setters for what is valued in school. Without the support and investment of student leaders, there will continue to be student-only spaces where incidents of harassment take place such as locker areas, washrooms, and areas in playgrounds and athletics fields. Schools that successfully engage student leaders, such as athletic team captains, student council members, peer mediators and others, can have a much broader and deeper impact on the lives of all students in school. Ways that this can be done include implementing a more student-centred approach to teaching and coaching as well as integrating a critical and queer pedagogy across the curriculum. Extra-curricular projects can also be implemented such as: conducting summer leadership retreats, after-school discussion groups on diversity issues, or weekend workshops that educate students about gendered harassment. These sessions can provide a discussion forum about school culture and solicit students' help and support in challenging gendered harassment and other forms of bias in the school. In addition to engaging prominent students in the school population, all students should be informed of the school's policies on harassment and discrimination by posting a code of conduct in each classroom, having students sign a behaviour contract, and/or by having home-room discussions about the policy, what it means, and how it might affect them.

Families & community members

Finally, no school community is complete without the input and influence of families and community members. The parents' association and other community groups

should be invited and encouraged to become actively involved in developing the school policy and educational strategies regarding bullying and harassment. By developing these partnerships early on, schools can anticipate any resistance or potential backlash and work through these issues before they grow into negative publicity for the school. Most families are deeply invested in the education and development of their children and therefore should be included in such initiatives. Although some resistance might be present, by building strong ties with parent groups and other community organizations, schools can create a lasting network that will potentially expand their efforts to reduce such bias in the community at large.

By working with all four groups of stakeholders in a school community, we drastically improve our chances of lasting and meaningful change in the culture of the school. Each of these four groups actively participate in creating and supporting the formal and informal cultures of the school and must be considered and included in any approach to reduce gendered harassment and related forms of bias in schools. Although this study has worked to thoroughly understand this problem from the teachers' perspectives, there are a few limitations to these findings that will be discussed in the following section.

Limitations

This study had two main limitations that I will discuss here. These limitations were: participant recruitment and selection and integrity of participants' responses. In regards to participant recruitment and selection, the two main issues were: recruitment and self-selection. Under the theme of integrity of participants' responses, the limitations include: political correctness and self-reports.

In this study, the most difficult limitation that emerged was in locating and recruiting a diverse pool of participants. I contacted eleven Principals of secondary schools and requested their assistance in distributing letters to teachers about the project. Four Principals declined to distribute the letters to their staff citing their wish to protect their teachers from additional non-school based demands on their time, or stating that their school was already involved in other research projects. Four never replied to any of my letters, emails or phone calls. I only got assistance distributing recruitment letters from three of the eleven Principals contacted. This unwillingness to support the outreach for the

study could also be attributed their own homophobia or fear of exposing their school to scrutiny on a sensitive topic. Fortunately, I was able to locate a demographically diverse group of participants through other methods.

As noted in Chapter Five, self-selection was a factor the influenced that type of teachers who participated in this study. Since the average age of the participants was relatively young as was their average number of years of classroom teaching experience, future study needs to be done to incorporate the views of more experienced teachers as well as those who may not be as attuned to issues of bullying, harassment, and gendered bias in schools. This self-selection provided rich data, but leaves many questions unanswered in regards to teachers who would not consider participating in such a research project.

The second group of limitations was in relation to the integrity of participants' responses. One concern was about getting open and honest responses in the interviews. Many teachers understand that prejudice of any kind is viewed negatively in Canadian society and have learned to be politically correct when discussing sensitive issues. I was concerned that participants would say what they thought I wanted to hear rather than what they honestly felt and observed in their daily experiences. This limitation was addressed partially through the study design. By the third interview, I had established a rapport with each participant and they spoke more freely about the limitations and obstacles they faced in their classrooms. Since these participants were self-selected and all spoke of their desire to make a difference in their students' lives, they, for the most part, shared my concerns about the problems of violence and harassment in schools and didn't appear to censor their thoughts in the interviews. Based on the data I was able to collect from my time with these teachers I feel that I was successful in earning their trust and respect to engage them as fully as possible in this process.

By establishing from the outset that my main objective was to better understand the daily lives and experiences of professional educators and how they understand this complex and controversial issue, I worked to gain the trust of the participants. I also shared with them my research objectives. I explained that I aimed to find out how to improve the school experience for students who are often targets of harassing behaviors and how to better prepare teachers and administrators to address this challenging issue in their schools. Additionally, I established rapport through our shared experiences as classroom teachers

and as a teacher-researcher who deeply respects teachers and understands the very difficult job that they have in today's schools.

Finally, I am also aware that there may be some concerns with the self-reporting involved in the interview methods of this study. There is the chance that inconsistencies arise between how teachers actually behave in certain situations and what they report in their interviews. As I was unable to secure ethics board approval to conduct in-class observations of the participants, I had to rely solely on the self-reports of their actions and beliefs during the interviews. Since this study is based in a phenomenological approach, this absence of participant-observation did not detract from the objectives of the study. As Seidman writes in his guide to phenomenological interviewing, "if the interview structure works to allow [participants] to make sense to themselves as well as to the interviewer, then it has gone a long way toward validity"(1998, p. 17). The fact that the teachers' responses were internally consistent over time and that they showed a deep emotional engagement in their reflections and responses gave me confidence in the authenticity of their statements. This enabled us to explore how these teachers made sense of this phenomenon, not whether they behaved in a certain way on a regular basis or not. By acknowledging the potential limitations to this study, readers will be aware that I took all of the limitations mentioned into consideration and worked hard to address them to the best of my abilities.

Directions for future research

The findings of this study could have an impact upon several areas of professional education including: teacher in-service workshops, bullying and violence prevention programs, as well as the curriculum for teacher and administrator education programs. By understanding where educators currently stand on this issue we can more effectively develop approaches to work with school staff on addressing and eliminating sexism and homophobia and other forms of bias in schools. By combining the results of this study with other projects based on multicultural, anti-oppressive, and democratic theories of education, it could open the door for more focused inquiry on the responsibility of educators to create a learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. It will

also help educators to teach their students how to be more appreciative of differences and therefore more successful in a diverse world.

There are several future projects that could emerge from this work. One potential study could use a participatory action research design to explore transforming school cultures and actively engage students, teachers, and administrators in the research process. A second possible follow up to this study would be to conduct a large-scale quantitative survey to see if these six teachers' experiences are representative of those of teachers in secondary schools across North America. A third area of investigation could conduct a critical examination of curricular resources to explore if and how official materials reinforce the dominant ideologies that allow gendered harassment to persist and then develop new resources for educators to use. The final area that I suggest is rich for future examination is to conduct studies of the content and structure of teacher education and school leadership programs. As education and training were areas mentioned frequently as a common barrier experienced by the participants in this study, it would be useful to explore how teachers and administrators are currently being taught to understand questions related to bullying, harassment, gender, sex, sexual orientation, and bias in schools.

There are many exciting new avenues of research related to this study since the hegemony of heterosexual patriarchy is prevailing in North American culture and schools. Though critical, feminist, and queer theorists and researchers are working to undo the meanings and constructions that currently allow sexism, heterosexism, transphobia and homophobia to define and reinforce acceptable behavior in society, it is a long process and schools and universities should be actively involved in this work. This means there will be many future opportunities for application and deeper inquiry on this topic. It is my hope that through careful study and effective application, that I may contribute to working myself out of a job into a new field of inquiry.

Conclusion

This research project has been an exciting and rewarding experience. My personal struggles as an activist and as a classroom teacher have informed my approach to this research and provided me with the strength and the experience to pursue the study of this complex issue. I hope that by giving voice to the experiences of secondary teachers in this

project, I am able to provide some support and information to other educators and activists committed to transforming the experience of marginalized youth and educators in schools. I also hope that this work helps to complicate existing understandings of bullying and harassment as well as sex, gender, and sexual orientation to help readers re-examine how they understand these issues in their lives. As a queer theorist I don't expect to provide a panacea that will solve the problem of gendered harassment in schools. Instead, I hope that this research might cause educators to question their own practice and assumptions and make visible the multiple forces that shape the gendered experiences of everyone in schools.

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Appendix A: Certificates of Ethical Acceptability

(2004, 2005, 2006)

Appendix B: School Board Approval

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

Appendix D: Consent Forms

Appendix E: Demographic information form

Appendix F: Interview guide

Appendix G: Coding tree and selections of raw data

Coding Tree

1. Bullying (B)
   a. Definition
   b. Frequency
   c. Physical
   d. Reporting
   e. Impacts
      i. Activities
      ii. Classroom
   f. Intervention
      i. Tools
      ii. obstacles
   g. Policy
   h. Student perceptions/responses
   i. Targets & perpetrators
   j. where
   k. verbal
2. Challenges (problems)
   a. Teacher
   b. Administration
   c. Students
   d. School
3. Education & Training (E&T)
4. Harassment for Gender non-conformity (H-GNC)*
5. Homophobic Harassment (HH)*
6. Job Responsibilities
7. Legal Issues
8. Policy
9. Racial Harassment (RH)
10. School Culture (SC)
11. Sexual Harassment (SH)*
12. Student Support
13. Suggested Interventions
14. Swearing
15. Teacher initiated programs
16. Teacher perceptions of Administration
17. Why teach

*raw data in these categories are provided in this appendix to provide an audit-trail for the reader

Harassment for Gender non-conformity (H-GNC)

Definition
I guess just people who aren't conforming to the traditional or stereotypical gender roles would be harassed because they don't fit into that, kind of, stereotype. FT-02c (28-29)

S: Sure. Um, I mean if you, I'll use the word stereotype, is that if you stay with the stereotypical feminine, or stereotypical masculine, so assigning masculine behaviors to men and feminine behaviors to women, um, gender non-conformity would be a male student displaying what would be considered feminine characteristics or vice-versa. MT-01b (1131-1135)

S: Oh. Right. Well, because I just think – this is a grade 9 student, right? I mean, and I wonder about how she deals with this in terms of being bisexual. When that is the one age group that I feel they really have this pressure to be "female" or feminine or be masculine because that's the age group where I've had to have these sorts of discussions about, you know, is there just one way of being a girl, is there just one way of being a boy, you know? And, that's I guess my understanding of conforming to a particular gender, so, not only is this particular child, saying that, you know, No, I don't want to be this one way of being a girl, or I don't want to be this one way of being a boy, but, hey, maybe I can be both. And maybe, I could…do I not have to be either, but can I just be in terms of sexuality and who I'm attracted to. I could be attracted to both, you know and um…I just think that, I don't know…enough about how my students deal with and how that plays out in terms of you know, behavior towards each other. But I have to say that there's this child, how then…singled out in some way I know that for sure, you know? That I can ascribe that, you know, to what… FT-04b (680-694)

Impacts
I mean the opposite would be if I were to think of some of the girls. Some of the girls that take on a masculine…like more of a masculine way of dress. Like, they've got uniforms, but some of the girls who always wear pants…who might be a bit…who don't buy into the feminine culture. So they're not doing their make-up, they're not doing their hair. Sort of turn their back on dressing more feminine, or trying to make themselves pretty. They would get less attention. So I wouldn't say specific harassment in a way, but that they're disregarded. So, I think they really just fly under the radar in a lot of ways. Its just not part of the mass pop culture sort of thing, the whole Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera… MT-01b (1220-1228)

S: Well, it is a problem. [laughs] not whether I see it as a problem or not, but it's a …it goes along with the general education of respect and including respect for differences in sexual identity as a key component of respect. Not as a different component of respect, but relating to making fun of anyone for any reason. Or…I mean the challenge of it is: why is it still okay to consider a boy who's effeminate as a negative thing? So there's a gender stereotype that we've…I think there still are those values unfortunately it's the feminine or femininity is only valued out of beauty or admiration. Or in seeking the sexual attention of

men, but its not seen as something that is valuable. So. [laughs] I think that's the problem. I think. I don't think the problem is gender stereotyping really, I think it's the value placed on feminine characteristics as not being valued. MT-01b (1300-1310)

Incidents
It does happen repeatedly over the past year. And I've had to say that, "No, that's really inappropriate. How can you say that?" you know, how do you define behavior as being necessarily masculine or feminine? And, um…so, um…yeah, I know that's happened right in front of my eyes. In terms of girls, and um, girls who have accused each other of maybe being…too bold and too sort of…I haven't really…girls, I haven't noticed that happen. Actually. You know. I know there's the pressure to sort of conform to a certain way of being a girl. I think more with girls than I noticed with boys in my experience this past year. Uh, with my, you know my Grade 9 girls…[unclear] and my Grade 10 girls have made comments about how the Grade 9 girls seem to be part of one mold where they all look the same, behave the same, and talk the same, and…but I haven't really seen [unclear] being expressed. FT-04b (116-126)

Interventions
Oh yeah. Because he was a student in my class and um, I would try to intervene. A lot of the kids picked on him, like it was kind of the classical bullying case, you know, where there's one student who's being picked on and everybody kind of joins in. Um, he was definitely being bullied, yeah. And I…yeah, I tried to, to deal with it in my classroom just sort of like giving students detentions and stuff like that. When it got really I went to see the administration and asked them to help out with…I think that the vice-principal, he spoke to some of the boys in the classroom and their behaviour was much better afterwards but, I mean, who knows what was going on outside of the classroom, right?
FT-02c (42-50)

-obstacles
When it got really I went to see the administration and asked them to help out with…I think that the vice-principal, he spoke to some of the boys in the classroom and their behaviour was much better afterwards but, I mean, who knows what was going on outside of the classroom, right? FT-02c (46-50)

And you could still feel a tension there, so I mean even if you get kids to behave just within that setting I don't really think it solves the problem, it just solves it for that sixty minute. FT-02c (54-56)

when it comes to, um, perceived sexual orientation, maybe three, gender non-conformity, I don't even think it makes it on the list, um, yeah, it's just one of those things that, it's not new but, it's not even talked about, it's not even recognized, um, like I don't even think, I don't even think the idea[emphasized] of setting up a safe school for um, the possibility of transgendered students would even occur to the administration. I don't think they would even think about the fact that you have, you know, in phys ed we have change rooms for the males and females, and... their other option is if they don't want to change in there then they can...no problem, they can go to the bathroom. Ok, so they can go to the male or

female bathroom, you know what I mean like, there's just, there's nothing set up, and... uh, it's not like we even have the other option of a single stalled bathroom. Um... so, it's just, it's one of those, it's one of those things to me, I would say, it's...it doesn't even make it on the list, I think it's just totally, um, I could say ignored, but I don't even think that they think it exists.
(300-312) FT-03c

Policy
I: No. And…also like about policies in your school and their kind of non-discrimination or harassment policy. Was there any, to your knowledge, information about that type of bullying or harassment?

S: Not that I'm aware of, no. FT-02c (151-155)

Targets & Perpetrators
Well I think as I was mentioning before, there was one boy who was – he wasn't, he just had a very feminine looking face, like a really pretty face I guess you could say. And uh, and yeah he was picked on a lot by the other students. I don't know if they necessarily said he was…yeah they did say "oh you're so gay" or um…or they would say "well you're so stupid" and stuff like that. But yeah, he was definitely picked on. FT-02c (33-38)

Well he kind of played into it, actually. I mean the kids would um, you know, would say something like "oh you're so stupid [name]" and…and he kind of adopted this persona where he would make stupid comments or even try to pretend that he was – and he was a bright kid. He really was, but, yeah he would play into it, definitely. So it almost became like a joke. And actually, yeah. Because that's the thing, is when I talk to my students about it they said to me "we're just joking around, and he knows that we're joking, it's not a serious thing". And he played into it and the kids saw it as being a "ha ha it's so funny, type thing". FT-02c (70-77)

I remember doing this reading circle with my students. They'd, like they'd have a novel and they all took turns reading. And I was sitting with his group and he was reading and he was an excellent reader. Like, I could believe how well he could read, he was just wonderful. And I said that to him, "oh my gosh", I said "[name] you've been hiding this from me all year". Like he was just such a great reader. A couple of weeks later we had parent-teacher interviews and his parents came in and they said um, "you know, [student's] been having a lot of problems and we've been to see a social worker and we're putting him on Ritalin". And I was almost in tears, like talking to him, and I said, you know "I don't think that's what your son needs, I mean he's very very good at reading and he's very bright" and they said "well, he might be good at reading but he doesn't understand what he's reading". And they were really, you know, like kind of repeating I guess what had been told to him by their social worker but, yeah I found that interesting. And I told them, you know, about the dangers of putting him on Ritalin and that I didn't think it was the right decision for them and they said…that they would think about it. So yeah, it definitely did impact. FT-02c (83-97)

S: I would say that, girls have a right to be masculine in my school, but boys don't have the right to be feminine. And…(pause)…um…one of the things I was thinking since the beginning of the interview, is actually there are rewards for women who actually act sort of masculine or take power or tell the guys where to go, or stand up for themselves. If you consider those masculine traits being more boisterous or mouthy or fighting back. Then, I would say those girls are almost rewarded in some ways from their male peers anyway, as being more respected. On the opposite side, those girls can also be outcast from some of the other females in school. So, as seen as, they're not really, [laughs] that's not really what a girl's supposed to do. And they kind of have both…its very traditional student at our school, who I think follows those family values of what's masculine, what's feminine. I mean we still – all the way down from the top – we still have that attitude that the male students at our school are going to stay at home until they get married, and mom's taking care of them, and mom does their laundry and mom packs their lunch every day and that's mom's duty. And that's, that's the culture of our school. Very much that traditional [SEE] view that the boy stays at home until marriage and you know, he can't leave the house until he's married. That's sort of carried on. MT-01b (1140-1156)

I: So, the girls get rewarded then for this sort of gender non-conforming behavior, but you said the boys…its not positive for them to exhibit feminine qualities.

S: No. No, they would get teased for being gay.

I: Okay. And could you give an example of what types of behaviors might bring on that kind of teasing that you've seen?

S: What type of behaviors might bring on the teasing?

I: Like, what would a boy do that would be considered gender non-conforming? IN your school community…school activity, way of walking, way of dressing…

S: Yeah. I mean we have a school uniform, so it would be more mannerisms or way of walking. So that…sort of an effeminate walk or effeminate voice, or a lisp or something like that. Sort of things seen as stereotypically, stereotypically, "gay" I guess. Yeah, they would get called names for that. We don't have a lot of activities at our school. Like we don't have a lot of students involved in drama. We don't have a music program at our school. So from my experience with the students, I mean, a lot of it would happen there. Boys who got involved in music or drama or dance or something like that. I mean that was the easiest way to target yourself as gay, you know? [laughs] MT-01b (1158-1179)

I think, you know, maybe boys expressing certain interests. So, I mean, there was some guys who wanted to try out for Canadian Idol sort of thing. Well if you were *serious* about it, then you're gay, if you wanted to try out because you were gonna be one of those jokers who made a spectacle, then that's fine. But if you talked about Canadian Idol in a serious way, then you know, you might be gay if you wanted to sing…or… MT-01b (1204-1209)

S: Absolutely. Absolutely. I've seen a lot of harassment where uh, the girls here, once again, the girls that dress more like boys for example, but here, the interesting thing is that they're allowed to wear pants and skirts. Yet(?) those girls that always wear the skirts, then you have those girls that always wear pants, and, they don't tend to be [pausse] they don't necessarily dress in a more feminine way. But then you have those girls that dress in a very feminine way. The funny thing is that they're both very athletic. So that's kind of, that's kind of neat when I see it. Because here we force them to be athletic. So there's one young lady who's right now downstairs, she dresses like a male. But she's downstairs, and she's playing badminton. There's another young lady who's always dressed in a skirt, and that freaks me out, because I'm saying, it's minus forty, and you're still in a skirt! What the hell? [laugh] What is going on here? The boys though, it tends to be a lot different. You have those boys that really want to push the envelope. You have those boys that I see this a lot of times where, once again, the school's a little bit special, 'cause I see [unclear] these young males that are really really tightly buttoned, it's almost chocking their neck, and they walk around proud. And I'm looking at them going, wow, it's kind of neat because no one's beating them up. In my school, man, that kid would learn quickly [laugh] you know what I mean. Like, I even stop and say, you know, wow, [laughing] this is a kid I would have beaten up when I was younger. We, they're very accepting here, they're very accepting to a certain degree. There are students though, whose behaviour though, and I don't think it's about the way the kids dress because the uniform, it has to do with the behaviour. If a girl is more masculine, then there's a comment that will be thrown along. And I see it, some of these girls are very very self-conscious about their bodies. And so, some girls wear very baggy clothes, very baggy shirts. But the thing is once again, they can't hide under just anything. It's kind of neat to watch the girls during our free dress days which basically they don't have to wear uniforms. Then you get the girls that wear the skater, skater outfits, that come here dressed sort of grundgy. Then you have the girls that are dressed like Britney Spears. And then you have the, the guys that come here, like they're part of the hood. Then the other guys that are just, you know, jeans and relaxed, whatever. So they tend to be very diverse in this community, which I find is really positive. The more the diversity they have, the better off. There's no one particular student here in the school that I feel is really isolated. There are a couple, that I feel that are becoming isolating, and they're isolating themselves. And we... I'm trying to work with one of them anyways, so, that's a big concern to me.   MT_06b (538-571)

This is a classic case, this school is perfect for the maturity level between the boys and the girls. The maturity level between the boys and the girls, the boys are so much more, so much less mature than the girls. The girls are just up there, at the very top of the school. The boys come in, a good head below the girls. And then there's some students here that I'm really curious about. Like I watch them and they're really well grounded. Some students that I know that in other school would be.. terrorized, they're very effeminate individuals here. So these young males, have this context, this safety bubble that they can work within, so I think they're very lucky. You know, in other schools, I think they'd be ripped apart, I really do. But I don't, I see a lot more between the girls than I see between the boys. The boys tend to be more, oh who cares, whatever, it's not a big deal. The girls tend to be, because they're more promiscuous, I find, they tend to take things a lot more personal. A lot more personal, and they can be very viscioius with eachother. And it's sad,

I see it really sad, because once a girl, typical story, once a girl makes a mistake, forget it. Once a guy makes that mistake, you'd think that at a progressive school like this, that wouldn't exist anymore. MT-06b (649-664)

and I know that, um, when kids don't fall into a particular way of being a girl, or being a boy then you know, I mean, like I remember in the last interview mentioning the whole name-calling, you know, which is particularly I know between 2 boys that are actually good friends. You know one of them who repeatedly, you know, I repeatedly have to say, you know, "I don't want to hear you use the word gay in a derogatory sense." And he always uses it with respect to this friend of his who, you know, might, you know, be thought of as having, you know, he has softer features, very nice looking kid, you know, I mean but…um…might be thought of as having more sort of feminine, effeminate, mannerisms, right? FT-04b (107-115)

I've seen behaviors all across the board in terms of participation in activities, that's another thing that I find tends to be a stereotype about the kids that are…can do drama and art, and the kids that do sports, and you know? There tends to be a stereotype that you know, kids that are more…like if there's a boy that does drama and you know maybe…maybe he could be gay, right? But I don't see that at the Grade 7 level. I find that the kids are very open to participating in whatever and, you know, um…so they'll do drama, they'll sing, they'll dance. I don't see it quite as much. I'm sure it happens, I'm sure it happens, but, you know, kids are targeted based on behavior, but I find that at Grade 9 boys will never come up…[?] FT-04b (707-715)

Homophobic Harassment

Definitions

S: So, homophobic harassment…um…so yeah, I guess like, name-calling, and uh, I guess it could get physical as well, although I don't think it did in our school, but I have heard of that of course, like bullying. Um…Yeah, I guess it just, excluding people because of their sexual preferences, I mean, this would all be sexual harassment and homophobic…

S: Sure, um. Homophobic harassment. Um…any comments that portray same-sex relationships in a negative connotation, um…

I: and for you its purely comments…verbal only?

S: Oh no, it could be comments, it could be acts, it could be suggestions, could be touching like between same-sex…whether its directed at someone who's gay or not, it sort of sets the context for that not being an appropriate behavior. MT-01b (607-615)

S: Homophobia, uh, incidents, are any kind of derogatory comment, derogatory I mean, like, something that insults somebody's sexual orientation, and it's very general, it's a very general stereotype. MT-06b (406-408)

S:[pause] I think, you know, homophobic harassment would be, you know, looking at, I mean, the intimidation again, you know either verbal, or physical or, emotional, whatever, right? Just based on how a person looks or behaves, or, you know? Whether its right, or whatever. I'm very much more um, a form of harassment that is based on very superficial sort of things that is hitting at, targeting, very sort of personal aspects of who a person is, right? And I think, you know, I mean, that's something that I feel is verbally has come up more than anything else in terms of sort of jokes and you know language that kids use. You know? Over this past year, than I would say racial harassment. I think that there's more of a sensitivity towards race, even though it still happens and its still unacceptable. But there seems to be a more, sort of acceptance to be able to be verbally abusive in terms of using terms that, you know, ascribed to homosexuality and homosexual behavior. [unclear] FT-04b (480-491)

I: And even though like, things like that might not be directed at an individual, would you describe that as harassment when somebody says "oh this is so gay" or you know, using that in a negative sense but in a general term. Do...do you see that setting up as a type of harassment?

S: Yeah, because if they are kids that are gay, you know, then how are they gonna feel in my classroom if this is being said constantly, you know I mean like, they're gonna be sitting there, just, you know.FT-04c (184-191)

Frequency

S: every day [laughing] MT-01b (618)

Impacts
S: I mean, I think when I say, sometimes it interferes or I see it everyday…part of it is just that, I feel a natural part of boys coming to terms with their sexuality, or girls coming to terms with their sexuality is that …the discussion about what it is to be gay. I mean that's a question of sexuality that comes up, so when [??] are discovering sexuality they hear about gay and whether it fits or doesn't fit. They naturally kind of are curious about what that is. With boys its something that needs to be pronounced…it needs to be talked about it needs to be something out in the open, and it becomes a challenge of whether you're masculine or not. And that's what it comes down to. Being gay is not masculine, and that's where a lot of the harassment or comments comes up. So where it becomes distracting is that the boys who are distracting in general – homophobic remarks, or jokes about being gay, become their outlet for how to be disruptive in class…sort of become part of their behavior. So…I mean things that I've seen in my class is the whole thing about uniforms and boxers being pulled down…or not boxers, but pants being pulled down to show the boxers, you know some guys will say, "oh yeah, do you like my butt, do you like my ass?" to other students, or "Stop checking out my butt" they'll say to other students in class, it could be girls or guys …'cause I mean the homophobic comment always gets a bigger laugh than a guy asking a girl if she's checking out his butt, so …yeah, there's a whole…laugh content that it's a better joke…to the point of getting attention. MT-01b (631-649)

S: You know you can get, just sort of touching…touching as in the sense of …you know a guy trying to distract another guy, and so he'll sort of just touch him or grab his knee or caress his leg for a second and make a joke out of that, and they're like, "hey, stop it, stop it." So it gets really disruptive in the sense that its not just "can you take your hand off my leg," its, you know it becomes a gay joke. It becomes, "hey, what are you gay?" "are you trying to hit on me again?" "Hey guys, Todd's gay…he's hitting on me." You know, and so that erupts where…let's say it was a girl doing that to a guy, it wouldn't erupt…it would be, if anything, he would probably, you know…sometimes it could erupt…but not in the same way. My perception is that it doesn't get the better laugh so… MT-01b (653-662)

and another student who is a really great singer who some people might say "oh, because he sings so well he's gay" or whatever, he gets the comments. I remember hearing his name and I'm involved in student council and sports and things…I had never seen…before he had performed onstage at our fashion show…and so, like, just that whole…I would say that students who are rumored to be gay, or might be gay, they don't have the ability to be as …extroverted within our community…I guess I would say. So that makes this already within in the school. So, I mean it could relate down to other things…to those students not wanting to participate in sports, or that particular student not wanting to be at the school beyond the school hours. Once their school day is done, they leave, and that's for sure a possibility. That exists…I mean…coming up from the comment that I started with. Like that represents a big idea of the attitudes of the school, so…and like I said comments like: "oh, that's gay" or "you're gay" it's a daily occurrence. So, its clearly not an environment where…if I were a student, being a gay student, that I would feel safe coming out and telling everyone that I'm gay. I don't think it would. MT-01b (690-701)

S: Um. Not in terms of you know straightforward teaching them math. Um, you know giving them work to do, or whatever and getting the work back. But, I mean how do you draw the line in terms of saying how does that really affect my teaching, you know? If I have…If I find that a child is struggling, you know, with my subject does that mean that they're really just struggling with my subject, are there other issues here? You know? And, they just…sometimes, you know, you know as a teacher that a lot of the times you can recognize that a child is…has a better tendency towards dealing with these sort of topics in math, and sometimes, they will just rebel and not want to. FT-04b (723-731)

.. I've noticed kids get more upset about is when they're called a homo, or a fag, or, you know, that...they do get more upset about that. That[emphasized] is also used a lot, you know, oh that's so gay, or you know, you'r...stop being so gay, or whatever, right. And, and it seems to be part of everyday vocabulary, which they don't even at time, you know, bat an eyelid over. Which I think is, uh, and that's[emphasized] frightening, you know, and that's the one where I.. I think I probably mentioned that that's where I had to stop them and say listen, you know, don't, these are words that are not bad words, but don't use it like that, because you don't mean it like that, do you? You know, I mean.
FT-04c (176-182)

Incidents

I mean things that I've seen in my class is the whole thing about uniforms and boxers being pulled down…or not boxers, but pants being pulled down to show the boxers, you know some guys will say, "oh yeah, do you like my butt, do you like my ass?" to other students, or "Stop checking out my butt" they'll say to other students in class, it could be girls or guys …'cause I mean the homophobic comment always gets a bigger laugh than a guy asking a girl if she's checking out his butt, so …yeah, there's a whole…laugh content that it's a better joke…to the point of getting attention. MT-01b (645-649)

S: (pause) I would say that the homophobic harassment goes along with those other acts. I would say that not necessarily the gay boys are the ones getting picked on, or you know, the really, girls who are considered to be macho or lesbian, or whatever…I wouldn't say that they are picked on and those things happen to them, I would say that kids might knock each other's books out of their hands, or move their books, or throw their pencil case off the desk and then the reply is "you're gay" for doing it. Or, you know, "oh you're so gay" and knocking some books out of their hand to prove that they're weak sort of thing. But I wouldn't necessarily think that because they feel that that student is gay, its just that making the gay comment enforces the fact that they've made fun of this individual. MT-01b (724-733)

So in June is when this picture was taken, I went to my new school at the end of August, and a teacher who had been on the staff for a long time came to me and she said "I want to warn you that they know who you are here at the school." I didn't know what she meant and I – she said "But we're all together and there are people who are going to support you at this school" and I still didn't – she didn't quire explain everything to me and…and I knew that there was something that I was going to discover as the year went on. So that's when I transferred to [school name] as the department head of Math, I stayed only until October 23rd was my last day and because it came to the point already that they, that that campaign had already been organized and all the parents were in possession of my picture and the students as well. It was circulating in the hall and I was getting called faggot and parents were calling, were coming onto the property to harass me while I was doing yard duty. It was a middle school so there's still yard duty to be done. Um. [pause] So I asked the federation to take me out of this school. So I was off for over a year and I decided at that point that I wasn't – because there was no support for me administratively I decided I just wanted to leave teaching all together and I convocated. I had to leave the school October 23rd and I convocated on November 4th, receiving my Master's of Education and at that point I had decided, you know, within the week that I probably would never go back to teaching. MT-05a (84-95)

-Verbal
. In our school, and I think I mentioned this to you the last time we spoke, it was very, um, there was a hostile environment there, towards homosexuality. Especially because it was like, this [SEE] school and it was very, this macho kind of attitude, and the kids used to use a lot of, you know like, homophobic language to insult one another. Now, whether they realized the implications of that, I don't know, but it was, it was in their vocabulary to say, "you're so gay," or "you're a homo" or "you're a faggot", or you're a whatever. Those

words, the main terms that they would use, um, but I don't know of like any one specifically being targeted. I'm trying to think of …like if the kids ever said, "oh this person's gay." There, like, you know, its funny, 'cause there was one boy in the school, who I thought might have been gay. He was, and I know this is gonna sound like such a stereotype when I say it, but he was very effeminate, and just like, he just had all of those stereotypical kind of characteristics that we associate with homosexual men. And that was him, and I always had this fear that the kids would really pick on him, like just given the way that, that whole mentality was put out in the school. But I didn't see it. I didn't see it. Which was interesting, but he was in the IBO program – the International Baccalaureate – and those were the kids that did really well in school and I think they were probably more accepting of things. But he always seemed to have a lot of friends and stuff like that, so…which, which surprised me. Just because of the school environment. Um, but yeah, you always did hear people making these derogatory comments, and, and I know that there was one teacher in my school that was trying to control it in her classroom because it happened so much, so every single time somebody would say something, she'd make them get up on their chair and talk about what they had said and why it was wrong, and I don't know how long that stuck for because, honestly, if you were to try and control it like that…every 15 minutes you'd have a kid get up on their chair and talk about it. So…yeah. FT-02b (256-280)

But I was just doing sort of a critical thinking mind puzzle: Someone died, they're laying dead in the field…how did they die? And one of the girls, you know, we got to the point that: yes, he committed suicide, and one of the girls said, "Was he [SEE]?" and just, you know, I answered back, "yeah sure, let's say he was [SEE]." And she said, "was he gay?" [laughs] and I just brought it up and she was kind of joking, and I said, I go, I go, "I don't think that being gay has anything to do with this puzzle whatsoever. I'm not sure why you're asking me this." And she said, "well sir, if he's gay and [SEE]. That's why he killed himself. Story solved." [laughs] MT-01b (919-927)

. Among students, I notice, oh could we stop for a second... so uh, among students, what I notice a lot, is the comment term fag being thrown around casually. Especially among the boys, it tends to be a very uh, and you know in high school, I saw that as well. You know the big thing to push a kid around by saying, he's a fag, he's a fag, and so on so for... I haven't really seen a moderation(?) view of homosexuality tw.. uh, tw, of young, young males, young teenage males towards homosexuality in terms of, I haven't seen a degrease. I haven't seen like, people stepping in saying hey, wait a sec, that's not cool saying that, you know. They still say it, I think there's, there's always been this tendency of young males and their sexual, they're so sexually aware, that they don't want to come off in any light or any manner, different from others. It's a huge, I, I see that every single day when I talk to them. The big thing for them is really about being seen as somebody who is very uh, confident, very aware, 'cause I don't really know them that[emphasized] well if I'm going to make that kind of judgement about them. MT-06b(32-43)

one of my uh, students in my homeroom, he's openly gay. And students love him. He's one of the most well liked students in the entire school. Last year, I didn't hear from it directly, or no, I was there actually, at the time, it was the secretary downstairs, one of the

[unclear] secretaries. And, I'm just talking about this particular young, young, young male student and she said, oh isn't that a shame. I looked at her and said, what? What's a shame about him? Well you know. And I said, I don't think it's shame, it's the way he is. Why do you see it as a shame? What right do we have to see it as a shame? It's not our life. So she was kind of taken aback because she thought that I would agree with her. So she became quite quiet and she walked away. So, and uh, I deal with a lot of these innuendos that uh, that people make comments about. MT-06b (413-422)

I mean there's the one that readily comes to mind is one where a kid is repeatedly saying, you know, calling somebody…you know…then there's sort of…and they're good friends these two. So its not a…but then I don't know how it plays out. There's this one kid who is repeatedly being called you know a homo, or you're so gay, don't behave in this fashion or whatever, FT-04a (515-519)

S: No. These were all things that I had personally sort of dealt with. There was another one this year where there was a writing on a table where it specifically mentioned a kid's name and they said, you know, "so and so is a homo" you know? FT-04a (556-558)

he came out and I mean, so I didn't watch that sort of progression that was how that happened, and how that was…but I DID…when I found out…I'll never forget what happened. And it was something that even today, I can't believe I didn't say anything. I feel sick even thinking that I didn't say anything. I was in the staffroom [getting choked up] and one of the secretaries came in and she goes, you know, "Did you hear about so-and so?" And she used some terms that I don't even know what they mean? You know, I really [crying through her words] …I don't remember…when she said it, she said, well I can't believe that he wanted to bring his boyfriend to the dance, and this whole thing. And I was just sitting there, first of all because I was like, "wow, you know, I mean, so-and so came out…and, you know, my goodness, how brave, how did he do it?" you know? And partly, partly, my own sense of curiosity, you know, right? And, my own sense of disbelief and shock, but she used…I don't even know…I can't even think of what they were because I didn't understand what the words meant. Right? And, coming away after that I [unclear] I came home and I thought about it and I mentioned to Allison what happened, and I said, you know, "My god, I can't believe that she said these things," and she was so, you know, just uh, taken aback by the audacity of this child to do this…and I didn't even react. I didn't even say, "You know, I don't know if that's the attitude that we need to have, because, if that's what it is, then we're not…we're not…being a good example of respect." You know? And then, that's what makes me think, that you know, [crying through her words] sometimes kids are so much more open-minded than we are as adults and sometimes they have so much more [unclear] and vision than we have as adults to deal with difference…FT-04b (401-422)

Interventions
S: Um…in my classroom? When kids made comments like that…I would tell them, you know, like that type of language is not welcomed in my classroom, and I don't want to hear that type of stuff, and but the thing is with the kids is that, I don't think that they really

realized what they were saying or how it might hurt someone. And that's what I would have to explain to them. Is that, you know what, when you call someone gay, or when you say, "you're such a faggot", although you might mean it as you know, you're being so stupid, or whatever, there might be somebody in the classroom who is actually gay. And you know what? It's so interesting. 'cause I remember having this conversation with my students…I said there might be somebody in here who is actually gay and I said, You're hurting their feelings, by using those terms. And one of the students put up his hand, and he said to me, "Oh my gosh, Ms. J_____, are you a lesbian?" and I said, "No, I'm not, but that doesn't matter. Regardless of what my sexual preference is I'm still going to treat everybody with respect." I said, "and you guys need to learn to do the same thing." But what I thought was so interesting is that, when they heard me defending people who might actually be gay. They automatically assume, "Well, she's gotta be a lesbian. That's gotta be the only explanation for it, right?" So that was, that was kind of interesting. But, I mean initially I tried to deal with it in my classroom, and then, honestly, I'd say halfway through the year…I just couldn't. Because it just, it happened so much, that to try and police that would take up like 50% of my time because it was such a problem. And it was a problem to the extent that teachers used to talk about it, you know? It was a part of our discussions that we had with one another and everyone noticed it. FT-02b (284-305)

"well sir, if he's gay and [SEE]. That's why he killed himself. Story solved." [laughs] and I said, "all right. Hold on right there. First of all, its not worth killing yourself over. If you really feel like any of your friends or you're gay in the class" it was a candid class already, so it permitted the conversation to be as candid as this. Which I was hoping for. And I kind of just said, "if any of you or your friends or anyone has considered killing themselves because they were gay or they got to that point, trust me, its not worth it. And trust me, that your parents would much rather see you alive than you go and kill yourself because you're afraid to tell them." And I said, "No matter what you think, its surprising how understanding parents and grandparents can be when it comes down it." So, you know, I sort of addressed it that way. But, it came up again in a joking context that, you know, "there's nothing worse than being born gay and [SEE]" that's kind of the viewpoint that a lot of the students have. MT-01b (926-939)

S: Yes. Yeah. I would say. I would say that I see fewer incidences except for again, the class who is making the innuendoes about homosexual behavior and saying, like, oh you know, "sir, he likes men." [laughs] but it goes from "you know, he likes men," to "sir, he likes men," [laughs] you know – then they're saying the homophobic remark to another student about him, but is it interesting to YOU…you know [laughs] so its directed AT me, even though it involves another student. So, already even though, the words can be sexually harassing to a student, the context makes it such that they become the brunt of the joke to make fun of me in some senses, but again its…I never see it as malicious. Its always been – again, I take it as the student, you know, questioning about sexuality and its interesting to them.

I: Yeah. Do you see or know of other teachers who intervene consistently in those types of comments?

S: Yeah. The most, the most textbook response that myself and 2 other teachers, we often use, you know, just sort of saying if a student says "Oh, that's gay" you know you sort of look and say, "I don't think there's homosexual in that math textbook, actually." [laughs] you know, or "Is there homosexual content in that book? Let me see." You know and you pick it up and sort of clue in, you know, why are you using this word, you know, or you can make a comment towards gay being good. You know, like, if they use the term gay to mean something bad, say, "oh you mean you really like that textbook?" and sort of make them think about what they actually just said. I mean there are some of us, who just kind of, its just a comment that's said to make them think for a second and then they realize, "Oh, sir. You know what I meant. I don't mean its gay, but" "then, well say what you mean. You're more intelligent than that, aren't you?" and sort of encouraging them to not fall into the culture but actually think about what they're doing. MT-01b (1057-1083)

I: Why is it the right thing to do from your point of view?

S: Well, I just think its going on a…you start out with a rule of respect for others and any sort of behavior that is disrespectful to others who might be in my presence or who might not be in my presence – its just a standard rule. I have students who, because we have a good relationship, they all of a sudden feel its okay to talk about the teachers they dislike with me. And you know, I have to explain to them, those are my colleagues, those are professionals, if you have issues with them, go and discuss with them. It doesn't help your case to talk to me about it and you have to realize that I'm …I have a friendship with these teachers. And I mean, my students understand not to bad-mouth other teachers in my presence. It doesn't have to do with my personal viewpoint on those teachers as people, but, sort of…it comes down to respect 'cause of values that above anything else, that's the value that I'm instilling in the students. I mean, by no means do I say "close your mouth", you know, I talk to them about their outlets. You know, if you're having a problem, go and talk to that person…be it student or teacher, you know. You're inviting these comments to come back to you, if you spread these rumours, they're going to come back on you. Do you realize this? [laughs] Do you want to invite that sort of disrespect to be cyclical? MT-01b (1110-1125)

]. For example, I had one kid call another, uh, a fagot and I went up to him and said "you're not going to use that language, I don't want to ever hear it again, and you're going to promise me you're never going to say that again." And he looked at me, he was a real tough kid, says to me "whatever." I walked away and he said to the kid, again, called him fagot, and I went up to him, he was a black kid, and I had to make him understand. And I said, "you know, that's like using the word nigger and not in the good way" because they call each other that you know, it seems to be, they've taken the word back, "but in the bad sense of the word, and do you understand that?" and he goes [in a deep menacing voice] "no it's not." And I said, I hauled him to the principal, I asked for a suspension, the principal didn't want to suspend him. It was one of the vice-principals and they saw that I was about to blow my top so they suspended the kid. But I really had to push for it. MT-05a (138-148)

And right now, the big popular trend is accepting homosexuality. Which I'm not saying is wrong, I agree with it, but you know, like last night, I heard Rosie O'Donnell, you know, talking about her sexuality. You've got these ...shows out, L word, you know, you've got all... these are really popular, popular shows, are out, they're talking about homosexuality. When's the last time we talked about a young girl getting HIV? I haven't seen that at all on tv. I don't even remember, I, I think the last show that I remember of somebody who had HIV was probably Degrassi. Really bizarre the way media jumps onto certain topics and then education follows along with it. So I don't think, and that's why, when we're talking a little bit about, uh, what's his name, uh, Lewis, Steven Lewis, about AIDS, you know, and everyone's talking about the bird flu. I had a young lady come to me to talk to me about the bird flu. I said, you're concerned about the bird flu? What about the fifteen thousand young people in, in Montre..in, in Quebec that have A..AIDS? That doesn't scare you? The fact that you know, you could have sex with somebody and they could give you a terminal disease? Fine, you die in thirty years, but you die[emphasized] a real horrible death. And, it's like, I think that kind of woke her up, and she [unclear], oh, I guess I didn't think about that. You know, so I, I thinks it's, it's a popularity, it's really bizarre. MT-06c (704-720)

-obstacles
It's so interesting. 'cause I remember having this conversation with my students…I said there might be somebody in here who is actually gay and I said, You're hurting their feelings, by using those terms. And one of the students put up his hand, and he said to me, "Oh my gosh, Ms. J_____, are you a lesbian?" and I said, "No, I'm not, but that doesn't matter. Regardless of what my sexual preference is I'm still going to treat everybody with respect." I said, "and you guys need to learn to do the same thing." But what I thought was so interesting is that, when they heard me defending people who might actually be gay. They automatically assume, "Well, she's gotta be a lesbian. That's gotta be the only explanation for it, right?" So that was, that was kind of interesting. But, I mean initially I tried to deal with it in my classroom, and then, honestly, I'd say halfway through the year…I just couldn't. Because it just, it happened so much, that to try and police that would take up like 50% of my time because it was such a problem. And it was a problem to the extent that teachers used to talk about it, you know? It was a part of our discussions that we had with one another and everyone noticed it. FT-02b (291-305)

I think it must have been coming from the community, from outside the school. Cause I don't think…I mean, I don't know what went on in other classrooms, but I don't think that the other teachers would support that type of language. Maybe it was ignored, right? And so, in that way, I guess you kind of like, tacitly condone it. But, I mean, it was ignored by a lot of people, but never said, you know, "you're so gay". A teacher would not say that, I don't think. FT-02b (313-318)

S: No, there was no kind of uniform approach, you know, that all the teachers are going to adopt this method. Which probably there should have been something, but I kind of feel that, that maybe the administration didn't want to get involved because they were, you know, these [SEE] men and, if they were to come into a staff meeting and say, "You know we need to address some of the homophobic attitudes," I just, could never hear them

talking about something like that. I couldn't see it. So maybe that's a part of the problem. Like even the administration had that [SEE], kind of mentality. But, no. There was no policy, as far as I know.

I: Um hm, and so, as far as professional development or anything like that, that had never been brought up in your experience there.

S: No. FT-02b (337-349)

Cause also teachers…I think that something that we fall into.. is that we might not always be seen as the open ear or as…'cause if certain behaviors are so prevalent within the school…well we've accepted to work in that environment and so, are we not just part of that community? And so I think that some students can really feel alone if certain teachers don't speak up. Or if teachers as a whole don't model what's appropriate and what's not. MT-01b (749-757)

I: Do you ever feel concerned about any backlash from your administration or parents about speaking openly and frankly about issues of sexuality or sexual orientation or harassment?

S: No. No. It's the right thing to do…I think for me…I never…I don't tell my students that I'm gay. And …I've been asked twice…in…once…I'd say I've been asked twice in class, MT-01b (999-1005)

. I don't fear backlash. I know it's a reality. It's a reality that could happen regardless of what I talk about. I still feel that there are certain responsibilities that teachers have and I'm willing to deal with the backlash that happens. I've always maintained a certain professional conduct even if I talk about – you know – I bring it off the news. MT-01b (1023-1027)

S: So…I welcome backlash I guess [laughing] MT-01b (1045)

when it comes to, um, perceived sexual orientation, maybe three, gender non-conformity, I don't even think it makes it on the list, um, yeah, it's just one of those things that, it's not new but, it's not even talked about, it's not even recognized, um, like I don't even think, I don't even think the idea[emphasized] of setting up a safe school for um, the possibility of transgendered students would even occur to the administration. I don't think they would even think about the fact that you have, you know, in phys ed we have change rooms for the males and females, and... their other option is if they don't want to change in there then they can...no problem, they can go to the bathroom. Ok, so they can go to the male or female bathroom, you know what I mean like, there's just, there's nothing set up, and... uh, it's not like we even have the other option of a single stalled bathroom. Um... so, it's just, it's one of those, it's one of those things to me, I would say, it's...it doesn't even make it on the list, I think it's just totally, um, I could say ignored, but I don't even think that they think it exists.
(300-312) FT-03c

Homophobic Harassment_Policy
S: No, there was no kind of uniform approach, you know, that all the teachers are going to adopt this method. Which probably there should have been something, but I kind of feel that, that maybe the administration didn't want to get involved because they were, you know, these [SEE] men and, if they were to come into a staff meeting and say, "You know we need to address some of the homophobic attitudes," I just, could never hear them talking about something like that. I couldn't see it. So maybe that's a part of the problem. Like even the administration had that [SEE], kind of mentality. But, no. There was no policy, as far as I know.

I: Um hm, and so, as far as professional development or anything like that, that had never been brought up in your experience there.

S: No. FT-02b (337-349)

I: Yeah [laughs] all right. And so do you think your…does your school have a policy that specifically talks about homophobic harassment?

S: No.

I: No. SO, I would guess that staff training…

S: No.

I: or outside speakers or any kind of curriculum discussion about homophobia…

S: No…

I: Or sexual orientation… MT-01b (768-781)

I: And does this policy, or a different policy, include specifically issues of racism [Subject says: 'absolutely'] and homophobia [Subject says: 'absolutely'] all explicit in the [inaudible]

S: Absolutely, yeah, there's no, there's no tolerance whatsoever in the school. MT-06b (158-164)

Targets & Perpetrators
there was one boy. I think I told you about him last time..he had a learning disability, and he was on…what's that drug called? Ritalin. For his learning disability, which I don't even know if he really needed it, but anyway…the kids used to always call him gay, and what's interesting is that he was a very um…like he was a very nice looking boy, you know, like he, but he was smaller than the other kids. He was a little bit shorter and his frame was a little bit smarter, so maybe that's a part of the reason that they felt the need to target him. But he was also, um…like he just had more of a feminine face, I guess you could say? So

maybe the kids felt the need to target him in that respect. Because I mean, there's lots of kids especially in the class that I was teaching, that was learning disabilities, and not all of them were targeted, but this one boy in particular, people always used to say, "you are, you're so gay" and you know, they used that type of language. FT-02b (359-370)

I didn't see a lot of effeminate males in the school. There were a few, like I said, and there was one that was really targeted…one not so much. I just, I don't think I can answer that question well. There weren't a lot of (unclear) examples or things to draw on. FT-02b (411-414)

But I wouldn't necessarily think that because they feel that that student is gay, its just that making the gay comment enforces the fact that they've made fun of this individual. MT-01b (731-733)

S: I, I think it's part of their language. I think a lot of these kids here, as much as they might say right now, as part of their [unclear], I don't think these kids are, are, the nicest kids in the world, but I do think that they have certain social manners that other kids might lacks. I don't see them targeting a particular individual. I do see them using it at the younger levels to isolate and to form groups. You have those kids that form a particular group, and it's kind of intresting, because they still have their own ideas, but they'll agree to certain things, certain comments, certain ideologies, so. MT-06b (474-480)

and I know that, um, when kids don't fall into a particular way of being a girl, or being a boy then you know, I mean, like I remember in the last interview mentioning the whole name-calling, you know, which is particularly I know between 2 boys that are actually good friends. You know one of them who repeatedly, you know, I repeatedly have to say, you know, "I don't want to hear you use the word gay in a derogatory sense." And he always uses it with respect to this friend of his who, you know, might, you know, be thought of as having, you know, he has softer features, very nice looking kid, you know, I mean but…um…might be thought of as having more sort of feminine, effeminate, mannerisms, right? FT-04b (107-115)

Where
S: Everywhere.

I: Everywhere? [laughs]

S: [laughs] its innate. MT-01b (762-766)

Sexual Harassment

Definitions

I guess there's a few ways that we could define it. It happens a lot with, um, with young girls. I mean, like calling them sluts, or you know what I mean? Or harassing them

because of their sexual behavior. Of course, it would happen also with people who are…you know, if they're homosexual or something like that, then the kids are also using that as a form of discrimination or harassment…um…I don't know, okay, no I'm gonna stop there. FT-02b (106-111)

S: Uh…sexual harassment…I mean it can be anything from verbal comments on putting down someone because of their sex, or making sexual innuendoes that are unwanted…which makes the recipient of those comments feel uncomfortable. All the way up to physical touching or behavior, for sex….so I mean there's a whole range.

I: Okay. Um, do you see sexual harassment as separate or different from bullying? Or do you understand it to be a form of bullying?

S: No. I think it is a form of bullying. The goal of any of those comments is to make someone feel inferior, so that would be bullying [laughs]. MT-01b (165-175)

S: Uh, I guess anything that a person would perceive as harassing that has a sexual nature to it, um, for example it could a sexual approach or a touch, it could be an insult or words based on sexuality or gender…and so I guess that would – things that somebody finds undesirable of a sexual nature. MT-05b (25-28)

S: Uh…sure. Um…[pause] I think certainly…uh, guys towards the girls oftentimes, uh they get touches inappropriately or, not that I've witnessed but I'm sure it happens a lot, name calling based on, you know, the sexual attributes of their body, I don't know, breasts too big, breasts too small, uh… Anything that looks non-conforming for example, [unclear], I would say that that's also sexual harassment maybe a guy getting perceived as effeminate gets treated as gay. Or girls on the opposite ends, too masculine being called, you know, dykey or lesbian or whatever. MT-05b (33-39)

S: Um…sexual harassment, uh…I immediately think of it being gender-based. Um, but um, I usually think of it as male-female. I don't know why that comes to mind, but I usually think about it sometimes as…um…like sexual abuse, that sort of thing. Sometimes male figures overpowering female figures, that sort of thing. Um…that's traditionally how I think about it. But, I find that there's a lot more different levels of it going on than just the stereotypical one. Um, like I think sometimes even among boys, like boy to boy there's sexual harassment. Um, and even females…uh, but they don't seem to…seems to be more emotional…just trying to…sorry, I'm just running through all these situations in my head… FT-03b (94-102)

S: Yeah, um…yeah, primarily I would think of it as male-female, and I think that's because those are the, those are the relations that are detected right away by teachers if there's something, something going on and the ones that are taken really seriously at the office. But I think because the other…the other ones aren't as defined, they're not necessarily always reflected on as sexual harassment. Hm…I don't know if that answers your question. (laughs) FT-03b (106-111)

S: [interrupting] Ok, sexual harassment is wh... I, I view sexual harassment as uh, a situation where, whenever a student is... feels that they are being, uh, they're being, what's the word I want to use, [sigh] sorry, it's been a long day, where they feel that their personal space has, is being intreated upon in a very uncomfortable manner, in a very, in a manner that they don't feel comfortable. It's really abou the fact that the individual is not comfortable in a certain setting, certain given uh, situation. MT-06b (254-259)

He liked her, she didn't like him, and, he was, he was hurt by her reaction, and she was a little too aggressive in her reaction, and I don't think, I, I understand, she wants to tell him, leave me alone, but, she might have got carried away with it, and that really hurt him. So now, that she hurt him, he wanted to hurt her[emphasized] back and cause her a little bit of pain. So, I would define that as sexual harassment, because, it was clearly an intention of the boy liking the girl. MT-06b (280-284)

I would say that it would involve …it could be any sort of intimidation, either if its mental, or physical, or verbal, and, but specifically addressing aspects of, you know, feminine behavior or masculine behavior, homosexuality or heterosexuality…bisexuality or whatever. And um…that's basically [unclear] FT-04a (59-62)

Sometimes we've had to wonder whether the girls are socialized to sort of expect more of the [unclear] enjoy maybe a kind of attention that they might be getting from this. I don't know. I mean there's…I don't know…as a teacher I just feel that you know, for me, maybe I'm just a little bit more conservative, and you know if I find that a guy -- or a girl -- is making a comment that is inappropriate, you know and its specifically targeting a certain student whether with their looks or the way they behave then, you know I'm gonna [unclear] FT-04b (168-175)

Frequency

S: not every day, but I'd say its common.

I: So every week at least.

S: Yeah, I'd say every week. MT-01b (209-213)

S: You hear bitch a lot, but certainly, you know probably as much as I hear you know, "that's gay" or "you're a fag" or…probably just as much. MT-05c (76-77)

I: Mm hmm. So if you would have to rank from your point of view what you see as the greatest to the least important problems and forms of harassment from your school thinking of both sides – bullying, racial, sexual, homophobia, gender non-conformity. If you could rank them from the biggest problem to the smallest problem in your school.

S: [pause] I think I'm more sensitive – it's difficult for me because I can't detach myself from the sensitivity the I had towards bullying based on sexual orientation and it's certainly the one that I hear, that I feel I hear the most and I don't know whether my ear is more

sensitive to it, but it's certainly, it truly is the one I hear the most and certainly that one I least…uh…and maybe it's in direct relation to the fact that it carries the least consequence with it. So I'd like to say that that is the most important and probably maybe uh…gender non-conformity I tie that in to that so I think both of those are probably up there, anyways. Um…and then maybe sexual harassment somewhere after then and in our school because, like I say, the multi-ethnic culture of the school, the demographic of the school I would say probably that would be the last. MT-05c (109-123)

have you seen other, maybe more mundane kinds of examples? Other things that I've heard about going on is the typical like name-calling between girls of slut, whore, or sexual jealousy, that sort of thing. Or stealing boyfriends, or using any part of that language

S: Yeah…yeah…

I: [unclear]

S: Now that you say it, absolutely. Absolutely.

I: And so does it happen regularly?

S: Yeah. FT-04b (240-252)

Incidents (in its own file)

Impacts

S: Yeah. Its something that comes up all the time and its more of a body image type thing that the girls don't want to swim. And one of my best friends at the school is a phys.ed. teacher, and that's really…that's really a problem for a lot of the girls at our school. That they don't want to swim, or just changing for gym, they don't want to change for gym class, I think that's kind of standard, but I don't think that's sexual harassment, I would say that's a different problem that needs to be addressed in my school [laughs]. MT_01b (242-248)

S: One instance that I can think of in particular was a kid who had a speech impediment. He was a twin and his twin had the same speech impediment, a very strong…uh I'd say it was a lisp, I guess it could have been perceived – and it was perceived as a lisp by the kids and every time he opened – both of them were very intelligent kids, did very well in math, however they wouldn't answer any questions in class and most of the time he, the one that I taught would put his head on the table because as soon as he opened his mouth uh the kids well, a few of the kids, would repeat what he said with his accent – with the impediment. I dealt with that one MT-05b (73-80)

S: Yeah. In my opinion, it was taken over by their peers, and everything escalated, not even involving the people that were centered around it. But, they were reacting to their

peers, and I know there was a lot of tears and embarrassment, you know, for the girl, and the boys were…became the brothers…you know their issue. But the boys were just very you know stand offish, and no no no no no…it was just…once again, as everything happened this year with the grade 7s, everything exploded and all the grade 7s knew and it was just the talk for days. And, uh, I think it really took over, and unfortunately, made for a really embarrassed and sad girl and even, you know, the boy was acting out of embarrassment too, he didn't know, you know, this little girl liked him and that sort of thing. I just thought it was so odd that you know she was asked to stop harassing these boys.FT-03b (159-169)

S: Um. They do, if you said sexual harassment, they would, they [the students] would know right away that it has to do with gender. Um, and uh…I think they may, may have an idea right away, um, maybe an overall approach, what they've interpreted from media…that sort of thing? Big sexual harassment cases, that sort of thing. Um, but I don't know if they would truly understand how it would apply to them. Um…yeah. I think its just not dealt with, like racial issues are dealt with. Which, you know, my friends and I talk about quite frequently.   Its definitely something that's hopefully going to evolve in the next couple years. Its sort of getting there, but it's a long way away. FT-03b (232-239)

S: Um…well, we didn't have any…I was surprised that there wasn't any seniors that stepped and said, "whoa, what are you doing?" you know, that sort of thing? Um, if any of them, like I know one of our top students, she got totally sucked in and the two of them were like best friends, and all her grades went out the window and she was just like…a leech…you know what I mean? They got stuck together and it wasn't until that girl was gone that everything was resolved and her grades went back up. But, you know how its so easy to make a new best friend and just everything else in your life just goes out the window. All your priorities…cause you know, it would have been so exciting for this girl to have a friend like that, you know what I mean? (laughing) Um, I'm sure they would have had a lot to talk about (laughing)…but, uh, that was the only incident I really saw with a girl having tremendous power over more than one guy. And she was…she was powerful. Like, she ran all her relationships (laughs)…so…
FT-03b (291-302)

S: Um…I think that…I think quietly that was something that was talked about, but it never got to the point – she didn't stay long enough for it to totally flip on her. Um, I think it might of because she was hurting enough people, but, before she left the boys were still liking her attention too much. And it was funny 'cause the grade 11s kind of got sick of it and she had gone on to the grade 10s, like it was like she was moving down the scale. It was…it was crazy. Um…and if you were to flip that around and if that would have been a male doing that, um…I don't know, I would think that someone might've stepped in. You know? From administration or that sort of thing, or as a teacher, but, noone did. There wasn't, yeah, I don't know, what do you say to someone who's dating…you talk to the boys? Well the boys, what are they gonna say? (laughs) I don't know. I don't know. But it was just as a teacher watching it all go on, you're just like, "Oh my goodness."
FT-03b (307-318)

When I listen to the boys and the girls talking, I find a lot of time they're very respectful to each other, but once it's the girls talking amongst the girls, then it becomes really nasty, when it's the boys talking amongst the boys, then it becomes really nasty as well. For the most part I find these kids are tend to be really, really positive. The girl... this is why I like it at this school, the girls here are very strong willed, for the most part. At the same time it shocks me though that, how they sort of say it doesn't bother them, what people say. Yet we have a tremendous problem here with eating disorders, that no one's looking into. And where does that come from, so. MT-06b (341-349)

And I felt that was a lot of bullying, you know, it was very humiliating. She, she was out of our school for a couple a, several days, she shouldn't come back to school. MT-06c (141-142)

I can only begin to figure, you know, um…imagine what that must feel like, you know? To have to go in and somebody sort of labels you a certain way and, uh, you know, its got to affect how you see yourself because that's an age when these are things that matter so deeply. They are beginning to sort of, you know try and, and come to some sense of self and try to begin to understand what that must mean, you know? And you tend to …at that point in your life …there are so many changes taking place, right? You know, there are so many changes in terms of – forget curriculum – what's happening in terms of you know what you're learning and what that means to your future…but in terms of their bodies and how they're changing physically, you know? There are so many changes, that obviously in their minds maybe they are monitoring what's happening to themselves but trying to monitor personally what's going on along with socially how people are perceiving them. I mean, like, you know, it tends to be that social sort of circumstance um…takes preference, right? You know in terms of defining who they are. So, if in that social context they are getting negative, sort of messages to who they are…can you imagine? I mean, oh my god. I would be so devastated. FT-04b (297-312)

-obstacles
when you start out as a new teacher in Quebec you have two years of probation. And then after that period you're considered to be a permanent employee and during those first two years you don't want to rock the boat too much, right? So, so then it makes it difficult for you to get involved in these issues. But there's definitely something that should be done about it. And as far as I know this teacher is still at this school. FT-02b (187-192)

S: No. and maybe that's why I wasn't so aware that it was going because as a part of my training it had never really been brought up as an issue to be concerned with. So maybe it was going on and I just didn't see it, right? And just didn't notice it. It probably was. But I mean, no, I never received any training in it, so…FT-02b (227-230)

. I don't know if a lot of kids would come forth and talk about stuff like that for one, I mean it's rare the kid that'll actually say that "this guy was sexually harassing me". Um, I found that oftentimes the kid usually just goes quiet or if they were assertive enough to take care of their own problems, um…[long pause] I can't – I'm just trying to think of an

instance where a kid has come to me to tell me that they were feeling sexually harassed and not to come to report it, to tell me…I can't think of anything off hand. MT-05b (51-56)

. I can say that because of it, some things are great about having a small school, other things are not so good in that if you report a problem all the kids know about it and um…I would say that that, they were, might be fearful of having further problems if they told anybody in the administration…otherwise a teacher or something. So I think that oftentimes they often kept it because of that. Um, so how it would be handled like I say I never really…I've never really been privy to any type of undertaking that way so I wouldn't be able to comment on that. MT-05b (253-264)

Very difficult, it's very difficult because we don't tend to have a lot of time to deal with them. And I think that's the biggest thing, my biggest concern about the students. We don't, whereas, you go to some private schools, I was just reading about W School, they have a teacher that meets with the students at least once a month. It's not just the counselors, it's teachers that meet with the students once a month and ask them, what problems are you having, what positive do you have to tell me, so they're constantly being monitored. At this public school, they sort of come in and go, we assume that they, they got into School X, they must be awesome, they have no problems, they have a perfect family life, have a nice day, goodbye. Boy are we wrong. MT-06b (390-399)

we're almost like losing the battle, I feel, in sexuality. We're educating them to such a degree, that I think is the only way to fight it. But we're losing this fight, this commercialism, every time you look and turn on a tv you've got to be sexy, you've got to be this, you gotta be this, you gotta be this, you gotta be this. And, it's really difficult as a young person not to just give up and get sucked into the whole thing. And so I hear young people more and more talking about this. And I'm so happy when there's young people that are so comfortable in their own skin. And I just don't think that we, really, value that. MT-06c (610-617)

, I just don't think that sexuality is really discussed in schools. At all. Homosexuality, yes, because everything is so sensitive right now about homosexuality, racism, we don't really have much multiculturalism, so no one really sees any problems with racism. And uh, I think the big thing there is about sexuality. And, we look at these young girls in grade seven, and I'm telling you, they're about my height now. And I'm sitting there going, wow, you know. And, I listen to the music they're listening to, and it's, it's all about sexuality. And, we're not discussing what they're talking about, moral education, twice every seven cycles. I'm just surprised that we, something that we should value so importantly, like morals, and in fifty minutes, I don't have time, had a discussion about nuclear power, in my class, and so one of my students raised up his hand and goes, do you think moral education is a very important thing, I said it's the most[emphasized] important. How can it not be important. But, teachers, as a group, view it as something that they don't want to discuss. Because, there is no structured, uh, curriculum. It's very open. So a lot of the teachers that get put into it, have no other choice, so they put into it, and they don't want to do it, they don't want to discuss it, they don't want to be talking to young people about their problems, 'cause everyone has their own problem [laugh] you know, I don't need to hear thirty

people's problems, and so on so forth. So, it becomes really difficult. So I think it becomes a real emphasis on us to discuss, very carefully, about these particular topics. MT-06c (630-649)

I think that for sure there's an expectation that this is not something that we're going to put up with. And I know that if I think of all of my colleagues…all of my colleagues that I can think of – right? I know would stand up to this and [unclear], you know? And how strongly its enforced, in terms of sometimes…sometimes maybe, sometimes you get immune, you know, you get desensitized and you get caught up and you, but I know consciously that I try and make and effort [inaudible]…that I stand for. Even, you know, you'll hear kids say, "oh wow, Miss, you know, I mean we're just joking," you know? FT-04b (271-278)

Sexual Harassment_Policy
I: Um hm. And did your school have any sort of policies about how to deal with sexual harassment?

S: They might have, but none that I'm aware of, no. FT-02b (130-133)

S: Yeah, its included in the code of conduct there's a specific line on sexual harassment or harassment saying that its not tolerated. Its short – I know its only about three lines long in the handbook, but I'll bring that in for next time. MT-01b (384-386)

S: I only taught there a year and no, I'm not [aware of a policy]. MT-05b (228)

S: um…(pause) nope. Its not a part of when you're hired. Its nothing that we see, or anything like that. FT-03b (219-220)

Targets & Perpetrators

S: Yeah. I would say it tends to be sort of the "cooler" or outgoing crowd. Um…[pause] I mean there are sort of two groups and if you look into the secondary 4 and 5 groups I can think of some of the students doing that as…you know they are some of the better students in school that I would consider being some of the smarter students, and that's sort of the fashion that has caught on. And when you go down to the secondary 3 I would say it is more of the sexually mature girls who have picked that up as part of their fashion…um…yeah.

I: Hmm. Very interesting. Um. So…are those the girls that you see then being the recipients or being targeted for …

S: Yes…

I: that type of sexually harassing behaviors? The ones who are more sexually mature, the ones who are choosing to present themselves in that way?

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S: Yeah. Yeah. I would. It sounds bad, [laughs] I'm making a connection here that really sounds bad but, I guess, its kind of making an argument for why we should have uniforms at our school. [laughs] MT-01b (309-327)

S: No, I don't see just any guy in school. I mean there are certain guys who tend to be more friends with that group of girls and that's where it would occur…so… MT-01b (354-355)

S: One instance that I can think of in particular was a kid who had a speech impediment. He was a twin and his twin had the same speech impediment, a very strong…uh I'd say it was a lisp, I guess it could have been perceived – and it was perceived as a lisp by the kids and every time he opened – both of them were very intelligent kids, did very well in math, however they wouldn't answer any questions in class and most of the time he, the one that I taught would put his head on the table because as soon as he opened his mouth uh the kids well, a few of the kids, would repeat what he said with his accent – with the impediment. I dealt with that one MT-05b (73-80)

S: Kids who did poorly academically, generally. One thing that I noticed that they had in common…oftentimes it was kids who were perceived as being popular as well that did that and that probably engaged in that more. And it was – as they got older it was less, towards Sec. 5…I did see it in Sec. 4 but generally at Sec. 5 I didn't see it as much but certainly grade nine, grade eight/grade nine was where I saw it the most. Um, the attributes probably popular, um, less…didn't do so well academically, generally…um…it wasn't necessarily the aggressive kids, that I saw. However, I'm thinking of one particular kid, of one instance that engaged in kind of harassing behaviour is the kid that would make fun of that kid with the accent – with the speech impediment. He has. He himself is not aggressive but his mother is extremely aggressive…and is well known at the school as being aggressive. [pause] And I'm thinking of another kid as well, who we knew he was being beaten at home by the mother, he was somebody who bullied other kids. Um…so it's not with everybody I get to know, kind of the background of what's happening at home but these two kids in particular I know the mothers, I've met them and certainly I knew what was going on at home with one kid. Um…those other two [inaudible], I would see it being common…most kids like that, popular and also not very, not uh…not uh succeeding academically as well. MT-05b (109-125)

But its such a common word that's thrown around, but I don't know…I don't know if that's considered…if they're actually pinpointing someone because of that. But that's what I would say boy to boy is. 'Cause sometimes, and sometimes its even, um, a boy that's…you know…hasn't reached puberty and he's really immature and wouldn't even be thinking about girls right now. Sometimes they get picked on as well, um, just the fact that they haven't made any progress in that department. So that's kind of a form too of sexual harassment. Um…I don't…on the flip side, that happens among the girls too. Um…that's what I think about that. (laughs) FT-03b (124-130)

Sexual assault, I would say that once again, a lot of the bullying has the same tendency as well. The bullies pick on certain... key things that are different about some of the kids,

especially younger grades. And the same thing with sexual assault. The guys focus on particular girls, who are different than the other girls, who might have a different view of their own sexuality than the other girls, and so, and, and the sad thing about it is that the guys at our school will, will continuously, uh, push this theme with some of these girls, that I've seen. But uh, I think they have that common thread, that a lot of them involve, just the fact that somebody does not fit in what is the defined uh, group, of acceptance, of nor...or of what they consider to be normal, MT-06c (37-44)

About the sexual assault, I might correct myself, because I think it's a little bit different. Sometimes sexual assault can be a little bit different than the other ones. I find that sexual assault sometimes, it might also involve, especially with the males, the males trying sometimes, to be part of a group that they're not. I find, I found that the young man that was stalking that other student. He was trying to be like all the other guys, rather than just sitting back and saying I'm a little bit different, and accepting himself for what he was, so he started pushing himself a little bit on this other individual. And, uh, I've seen uh, a lot of instances where, on the other hand, sexual assault, or, some kind of sexual bullying in the sense that, the guys are joking about the way a particular young lady looks, 'cause she doesn't fit into the role of what they consider to be attractive. So tha... sexual assault can come from a variety of different points, I tend to find bullying usually has been involved. That kid, something sticks out about that particular kid that makes them an easy target, [unclear] homosexuality is such an easy target, you're different obviously, and, so. MT-06c (56-69)

I think there's a lot more sexual assault, in your school, than what we're caring to talk about, but because it's a much more difficult topic to discuss, I find that, that our, that we tend to shy away from it as adults. Because, a lot of times we say, oh, she asked for it, and so on so forth, so. Or you know, their dressing, their skirts are too high, look at them, they're this, they're this. We've already, as young people and as teachers, and I, as I look at them, as they interact with each other, and I see that the grade eleven guys look at the, at the grade nine girls, wow they're coming of age, and he's about to say well wait a sec, they're grade nine, they're not grade eleven. There's a lot of distance still in that age group, so, I see that. MT-06c (86-94)

And she was definitely different from the other kids, she wasn't as social, she wasn't as popular, she wasn't as pretty as the other girls, and those girls weren't either. That's what really struck me as odd, they weren't the most popular kids either, so I was just like, why would they...MT-06c (133-136)

Where
So I think a lot of that behaviour happens in classes where there's a lot of social interaction there with teachers that probably – uh I know for example there was one kid who threw a desk at another kid in one of the classes, got up and, missed him, but literally a desk flew across the room and that class was known to have, just to be chaotic and that kids did what they wanted and I'm sure in classes like that there could have been some behaviour because I think kids like it when they have an audience. They like to exhibit that kind of behaviour

when people are watching them…um, it gives them some kind of power, I don't know what it is behind that. Um so I have to – it probably happened in classes that are less structured…um and at lunch time oftentimes the kids would walk to a small mall near our school and a lot of things happened there. A lot of kids did drugs at lunch and perhaps under the influence of, you know, something they would probably tend to be more aggressive or…MT-05b (143-148)

Why
the playing with sexuality can turn into unwanted acts or comments…or a competition. I mean a lot of the slut comments have to do with girls competing for the attention of certain boys in school, and its not necessarily that she really was sleeping around with half the school as some of the girls say, but its more that competitive….

I: Right.

S: Seeking attention from a certain group…yeah. MT_01b (335-346)

S: So, its also an attempt to get my attention, more to than them actually thinking its sexual harassment… MT-01b (418-419)

Appendix H: School Board Policies

- o Central Quebec School Board
    - Policy against all forms of harassment
- o English Montreal School Board
    - Safe schools policy
- o Lester B. Pearson School Board
    - Safe school policy
    - Intercultural Policy
- o New Frontiers School Board
    - Protection of employees, students, and non-employees from harassment and discrimination
- o Western Quebec School Board
    - Policy Statement: Race Relations and Intercultural Understanding