

TALK AMONGST OURSELVES: EXAMINING HOW HETEROSEXUAL ADULTS FORM
AND TRANSFORM PERSPECTIVES ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY THROUGH
DIALOGUE WITH ONE ANOTHER

by

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about homosexuality through dialogue with one another

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ABSTRACT

Despite the societal and legal progress of the gay rights movement in the last two decades, the negative impacts of society's marginalization of gay and lesbian people are many and widespread. Opportunities for open, respectful dialogue to facilitate greater understanding and reduce prejudice are rare. Scholars and practitioners in educational psychology and adult learning have been slow to consider the role of education in this social justice movement.

This study investigated a multi-session facilitated dialogue forum among heterosexual adults on the topics of homosexuality and related social challenges. The mixed-methods approach included a narrative analysis of interactive stories told during the dialogue as well as a pre/post-intervention attitudinal survey. A survey-only comparison group was also used, though quantitative results were limited by small sample size and ceiling effects.

Analysis of the narrative, including case studies of two individual dialogue participants, revealed evidence of in-progress shifting of perspectives around this topic driven by socially situated reflective discourse. The study forges new theoretical, methodological, and practical ground in the linkages it makes among concepts from transformational adult learning, social psychology, narrative inquiry, dialogue practice, and LGBT studies.

Dedication

To anyone and everyone who finds themselves struggling to understand, accept, and relate to homosexuality as part of the natural spectrum of human experience.

Whether your child, your parent, your friend or yourself, may you know you're not alone.

May you find places where, and people with whom, transformative dialogue can occur.

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In gratefulness,
Jules

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You've seen it. That bumper sticker that reads: "Hate is NOT a Family Value". I saw it again recently on the back of someone's car, as it seems I frequently do these days. But this time, those six words made an unusually big impression on me, due in no small part, I imagine, to my immersion in the research and writing for this very study. Reading that bumper sticker sent me into a rather complex internal dialogue and one that seems poignantly apropos to introduce the focus of this study. This bumper sticker epitomizes for me so much about the current cultural struggle over "gay rights" in the United States. On one hand, the apparent simplicity of the message suggests that its meaning should be self-evident to the reader (perhaps like other bumper stickers such as "Leave Iraq Now" or "I [heart] poodles" or "Baby on Board"). And yet in present U.S. society, it seems to me that "Hate is Not a Family Value" might just be the *least* commonly understood bumper sticker of our time. What qualifies as "hate?" What kind of "family" are we talking about here? Whose "values"? And which of their values apply here? Further, let's say that a reader actually *does* make the connection with this message as a response directed at the socially conservative efforts to "protect family values" against the "threat" of the advancing movement for "gay rights." Even then, most readers for whom the message is intended are unlikely to see themselves as harboring "hatred" toward gay people (even if they oppose equal rights for them), and thus *not* relate one way or the other with the message on the sticker.

This momentary unspoken exchange between bumper sticker-toting advocates of 'gay rights' and any potential opposed drivers passing by serves as but a tiny instantiation of the breakdown in communication between two disagreeing 'sides' of this charged political debate. Each 'side' throwing moralistic assertions at the other, assuming their logic to be self-evident but not understanding why their message seems entirely lost, not even comprehended, as if it had

been spoken in an altogether different language than that of the recipient. A central focus of the present project is to investigate such differences in verbal expression and the ways in which talk is used to convey one's perspectives about homosexuality and homosexual people in the current social context of a growing push (by some) for expansion of equal rights for gay people in this country.

The 'gay rights movement' in the U.S. has made great legal strides since 1973 when homosexuality was removed from the Diagnostic & Statistical Manual where it was defined as a mental disorder (Bayer, 1987). However in many ways, and among a large segment of society, the social acceptance of homosexual people by heterosexual people can appear relatively unaffected by validation from the scientific or legal realms. For example, during the earliest formulations of this study, two separate events made the news within one month of one another. In February 2008, a fifteen year-old boy named Lawrence King was shot in the head and killed by a fellow junior high school student after King had asked him to 'be his Valentine' earlier that week (Cathcart, February, 23, 2008). What kinds of viewpoints had been communicated to that fourteen year-old killer that resulted in his feeling so powerfully threatened? Who 'taught' him his understanding of what it means when someone identifies as "gay," and how did this understanding influence his own self-image, self-concept, identity?

The following month, State Representative Sallie Kern from Oklahoma was recorded on video telling a group of her constituents that "the homosexual agenda is just destroying this nation" (p.1) and that homosexuality poses a bigger threat to the United States than terrorism (Ervin, March 19, 2008). Kern, a former teacher who served on the Education Committee in her role as Representative, told reporters that her comments were taken out of context. She said she was referring only to activists who support gay candidates and what she called the "homosexual

agenda." She said she had no problem with gay individuals. How should the public make sense of Kern's explanatory comments? What do they mean? How is it that a political leader, or anyone, comes to believe that they can equate someone's sexual orientation with terrorism *without* condemning that individual personally? What does Representative Kern conclude about herself and others when she sees the "Hate is NOT a Family Value" bumper sticker?

Years prior, before either of the above events had occurred, I was walking across campus talking to a friend on my cell phone. It was a conversation I remember more vividly than most because my familiar surroundings seemed almost surreal to me that afternoon and for several days to come. Earlier that day I heard the news that 'Amendment 43' had passed in Colorado, and 'Referendum I' was voted down. The latter would have created a legal option for same-sex domestic partnerships in our state; the former successfully banned legal marriage for gays and lesbians. Intellectually I was well aware of the uphill battle that marriage equality efforts were facing across the country, and that Colorado's situation was no exception. But emotionally I was in shock. The reality was that more than half the people I passed everyday, on the sidewalks or on the highway, in the lunch line or in the grocery store – the people I might have opened a door for, or gave the right of way – had just voted to keep me from being allowed to ever marry. It felt like all masks were removed and "they" were telling me and my community that, indeed, we were not equal, we were not accepted, and we were not welcome in Colorado. I had grown up in this state and, for the first time, felt unsafe in it. I felt as though my being gay trumped every other quality or aspect of my being, superceding everything else about me including that I am a law-abiding, tax-paying citizen, an accomplished and talented professional, a devoted daughter, granddaughter, sister, and friend. On that day, my sexual orientation was the most significant

thing about me, as it was the basis upon which I was being denied a right which I always thought I possessed as an American.

How did my sexual orientation become *such* an all-encompassing aspect of who I am, *in the eyes of others*? Despite all my hard work up to now, all the life lessons I had learned to date and all the contributions I hoped to still make, *this* was the basis on which I was being judged: the fact that, in my early twenties I finally realized that my romantic connections in life were with women and ever since I have tried to live in integrity with that awareness. That afternoon, looking around the beautiful mountain campus I knew as home, I suddenly felt so completely out of place, so completely misunderstood. What can these people, these voters, be thinking about me? About my intentions for my life? How did they get such a wrong idea about me? How must they talk about gay people and gay lives? And why would people want to prevent me from finding happiness, with a partnership and a family of my own someday? Why is my being a lesbian, *such* a big deal to them? Why is this one part of my identity in such conflict with their identities?

As might be derived from the questions bubbling up in my mind that day, this experience was compelling to other 'identities' I held, beyond just my being a lesbian, not the least of which was my identity as an emerging educational psychologist. In accordance with the latter, I carry a deep interest in how people come to develop, or learn, these types of interpersonal, cultural, social, and moral values and beliefs, and how something "self-evident" to some is taken as entirely unfounded by others. As an educational researcher influenced by sociocultural notions of learning, I have many curiosities about how attitudes and perspectives are co-created and perpetuated, taught and learned, through interaction. So from the seed planted that day on campus, this course of study began. This is a project grounded in my own identities, about the

identities of others... a personal and scientific journey to better understand the nature of the grip on society possessed by this rejection of same-sex affection, and to investigate an educational intervention with the potential to loosen that grip which affects so many lives.

Statement of the Problem

I purposefully shared a personal story about the subtly disenfranchising effects of large-scale sexual orientation prejudice in my own life. Sadly, many more stories and statistics about rejection, discrimination, harassment and violence display expressions of this prejudice which are far more blatant and individually targeting. According to a nationwide survey by the National Conference for Community and Justice (T. Smith, 2006) on intergroup relations in America, as compared with African Americans, Muslims, and those who are poor, lesbians and gay men rank highest as targets of discrimination. The most recent and reliable estimates to date indicate that approximately 20% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) adults in the U.S. have experienced a crime against their person or property based on their sexual orientation; this proportion increases to almost 25% with attempted crimes included (Herek, 2009). Harassment is significantly more widespread, with about half of sexual minority adults reporting verbal abuse at some time in their adult life as a consequence of their sexual orientation. More than 1 in 10 LGB adults have experienced housing or employment discrimination because of her or his sexual orientation. These estimates, derived from a probability sample of surveyed LGB adults in the U.S., are considered to be substantially low due to both reluctance of respondents to truthfully disclose their sexual orientation, as well as known inconsistencies in memory recall of stigmatizing events (Herek, 2009).

In the same study by Herek, more than half of the respondents reported experiencing some degree of felt stigma, or sense of threat from society, related to their sexual orientation. This finding is considered by researchers to further highlight the extent to which gay, lesbian, and bisexual people are subjected to chronic stressors that heterosexuals do not experience (Herek, 2009; Meyer, 2003). The kinds of subtle violations of rights, and injuries to dignity and spirit, that contribute to the day in, day out mundane aspect of such stress, called “microaggressions” by some contemporary scholars (Sue et al., 2007), are occurring daily across the range of life settings in which gay and lesbian people live and work (Nadala et al., 2011; Shelton & Delgado-Romero, 2011). On top of the everyday microaggressions, the most recent two decades of public ballot initiatives put forth to restrict the rights of gay and lesbian people (Russell, 2000) or prevent their actualization (Herek, 2011; Levitt et al., 2009; Rostosky, Riggle, Horne, & Miller, 2009) have been proven to create an environment associated with negative psychological outcomes for LGB individuals.

In the workplace where most adults, including gay and lesbian adults, spend the largest proportion of their time, The Williams Institute (B. Sears & Mallory, 2011) reviewed four decades of research finding that employment discrimination against LGB people continues to be widespread. This body of research has shown that discrimination against sexual minorities has negative impact in terms of health, wages, job opportunities, productivity in the workplace, and job satisfaction. Specific findings from national probability samples indicate that both gay and non-gay employees consistently report witnessing discrimination based on sexual orientation. Twenty-seven percent of LGB people experienced workplace harassment based on sexual orientation in the years between 2003-2008 (the percentage is 38% among LGB people who are open about their sexual orientation). More than one-third of LGB respondents report that they

are not out to anyone at work, and only 25% were out to all of their co-workers (B. Sears & Mallory, 2011).

In the realm of health, both mental and physical, gay and lesbian people on average suffer from a number of disparities as compared to the population as a whole (Institute of Medicine, 2011). These health disparities include heightened rates of tobacco and substance use, depression and suicidality, obesity, breast and cervical in lesbians and HIV and hepatitis in gay men. All of these disparities, which are entirely preventable, stem from both reduced quality of care provided to LGB people as well as barriers to accessing care that result from healthcare systems that exclude the needs of same-sex families (Graves, Gujral, Bongiovanni, Moya, & Zimmer, 2012).

The above studies paint the picture of stigmatization and its effects on LGB adults in this country, while LGB youth or those questioning their sexual orientation face perhaps the most disheartening picture of all. A 1999 self-report survey found that 33 percent of sexual minority high school students attempted suicide in the previous year, which was in contrast to eight percent of their heterosexual peers in the same survey (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2000). Whether as runaways or as a result of expulsion from their homes, some estimate the percentage of homeless youth who are sexual minorities to be as high as 25 to 40 percent (Ryan & Futterman, 1998). Studies range between 74-83 percent of all sexual minority youth who suffer from verbal harassment and abuse while more than 21 percent of these youth report physical violence within their schools (Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009). Peer harassment was cited as a primary reason by the 28 percent of sexual minority students who dropped out of school (Savin-Williams, 1994). Compared to their peers, students targeted because they were perceived to be sexual minorities were almost twice as likely to report heavy drug use (Safe

Schools Coalition of Washington, 1999). Those perceived to be sexual minorities report with much greater frequency feeling negative emotional states, such as loneliness and depression (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003).

In Chapter Two, I provide an in-depth review of the etiological and conceptual underpinnings of the prejudice held by heterosexuals toward homosexuals in this country, the extent of which has been assessed at the population-level through only a small number of survey studies. Poll data since the 1970s show consistently more favorable attitudes toward both homosexual behavior and homosexual people. By 1996, only 56% of respondents on the General Social Survey (GSS) regarded homosexual behavior as “always wrong” (Yang, 1997). And yet in that same year, respondents to the American National Election Studies still rated lesbians and gay men among the lowest of all groups, though these ratings had increased more than 10 points since 1984 (Yang, 1997). More recent comparisons on these same surveys are not available in the literature.

As collective opinions have changed on this topic, however, scholars have recognized the need to assess attitudes in a more nuanced fashion, based on particular public policy and rights issues. Results of a study by Herek (2006) indicate the U.S. public strongly supports hate crime laws addressing sexual orientation, policies in employment and housing that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and military service by openly lesbian and gay personnel. In contrast, this same 2006 study found the public largely divided or opposed to policies that support same-sex headed families. Although a majority supported civil unions for same-sex couples, they opposed marriage equality and were mostly unsure about their opinions regarding whether same-sex couples should be legally allowed to adopt children (Herek, 2006).

Important to note is Herek's explanation that estimates of public support for policy are not actual proxies for gauging public attitudes toward a group of people. As he states, "research on prejudice against other minority groups has shown that, although the specific manifestations and prevalence of prejudice change over time, the motivations and thought processes on which prejudice is based evolve much more slowly" (Herek, 2006). Extending this distinction to the most recent assessment of public opinion, despite the 2011 Gallup poll results being the first to indicate that a majority of Americans (53%) now support marriage equality for gay men and lesbians, the underlying thought processes that constitute these same Americans' attitudes toward gay and lesbian people overall are not necessarily consistent with this specific policy-related shift. American people on the whole, in fact entire American organizational systems, are struggling intensely over how to think about and relate to gay and lesbian people and the topic homosexuality. Stein (2004) captured the depth of the cultural conflict with this assertion:

Other countries may adhere to even more negative views of homosexuality and LGBT people, but few are challenged by the extreme dichotomization in beliefs represented by the Christian right on the one side and by the gay and lesbian rights movement on the other. The prominence of this divide in current American politics is out of proportion to its representation within the population and it must therefore be viewed as a struggle not only between competing groups but between fundamental cultural ideologies. (p.5)

The focus of the present study is the problem of how adult learning scholars and teaching practitioners might best support the evolution of prejudicial attitudes surrounding sexual orientation through educational means. Many respected educational pioneers (Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970) and contemporary leaders (Hart, 1990; Mezirow, 1981, 1990; Rubenson, 1989) have touted the catalytic role of adult educators in contributing to a more democratic, socially just, and egalitarian society, claiming this as the highest and truest purpose for the field adult education. Yet when it comes to the prejudices surrounding LGB people in this country,

scholars of adult learning have made very few strides in countering the oppressive realities described above. Sexuality is still today considered a topic inappropriate or unnecessary for most adult learning settings. In fact the field of adult education has been criticized for being “the guardian and caretaker of heterocentric discourse, continuing the processes of disenfranchisement that begin in preparatory schooling” (Hill, 1995).

Beyond the disciplinary boundaries of academia, other common settings of adult learning exhibit the same paucity of educational opportunities on these topics as well. In the vast majority of professional development settings, the subject of sexual diversity is still highly taboo or considered a nonessential topic (Martin & Collinson, 1999). Studies of teacher education programs (Sherwin & Jennings, 2006; Szalacha, 2004), medical schools (Townsend, Wallick, & Cambre, 1995), law enforcement (Stewart, 1997), and other professions, have found established standards to be sorely if not entirely lacking on topics of sexual diversity. Even when the topic is addressed, trainers are encouraged or even mandated to dilute the message, thus avoiding conflict, by glossing over the subject with the more palatable focus on gender roles and sexism (Peel, 2002). Lastly, beyond such formal settings of learning, one is hard-pressed to think of any informal learning or community venues where heterosexual adults can turn for engaged meaningful exploration and knowledgeable unpoliticized answers to their questions about the truths of nonheterosexual identities. Even for adults interested or potentially willing to participate in the reflection and critical discourse of what might be powerfully transformative learning on these topics, after college such forums simply do not exist for the vast majority of adults in our culture.

Learning researchers and practitioners are highly qualified, arguably the most qualified, to respond to this profound need. For educators and learning scientists who view their work as

contributing to the ideals of a more egalitarian, democratic society this is a calling to which our response is painfully overdue. We might consider our response in particular to a voicing of this call made by U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, in her December 2011 address to the United Nations. On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, Clinton asserted that “Gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights,” and proceeded to propose a particular mode of intervention to that end.

Progress starts with honest discussion. Now, there are some who say and believe that all gay people are pedophiles, that homosexuality is a disease that can be caught or cured, or that gays recruit others to become gay. Well, these notions are simply not true. They are also unlikely to disappear if those who promote or accept them are dismissed out of hand rather than invited to share their fears and concerns. No one has ever abandoned a belief because he was forced to do so...Reaching understanding of these issues takes more than speech. It does take a conversation. In fact, it takes a constellation of conversations in places big and small. And it takes a willingness to see stark differences in belief as a reason to begin the conversation, not to avoid it. (Clinton, Dec.6, 2011)

Present Study and Research Questions

With the present study, I sought to investigate the nature of one such conversation. In the Fall of 2008, The Institute on the Common Good (ICG) at Regis University in north Denver sponsored a first-ever public group dialogue series, entitled *The Straight Talk Dialogues*, inviting heterosexual adults to discuss topics of “homosexuality and related social challenges.” This four-session conversation took place among nine adults as a structured dialogue facilitated by a professional facilitator in an informal, community-based learning forum.

My research design centers on the examination of talk among the participating individuals to answer the following questions:

- 1) How are frames of reference on topics related to sexual orientation and lesbian/gay people revealed and asserted by participants through interactive talk?
- 2) If transformation in frames of reference is evident over the course of the dialogues series, how are these transformations achieved in the interactive talk?

3) If transformation in frames of reference is evident over the course of the dialogues series, what appear to be the nature of such transformations?

The analysis I undertook is grounded in sociocultural notions of co-created cognition through the use of language in interaction. In particular, I drew upon a range of analytic tools for making sense of transcript content, including but not limited to Mezirow's (2000b) frame of reference, Ochs' & Capps' (2001) discussion of how moral stance is enacted in talk and interaction, and Tannen's (1993) surface evidence of underlying expectations as found in linguistic research. To complement and extend my analysis of the discourse, I also conducted a comparison of pre- and post-dialogue responses on a set of survey items addressing participants' attitudes about homosexuality, gay and lesbian people, and related public policy issues in answering the following question:

4) Is there a difference in pre-dialogue and post-dialogue attitudes or beliefs of heterosexuals about homosexuals and homosexuality?

In conceptualizing this study, I have attempted to honor both 'sides' of the empiricist/constructionist divide in social psychology (Gergen, 2002) because like others, I believe they extend rather than contradict one another in their explanatory utility. Thus, my review of literature, presented in Chapter Two, draws upon relevant theories from both the social cognitive and the social interactionist paradigms on prejudice and prejudice reduction. Although research and literature in the learning sciences has not explicitly emphasized a focus on prejudice reduction in these terms, I have also relied upon relevant work from the fields of adult learning, educational psychology, and dialogue/deliberation in order to ground the proposed analysis within educational practice. Chapter Three presents my conceptual framework, focusing on the theories and analytical tools that guided my thinking about the central issues of my study. In

Chapter Four, I detail the research design and methodology that I employed in this dissertation.

Chapters Five, Six, and Seven present my findings, and Chapter Eight offers discussion and recommendations for practice and research.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

In this chapter I review a wide-ranging and complex literature surrounding the central concepts that underpin the present study across a number of academic disciplines. First from the cognitive tradition in both social and educational psychology and then from the social interactionist lens, I highlight the current state of our understandings of prejudice in general and the specific form of prejudice surrounding homosexual people. In addition, I have summarized the conceptual tenets of prejudice reduction initiatives overall, and empirical findings on interventions applied to reduce sexual orientation prejudice in particular.

Prejudice and Identity: The Social Cognitive Perspective

Social scientists from a variety of academic disciplines are concerned with the social dynamics of how groups interact in our society, how the ‘us’ and ‘them’ develop and transform, how one person becomes labeled as part of ‘we’ and another person is labeled ‘other’ (Allport, 1954; Banks, 2005; Billig, 1985; Gay, 2000; Gergen, 2009; Hale, 2003; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Rocco & Gallagher, 2006; Tropp, 2003; van Dijk, 1987). Although actual applied efforts to reduce prejudice have grown out of many human service disciplines, in academic circles it is the field of Social Psychology that has most systematically pursued the study of prejudice and prejudice reduction. Scholars in this field, over the last fifty years, have produced research that examines prejudice from many angles, all of which share the definition of a ‘prejudice’ as a negative attitude (a belief or opinion accompanied by a negative feeling tone) toward a group of people or its individual members based purely on their membership in that

group (Plous, 2003). Monteith, Zuwerink, and Devine (1994) provided an historical account arguing that in the early years of scholarly work on prejudice in the United States, beginning shortly after World War II, our theories tended to be entirely focused on individual-level explanations, and on highly blatant manifestations of prejudice.

From these early decades emerged three main conceptual lines of research seeking to understand the phenomena of prejudice. The first of these became known as social learning theory and postulated that the acquisition of negative or positive attitudes toward another group of people occurred through the interplay of behavioral reinforcement, modeling, and association. The second vein was personality psychology which attributed prejudicial attitudes to various pathological developments of the personality, most notably the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950). The third explanatory stronghold during these beginning stages was claimed, and is still maintained to some extent today, by the cognitive psychological framework on prejudice which holds, in contrast to the other two, that *all* people are naturally inclined to hold prejudicial biases due to the mind's functional need to categorize, organize, and simplify our complex social environment (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1969). This approach to the study of prejudice stood as a deviation from the mid-century research trend of focusing on the most highly prejudiced of people and behaviors, and represents the historical precursor to the leading school of thought in prejudice research today, the social cognitive perspective (Monteith et al., 1994).

Contemporary theories on prejudice, those generated during the latter decades of the 20th century and built upon the work of those that came before, are more process-oriented, examine more subtle forms of bias, and are largely grounded in the social cognitive tradition of psychology (Monteith et al., 1994). Authors from this tradition point out that overall societal

attitudes in the United States toward historically targeted groups have indeed shifted since the early days of research on prejudice, and that this shift toward social egalitarianism in the post-Civil Rights and post-Women's Movement era, while gradually making the expression of prejudice less socially acceptable, has simultaneously catalyzed the refinement of scholarly study of prejudice. Thus while "old-fashioned" prejudicial attitudes have declined, research has traced the evolution of prejudice into a modern form in which subtle discriminatory responses remain. The main premise undergirding contemporary theories and research on prejudice is that individuals experience an internal state of conflict, or self-threat, by the co-existence of their own cognitively-driven prejudice responses and behaviors, coupled with their more socially-driven egalitarian values (Monteith et al., 1994).

Contemporary psychological theories on modern prejudice can be understood in three main categories, according to the hypothesized nature of this internal state of conflict:

- 1) Conflicting value structures – this body of theory considers the values and attitudes people have about certain stereotyped groups and tries to understand how individuals may attempt to resolve the ambivalence that is generated when certain closely-held values and their associated attitudes come into conflict. For example, researchers of this ilk may investigate the conflicts between a person's value of egalitarianism and their value of individualism (Katz, 1981; Katz & Hass, 1988).
- 2) Conflicting values & beliefs/feelings – this theory, commonly referred to as the theory of aversive racism (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), holds that the egalitarian self-image of most Americans conflicts with negative beliefs and/or feelings toward an 'out group.' Such negative beliefs and feelings are, even in modern times, widespread due to a variety of factors including the historically racist culture in this country, along with the normal

function of cognitive information processing which serves to distinguish 'self from other' in social interaction. This theory asserts that people will respond either positively or negatively toward the out-group depending on the sociocultural norm of the particular situation at hand. In other words, if the situation calls for a nonprejudiced response, a positive response will be generated. However, if the situation allows for the more convenient negative response that is consistent with their negative belief or feeling, then a negative response will be manifested. According to this theory, the selection of responses here is unacknowledged by the self and occurs unconsciously in order to maintain the egalitarian self-image (Gaertner et al., 2003).

3) Conflicting stereotype-based responses & personal beliefs – according to this theory, also known as the The Dissociation Model (P.G. Devine, 1989), we must understand a distinction between two types of stored information: the stereotype, which is the knowledge of an attribute that is commonly associated with a particular group, and the personal belief (or 'attitude') which is the individual's endorsement of that stereotype. Devine's central argument is that the mental activation of the stereotype and the attitude are each governed by two different cognitive processes, automatic and controlled, respectively. The implication is that, while stereotypes may be automatically activated in the presence or symbolic presence of the stereotyped group, people *can* inhibit stereotype-based responses if they have the time and cognitive focus to initiate controlled cognitive processes, to call forth egalitarian attitudes. "This analysis suggests that subtle, contemporary forms of prejudice exist because many low-prejudiced people have not progressed far enough in the prejudice reduction process in order to be efficient at

generating nonprejudiced responses that are consistent with their nonprejudiced beliefs” (Monteith et al., 1994, p. 335).

Implicit prejudice. The reader will note in the last two theoretical explanations of prejudice described above, there is a defining role played by cognitive processes that are below the level of consciousness. These notions ushered in what has become the newest wave of social psychological research on prejudice, often called automatic, implicit, or spontaneous bias. In a special issue of *The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, veteran researcher of prejudice Patricia Devine noted a “veritable explosion” of interest and research on the nature of implicit prejudice beginning in the 1990s, and stated that “few issues have so completely captured the interest and imagination of many well-established researchers as well as those who are new to the discipline” (Patricia G. Devine, 2001, p. 757).

The study of implicit prejudice has increasingly consumed the attention of social psychologists over the last decade due largely to the advent of new tools for detecting and measuring stereotypes and attitudes that do not rely on an individual’s self report. Indeed, at least with regard to certain kinds of prejudice (e.g., racial), sole reliance on self-report measures today would likely suggest a virtual disappearance, and widespread distaste for prejudice. However, recent studies consistently demonstrate that, when attitudes are measured using methods that do not rely on a person’s honesty or accuracy in reporting their own opinions, stereotypes, negative attitudes, and discriminatory behaviors are revealed repeatedly again with regard to race, gender, age, religion, physical appearance, socioeconomic class, and sexual orientation (Rudman, 2004b). Thus, while social and cultural influences have made it unpopular and undesirable to both express prejudice and *be* prejudiced, the study of implicit prejudice continues to demonstrate that negative stereotypes and attitudes toward “others” are alive and

well just below the surface of consciousness, even in people whose self-reported prejudice is quite low. And yet, because judgment and behavioral response flows from both conscious and unconscious attitudes, the dangers and potential injustices of implicit prejudice must be carefully considered right along with those of explicit prejudice. As Rudman (2004a) states, “The hidden nature of prejudice is one of its most pernicious aspects, whether the secret is kept from others or ourselves” (p.130).

The introduction of such new ways of measuring prejudice in its implicit form (e.g., Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), has generated an ongoing discussion and debate about what exactly is being assessed. According to Rudman (2004a), the assertion by some in the field that implicit biases are “nonconscious” or “unconscious” has been a major point of disagreement. The essence of the unrest lies in whether an implicit bias is defined declaratively (in terms of its mental contents) or procedurally (in terms of how it operates). The resolve offered by Rudman (2004a) is as follows:

In sum, if we declaratively define implicit and explicit orientations [biases] as “well-learned associations” but also specifically define the former in procedural terms, we need not require that people be unaware of implicit biases when we distinguish automatic from controlled responses. Although it is entirely feasible that people are, at least at times, unable to access the content of their minds, it may be more prudent to claim that people are unaware of 1) the influence that the source (e.g., traces of past experience) has on their implicit biases, and 2) the influence of their implicit biases on their judgments and behavior. That is, the source and the impact of the evaluation can be nonconscious without the evaluation itself being inaccessible. (2004a, p. 135)

Given this conception of implicit prejudice, the necessary next question for many social scientists is: how are these biases caused or formed? Rudman (2004a) outlines the evidence for four known sources of implicit biases and speculates about a fifth one. The first theory and supporting body of evidence suggests that implicit prejudices originate from past developmental experiences, in contrast to explicit prejudices that are thought to reflect more recent events. The

second explanation asserts that implicit prejudices are formed, more so than explicit prejudices, as a consequence of affective (emotional) experiences. A third causal explanation is that implicit prejudices, more so than explicit beliefs, result from the influence of cultural bias.

A fourth theory and set of evidence proposes that implicit prejudices are influenced by “cognitive balance principles,” meaning a need for consistency between one’s self-appraisal and their in-group identity. Rudman (2004a) articulates that this “pattern can be characterized as ‘If I am good and I am X, then X is also good’” (p. 137). This basic notion of one’s in-group evaluation being dependent upon the interaction of self-appraisal and group identity is “the hallmark of the unified theory of implicit social cognition, which has provided some of the most compelling evidence that implicit and explicit orientations [biases] are derived from different sources” (Rudman, 2004a, p. 137). Finally Rudman offers evidence and speculation that implicit biases may also be caused, similarly to the cognitive balancing principle just discussed, by the need to balance self-concept and stereotypes of groups with which one identifies. In other words, whereas controlled or explicit prejudices may allow for a more objective evaluation, it may be difficult for a person to possess an implicit bias that is inconsistent with her/his self-concept.

Social identity theory. Before moving on from the present review of basic social cognitive concepts in the study of prejudice, it is important to highlight a key concept that is integral to social psychology’s research on prejudice, and yet paradoxically, is rarely named within the discipline – and that is the concept of identity. For many conventional social psychologists, those trained within a positivistic, experimental paradigm, the construct of ‘identity’ is too abstract, too immeasurable, and is thus often passed by in favor of concepts that might be more readily operationalized such as self-concept and self-image. Indeed the construct

of identity is one that is more readily embraced by scholars and practitioners grounded in fields more fluent with a social interactionist perspective such as education, sociology, anthropology and others to be discussed later in this chapter. Nevertheless, in the context of investigating prejudice, all the previously discussed concepts from social psychology, including attitudes, stereotypes, and ingroup/outgroup biases can be discussed as they relate to an individual's identity. In establishing the conceptual framework for this study, it is necessary to begin now recognizing the predominant theme of individual identity as it is integrally related to Mezirow's *frame of reference*, the central construct under investigation in this study.

Howard (2000) has articulated a particularly useful analysis and integration of the interdisciplinary concept of identity, comparing and contrasting how it is understood and applied across academic disciplines. As she explains, the cognitive labeling and grouping we do about ourselves and others (e.g., male/female, intelligent/unintelligent, homosexual/heterosexual) is the fundamental process in the large and productive body of social psychological research referred to as social identity theory (R. Brown, 2000). Howard (2000) states that:

The central tenet of social identity theory is that individuals define their identities along two dimensions: social, defined by membership in various social groups; and personal, the idiosyncratic attributes that distinguish an individual from others. Social and personal identities are thought to lie at opposite ends of a continuum, becoming more or less salient depending on the context. (p. 369)

The premise of social identity theory grew out of a foundational assertion from experimental laboratory studies in cognitive psychology that human beings, due to limited cognitive capacities and the need to attain cognitive efficiency in our interactions, naturally categorize information about people, objects, and situations *before* we engage our memories or inferential processes (Howard, 2000). These categories of information are known as *cognitive schemas* in psychology and are, from this perspective, the building blocks of identity. Applying

this principle of cognitive efficiency in social situations, social identity theory looks at the ways in which humans identify themselves by their membership in groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). As instantiated in the earlier discussion of contemporary social cognitive theories on prejudice, this line of research has yielded substantial evidence that shows a consistent connection between this cognitive categorization and the cognitive evaluations that quickly follow such that people are naturally motivated to evaluate groups to which they belong more positively, and to discriminate against groups who pose a perceived threat to their social identity (Howard, 2000). For example, in the present context, social identity theory holds that someone who identifies as heterosexual would be naturally and automatically inclined to evaluate themselves more positively than someone they perceive to be gay/lesbian simply based upon the fact or perception of the gay/lesbian person's membership in a social identity group different from their own. Thus, an understanding of the nature and dynamics of prejudice is impossible without a concurrent understanding of how one's sense of self, or identity, is formed and transformed in relation to the social environment.

Identity within education: The constructivist perspective. Consistent with the aforementioned reticence of positivistic psychologists to engage with the concept of identity, Packer and Goiccochea (2000) point to “a lingering anxiety, traceable to the logical positivists, that discussion of ontology is merely ‘metaphysical,’ untestable, and therefore unscientific or even meaningless” (p. 228). These authors call for the two major paradigms on human learning – constructivist and sociocultural – to extend their orientation beyond strictly epistemology (knowing) into one of ontology (being) as well. They insist that hidden in both sets of perspectives about how learning happens, are complementary notions that learning involves a transformation in the learner's identity. Nonetheless, explicit discussions of identity and identity

transformation are relatively new on the scene of educational psychology (S. Wortham, 2004) and were especially sparse prior to the flourishing popularity of the sociocultural perspectives on learning. These perspectives will be revisited in depth later in this chapter.

Perhaps the most influential voice from psychology that motivated education on the topic of identity, that of Erik Erickson (1968), was situated in the field of developmental psychology and became important among educational psychologists studying stages of overall identity formation. In the context of investigating prejudice, however, the field of education and especially its subfield of educational psychology, have built very few bridges between concepts of identity and the learning or “unlearning” of prejudicial beliefs and attitudes. Most of the work in this respect has been completed by scholars typically associated with another of education’s subfields, that of multicultural education. One such psychologist and educator, Tatum (1992, 1997) has examined multiple theoretical models of racial identity development, focusing on Black identity, in her efforts to understand and reform the dynamics of contemporary racism in K-12 classrooms and schools.

Adult identity - the social nature of its formation and transformation – and how it influences attitudes about sexual orientation and homosexual people, represents the core set of phenomena under investigation in the present study. Mezirow (1991; 2000) introduced a set of ideas surrounding a type of perspective change that he called transformational learning. His concept of the frame of reference has sparked a wealth of scientific interest and research into the educational processes by which adults undergo attitudinal and belief change, and offered an especially useful lens for the present study as well. In the next chapter I present and discuss Mezirow’s concepts surrounding adult learning and identity as they relate directly to this project.

Sexual Orientation Prejudice & Heterosexual Identity: The Social Cognitive

Perspective. Social scientists point to two events in U.S. history, only a year apart from one another, which sparked serious scholarly questioning and concern around the negative attitudes held by many heterosexual people toward homosexual people. First, Weinberg (1972) coined the term “homophobia” in the publication of his popular book *Society and the Healthy Homosexual* in which he challenged the prevalent notion of homosexuality as a “problem” and asserted instead that anti-homosexual hostility was the problem in need of attention. The following year, in 1973, the American Psychiatric Association de-pathologized homosexuality by removing it from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, the authoritative guide for mental health clinicians then and now (Bayer, 1987). According to Herek (2004), a social psychologist and contemporary leader in the study of this form of prejudice, “the invention of homophobia was a milestone. It crystallized the experiences of rejection, hostility, and invisibility that homosexual men and women in mid-20th century North America had experienced throughout their lives” (p. 8).

While honoring Weinberg for instigating a watershed in the collective thinking about homosexuality during the last quarter of the last century, Herek’s (2004) contemporary work outlines several limiting and problematic aspects to the established terminology of “homophobia”. Herek explained, based on a personal interview with Weinberg, that Weinberg did not intend to equate heterosexuals’ reactions regarding homosexuals to such diagnostic classifications as a fear of snakes, heights, or closed in spaces and that scientific evidence does not support the notion that heterosexuals who are prejudiced in this manner actually have an intense, irrational fear of homosexual people themselves. Herek was careful to acknowledge, however, that for some heterosexuals with this form of prejudice, some version of fear may

indeed be at play such as a fear of being labeled by others as homosexual, for example. While such fear may play a secondary factor for some, empirical findings as well as observed patterns in antigay rhetoric and brutal hate crimes all suggest that a combination of anger and disgust are the primary emotional constituents involved in prejudice against homosexual people (Haddock, Zanna, & Esses, 1993; Herek & Berrill, 1992; Herman, 1997). Additional bases for Herek's rejection of the term 'homophobia' are the fact that this language is pathologizing of a normal pattern of thinking and behavior ironically similar in fashion to the historic pathologizing of homosexuality, and the restricted frame of reference that comes with 'homophobia' as an individual phenomenon, separate from any influence of social interaction and culture. Thus Herek (2004) turned from a retrospective to prospective view with the following proclamation:

Homophobia has been a tremendously valuable tool for raising society's awareness about the oppression of sexual minorities. No doubt it will continue to be useful to political activists as they challenge laws, policies, and popular attitudes that perpetuate such oppression. For scholars, however, a more nuanced vocabulary is needed to understand the psychological, social, and cultural processes that underlie that oppression. (Herek, 2004, p. 13)

To replace the term homophobia, Herek (2004) proposed the phrase "sexual prejudice" and grounds this recommendation in several points of rationale. However, before elaborating on his proposed new terminology, Herek articulated two related, but distinct concepts that predicate an understanding of sexual prejudice. First, he drew on an extensive social psychological literature to recruit the concept of stigma, which he dubbed "sexual stigma" in this context, referring to "the shared knowledge of society's negative regard for any nonheterosexual behavior, identity, relationship, or community" (p. 15). Next, Herek explained the critical feminist notion of "heterosexism" saying that "if sexual stigma signifies the fact of society's antipathy toward that which is not heterosexual, heterosexism can be used to refer to the systems

that provide the rationale and operating instructions for that antipathy” (p. 15). Herek then proposed the phrase “sexual prejudice” to refer to individual heterosexuals’ negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. It should be noted here that, based on extensive consideration and my own research, I have rejected Herek’s language in favor of the modified phrase “sexual orientation prejudice,” used by Dessel (2010). I believe this label to be more accurate to the intended meaning that the prejudice being referenced is a response based on the phenomenon of enduring same-sex attraction, rather than any other aspect of human sexuality.

With this conceptualizing language of “sexual prejudice”, Herek, whose training and research are situated primarily in the positivistic tradition of cognitive social psychology, made the connection between the phenomena historically called homophobia and his field’s contemporary scientific understanding of prejudice, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter. It should be noted, however, that Herek’s integration of sociological concepts such as “stigma” and “heterosexism” is unconventionally far-reaching from within his specific academic tradition. As Herek acknowledged, these concepts are credited to the scholarly traditions of sociology, anthropology, and linguistics and have been developed extensively within those traditions to explain antigay hostility from a more interactionist, structural viewpoint. Similar to Herek, I believe that a full understanding of the human phenomena at hand cannot be grasped without the inclusion of these perspectives. The social interactionist perspectives on prejudice- those that see prejudice as something not strictly residing within the mind of the individual but as something constantly being reborn and revised through interaction- in complementarity with social cognitive perspectives, comprise a major foundation of the present study and are reviewed later in this chapter.

Psychologists from the social cognitive tradition now have two decades of studies contributing to their understanding of the etiology and composition of the prejudice historically referred to as homophobia, what Herek now calls sexual prejudice, and what I will henceforth refer to as sexual orientation prejudice. Dessel (2008) conducted a thorough review of the variables that have been found to correlate with or to predict sexual orientation prejudice. She explains that these can be grouped into categories of traditional or conservative beliefs, feelings related to sexuality, and demographic descriptors, and include the following:

- social dominance and right wing authoritarianism (Haddock et al., 1993; Sibley, Robertson, & Wilson, 2006)
- Protestant work ethic (Malcomson, Christopher, Franzen, & Keyes, 2006)
- traditional Christian religiosity (Hicks & Tien-tsung, 2006; Olson, Cadge, & Harrison, 2006; Plugge-Foust & Strickland, 2000)
- gender essentialist beliefs or belief in traditional gender roles (Haslam & Levi, 2006; Jayaratne et al., 2006; Korfhage, 2006; W. Wilkinson, 2006)
- old-fashioned heterosexism (Cowan, Heiple, Marquez, Khatchadourian, & McNevin, 2005)
- anti-abortion and anti-women's equality views (Hicks & Tien-tsung, 2006)
- values of salvation, obedience and national security (Vicario, Liddle, & Luzzo, 2005)
- contact anxiety (W. Wilkinson, 2006)
- intrapersonal homophobia (Moradi, van den Berg, & Epting, 2006)
- negative affect in men (Parrott, Zeichner, & Hoover, 2006)
- stereotypes, symbolic beliefs, affect and past experience (Haddock et al., 1993)
- race, gender, previous contact with lesbians or gay men (Herek, 1994; Hicks & Tien-tsung, 2006; Mudrey & Medina-Adams, 2006)

(Excerpted from Dessel, 2008, p.29)

These studies revealed higher levels of sexual orientation prejudice among U.S. Americans who are older, less educated, living in Southern or Midwest states, living in rural areas, unmarried, and male (Britton, 1990; Herek, 2000b). Also, as the above list indicates, several psychosocial variables reliably go hand in hand with the presence of sexual prejudice including high degrees of authoritarianism, association with fundamentalist religious denominations, frequent attendance at religious services, and conservative or Republican

political affiliation (Herek, 2000b; Yang, 1997). The relatively few studies that have examined how racial differences interact with levels of sexual orientation prejudice suggest that the prejudice may be greater among heterosexual African Americans than among heterosexual white Americans. Herek asserted that these numbers are likely due to the relatively more favorable attitudes among white women (Herek & Capitanio, 1995). Finally as related to the correlates of sexual orientation prejudice, studies have strongly confirmed that heterosexuals who know gay men or lesbians personally harbor significantly less prejudice than heterosexuals who do not (Herek & Capitanio, 1996). As Herek (2000b) explained, “The lowest levels of prejudice are manifested by heterosexuals who have gay friends or family members, describe their relationships with those individuals as close, and report having directly discussed the gay or lesbian person’s sexual orientation with him or her” (p. 20).

Underlying motivations of sexual orientation prejudice. Herek (1987) posed that homophobic attitudes can serve experiential, social expressive, value expressive and/or defensive functions. Experiential refers to a basis in actual previous experience with someone who is gay or lesbian. Social expressive refers to approval seeking from peers. Value expressive is a function that affirms one’s values, and the defensive function serves to avoid one’s own anxieties related to sexuality and sexual orientation.

According to Herek (2000a):

These different motivations can be understood as deriving from the psychological functions that sexual [orientation] prejudice serves, which vary from one individual to another. One heterosexual’s sexual [orientation] prejudice, for example, may reduce the anxiety associated with his fears about sexuality and gender, whereas another heterosexual’s prejudice might reinforce a positive sense of herself as a member of the social group “good Christians”. (p. 21)

Here again we are returned to the connection between identity and prejudice as discussed earlier, in the automatic preferencing of self that is believed to occur when another person is recognized (and cognitively categorized) as part of an outgroup.

Heterosexual identity. Central to an understanding of sexual orientation prejudice is an examination of identity and its components among heterosexually-identified individuals. What are the identity characteristics of a straight person that may or may not contribute to the development and maintenance of a prejudice against gay or lesbian people? Especially from the social cognitive perspective, there is very little research to date that addresses this question. This question has been examined a great deal more just in the last decade, from the social interactionist perspective. Even the notion of heterosexuality as an identity at all, analogous to a white racial identity, has only very recently been ‘discovered’ (Howard, 2000). Most scholars have agreed that because of the degree to which heterosexuality is assumed in our culture, it is not common for heterosexual people to consciously acknowledge their heterosexuality as a component of their identity (Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, & Vernaglia, 2002). Nonetheless a few social cognitivists have proposed models for how heterosexual identity develops and is maintained (Eliason, 1995; Sullivan, 1998; Worthington et al., 2002).

Using Marcia’s (1987) theory of overall human identity development, Eliason (1995) applied this lens to the development of sexual identity in a qualitative analysis of essays written by heterosexually identified undergraduate students. Her findings were praised for the preliminary light they shed on heterosexual identity development in that, with regard to their sexual identity, the largest segment of her subjects exhibited Marcia’s “foreclosure” (acceptance of an identity imposed by expectations of other people or society without exploration). Furthermore, Eliason found important differences between men and women whereby men

seemed to commit to heterosexuality based primarily on a rejection of gay identity; the women seemed more open to alternatives.

Sullivan (1998) was the first to propose an original model for heterosexual identity development. She described five stages of development (borrowing concepts associated with theories of racial identity development) through which individuals can progress, and which exist within a cultural atmosphere of homophobia and heterosexism. The first stage, *naïveté*, is characterized by little or no awareness of sexual orientation; people in this stage are in the process of being socialized to view heterosexuality as the only option. By the time they achieve the second stage, *acceptance*, people have fully internalized the cultural messages and have begun taking heterosexuality for granted. A dramatic awareness emerges in the third stage, *resistance*, by which the individual gains recognition of the dynamics of oppression in society and begins to appreciate non-heterosexual possibilities for sexual orientation such as lesbian, gay, and bisexual. *Redefinition*, the fourth stage, is when individuals are seeking ways to possess their heterosexual identity that are not dependent on heterosexism. In this stage people are moving toward a sexual identity defined less by their earlier resistance to heteronormative social norms, and more and more by their consciously considered affirmation of heterosexuality. In the final stage, *internalization*, one achieves an integration of one's heterosexual identity into all aspects of life.

Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, and Vernaglia (2002) critiqued both Eliason and Sullivan because, as they asserted, their theories rely on definition of sexual identity as based solely on an orientation (homosexual, heterosexual) and thus ignore other important aspects of sexual identity such as sexual needs, values, activity preferences, partner characteristics, and modes of sexual expression. Additional critique from Worthington et al. suggested that these earlier models do

not adequately account for the fluidity of sexual exploration across time, and that they overemphasize individual factors of identity formation to the exclusion of social factors, thus “failing to consider the impact of group membership affiliations and privilege on the identity statuses of heterosexuals” (2002, p. 502). By suggesting several more layers of complexity inherent to the development of sexual identity, including biological considerations, microsocial relationships, gender norms and socialization, cultural factors, religious orientation, and systemic homonegativity, Worthington (2002) and his team have proposed the newest model of heterosexual identity development, the Multidimensional Model (MM). Worthington et al. (2002) defined heterosexual identity development as:

The individual and social processes by which heterosexually identified persons acknowledge and define their sexual needs, values, sexual orientation and preferences for sexual activities, modes of sexual expression, and characteristics of sexual partners. Finally we add to this definition the assumption that heterosexual identity development entails an understanding (implicit or explicit) of one’s membership in an oppressive majority group, with a corresponding set of attitudes, beliefs, and values with respect to members of sexual minority groups. (p. 510)

Consequently, their model poses two parallel processes occurring simultaneously in heterosexual identity development: individual and social. *Individual sexual identity development* involves recognition, acceptance and identification with one’s sexual needs, values, orientation and preferences for activities, partners, and modes of sexual expression. *Social sexual identity development* involves recognition of one’s membership in a group of others with similar sexual identities and attitudes toward people with sexual identities dissimilar from that ingroup (Worthington et al., 2002).

In the Multidimensional Model, Worthington et al. (2002) conceived of the above two processes, the individual and the social, as occurring within five ‘statuses,’ or sets of developmental phenomena that build on one another while at the same time remain fluid and

flexible for individuals to circle back through and revisit as development progresses. Also, movement through and among the statuses may occur on both conscious and unconscious levels.

What follows is a summary description of each of Worthington et al.'s (2002) statuses of heterosexual identity development:

Unexplored Commitment. This status is thought to be the developmental starting point for the vast majority of people, because nearly every culture has strongly held norms for sexuality. This status reflects the familial and societal mandates for acceptable gender roles and sexual behavior, and on the dimension of sexual orientation, is characteristic of the individual that accepts and adopts without question society's compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1981). While people exhibiting this status can be of any age, its characteristics are often seen in prepubescent boys and girls who have limited opportunity to consciously consider their sexuality. Worthington et al explain that once a person leaves this status, s/he will not return; unlike other statuses, this one will not be revisited. In terms of the social processes of this status, a person situated here operates according to culturally prescribed norms for heterosexuality and will tend to be strongly influenced by unexamined negative biases against anything or anyone suggestive of non-heterosexuality. People at this developmental status tend to believe they do not know anyone who is lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) and are likely to conceive of LGB people in stereotypic ways. At best, people in this phase may hold attitudes of 'tolerance' toward LGB others.

Active Exploration. In this status, individuals may purposefully experiment, explore and evaluate any or all aspects of their sexual identity, including needs, values, orientation, preferences, partner characteristics, or modes of expression. Typically this status will coincide with biological maturation, though it could occur and recur at any age. The authors point out that due to the powerful systemic prejudice and taboo against homosexuality, most people will avoid active exploration with regard to their orientation (they will not 'try on' an identity of LGB), and reserve their explorations in this phase to other aspects of their sexual identity such as trying on different values, types of partners, modes of sexual expression, etc. On the social side of this status, a person in active exploration is likely to enter consciousness about her/his membership in the dominant heterosexual group and may either begin to question the justice of heterosexual privilege, or become more assertive about the privilege of heterosexuality. Worthington et al hypothesize that individuals experiencing this status are likely to hold more positive attitudes toward LGB people.

Diffusion. This status, often triggered by one or more crises, is defined as the absence of exploration or commitment (Marcia, 1987). The authors explain that people in diffusion are likely to be experiencing identity confusion in multiple aspects of their life, accompanied by multiple forms of psychological distress. They further state that "individuals in diffusion are likely to be rejecting of other social and cultural prescriptions for values, behavior, and identity and extend this social noncompliance to

their sexual life” (Worthington et al., 2002, p. 518). Individuals may enter this status from any of the other statuses, but can only leave it by moving into active exploration.

Deepening & Commitment. This status is characterized by the individual’s movement toward a greater commitment to the identified aspects of sexual identity (needs, values, orientation, preferences, partner types, and modes of expression). The authors articulate a significant critical difference from other identity development theories in this status. They theorize that, unlike other stage or status theories of identity “achievement,” heterosexually-identified people can and very often do enter this status without first engaging in active exploration with regard to their orientation and other aspects of sexuality. The basis for this assertion is that, due to the strong social forces dictating narrow expectations for one’s sexual identity, many people move right into deepening their commitment to heterosexuality simply by virtue of maturation and without being drawn into active exploration. Similarly, their perceptions of their own group membership as heterosexual and their viewpoints about sexual minorities begin to “crystallize into conscious, coherent perspectives...which may take virtually any form along the continuum of attitudes from condemnation to tolerance to affirmativeness” (Worthington et al., 2002, p. 519).

Synthesis. Only one pathway, through deepening and commitment, will lead to this, the most mature status of heterosexual identity development which the authors purport that very few individuals achieve due to the multidimensional complexity of sexual identity development. The unlikelihood of achieving synthesis is also complicated by the necessity that one must pass through the active exploration status in order to have the flexible thinking characteristic of this integrated perspective. Individuals who have achieved synthesis of their heterosexual identity will likely have affirming attitudes toward LGB people and conceive of human sexuality along a continuum. (Worthington et al., 2002)

Worthington et al. (2002) acknowledged the above model was in need of empirical validation but offered several implications for research and practice based on their hypothesis that the sexual identity development of heterosexuals is related to their potential for antigay attitudes and behavior, and also to their potential for LGB affirmativeness. Specifically, these authors assert that “there is likely to be a strong association between more affirmative attitudes toward LGB persons and more integrated sexual identity statuses associated with the exploration process” (p. 526). Thus Worthington and his team suggest, and this author upholds as a key assumption of the present investigation, that by tailoring educational and psychological interventions according to aspects of sexual identity among heterosexuals, we are likely to

increase our effectiveness in reducing prejudice and discrimination against LGB people and in bolstering the development of attitudes and behaviors that are affirming.

Prejudice and Identity: The Social Interactionist Perspective

Though the concepts of social cognition achieved and maintained a stronghold in the psychological study of social identity and prejudice in the U.S. during the ‘Cognitive Revolution’ of the 1960s and 70s, an alternative perspective on the nature of identity was emerging simultaneously from scholars in fields that considered culture and social practices more centrally such as sociology and education (Goffman, 1959; Vygotsky, 1978). In 1999, education scholar Stanton Wortham asserted that psychology’s stronghold on the phenomena of knowledge and identity had been weakened and was being replaced by explanations of cognition and the self as comprising “structures from several different levels of organization” (p. 153). From such scholars emerged the concept of social interactionism, grounded in the notion that, as Howard (2000) succinctly states, “people attach symbolic meaning to objects, behaviors, themselves, and other people, and they develop and transmit these meanings through interaction” (p. 371). From the social interactionist perspective, identities are not derived from cognitive schemas we carry in our heads; rather they are constantly created, modified, and re-created depending on the meaning we attach to the people and situations in which we find ourselves.

For educational scholars, social interactionism is a defining dynamic of sociocultural perspectives on learning, most often traced back to the influential writings of Lev Vygotsky (1978) among whose major claims was that individual mental functioning has interactive origins. Although Vygotsky did not use the term “identity” in his work (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995), his insights seeded much of the subsequent scholarship on the developmental formation and reformation of what we call identity today. The premise that identity and social interaction are

“mutually constitutive” (Rogoff, 2003) is central to a sociocultural framework for understanding learning. As Lave (1996) explains:

Crafting identities is a social process, and becoming more knowledgeably skilled is an aspect of participation in social practice. By such reasoning, who you are becoming shapes crucially and fundamentally what you “know.” “What you know” may be better thought of as doing rather than having something- “knowing” rather than acquiring or accumulating knowledge or information. (p. 157)

Another of Vygotsky’s (1978) most pertinent notions was that human development is mediated by cultural tools and signs such that, for example, our most robust set of signs, our language, is not solely a tool for communicating but actually transforms our thoughts and actions (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). Thus, since a large proportion of human interaction is largely either verbal or written, language plays a central role in mediating the process of identity construction. As Howard aptly put it, “At the most basic level, the point is simply that people actively produce identity through their talk” (p. 372). For socioculturalists, this cumulative reformulation of identity through language-based interaction, inherently molded by changing situations, represents a key mechanism by which learning occurs.

The work of a contemporary cohort of these sociocultural scholars builds on Vygotskian notions and offers particularly useful contributions to the present framework. Wortham (1999) described identity as “heterogeneously distributed because a coherent self emerges from the interconnection of structures of diverse sorts, which together facilitate the experience and manifestation of a coherent identity” (p. 155). Although acknowledging that a complete and thorough account of the structures that comprise a self would have to explain structures of groups, family systems, cultural patterns, meaningful objects, linguistic categories and more, Wortham emphasized one such contributing structure, that of the interactional patterns in narrative discourse. Simply stated, the idea here is that people construct their identities, in part,

by and through the stories they tell about themselves. Furthermore, one's autobiographical narrative takes on power to transform identity according to which characteristics of self the narrator feels compelled to foreground and subsequently use as mediators of one's own behavior (Stanton Wortham, 1999).

Wortham draws on and extends the work of Vygotsky's contemporary Mikhail Bakhtin who is admired for his social theory of language and the novel (Bakhtin, 1935/1982, 1953/1986). Bakhtin is credited with developing the dialogic approach to analyzing language and discourse which, when combined with Vygotskian concepts of socially-originated cognition, unearthed an entirely new set of lenses through which to view identity, its role in learning, and, I argue, its role in prejudice and prejudice reduction. Bakhtin asserted that all language and speech is dialogic, not monologic. By this he meant that the speaker is always, without exception, not strictly expressing an attitude about the topic of his utterance, but is also responding to the speakers who have preceded her/him on that topic. According to Bakhtin, this *social positioning* is a major contributor to the meaning of any utterance. Wortham (1999), from the vantage point of an educator interested in identity, explains that "for autobiographical narrative, then, we cannot understand its meaning solely in terms of its descriptions, themes, and symbols. Its full dialogic meaning will also include how telling that narrative positions the narrator with respect to others in the audience" (p. 158).

In further explaining Bakhtin's notion, Wortham (1999) asserted that "all narrators position themselves with respect to other voices from the social world, and thus make socially relevant points without stating these points explicitly" (p. 161). Wortham calls this "interactional positioning", based on the *action* taken by the person speaking to orient her/his self relative to what others have previously uttered on the topic at hand, thus contributing

implicit meaning to their comments. In addition, he claimed that in autobiographical narrative, the speaker is also positioning her/his self with respect to previously-narrated versions of her or his self. It is the combination of these interactional structures – positioning between present (narrating) and previous (narrated) selves along with positioning between narrator and other social voices – that helps organize the narrator’s identity.

Another set of Bakhtinian scholars whose work has provided central concepts to the present study is that of Ochs and Capps (2001) in *Living Narrative: Creating Lives in Everyday Storytelling*. In this book, the authors lift up and shed light on the ways in which identities are continuously crafted through ordinary social exchanges when speakers recount life events with one another. By outlining a set of narrative dimensions and showing how casual, personal storytelling bears certain characteristics at one end of those dimensions, Ochs and Capps provided a valuable perspective for viewing learning and identity formation in process. A great deal more of this conceptual vantage point will be discussed and applied beginning in the next chapter.

Using these foundational ideas, Wortham, Ochs, Capps and other turn-of-the-century learning scholars (e.g., Wertsch, Wells, Lave, Rogoff and others) have pioneered the path of examining identity in learning through investigation of dialogic processes inherent in discourse. “Discourse” is a broad interdisciplinary term referring to any or a combination of three categories: 1) anything beyond the sentence, 2) people’s use of language, or even 3) broadly defined social language practices (Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2001). For many social scientists, discourse, or simply the talk between people (Tracy, 2002), is the situation where the doing of identity can be captured in action.

Wells (2007) refers to discursive practices as “discoursing,” which he says “is at the heart of the identity construction project” (p. 4). He goes on to assert:

It is in large part through the discoursing in which we engage as participants in the various communities of practice of which we are members that we appropriate the cultural values and normative scripts that define our identities. It is not so much that these are imposed on us by external dominant institutions as that, by entering into the practices and discourses of these institutions, we come to assimilate them and make them our own – or, alternatively, to resist them with those that we have appropriated from other communities in which we participate. (Wells, 2007, pp. 4-5)

Mezirow's work on transformational learning theory, largely thought of as inherently individualistic in its emphasis on cognitive processes (as described in the next chapter), has acknowledged a central role for discourse in adult learning. Mezirow's concept of learning in adults necessitates that the learner engage in perspective-taking which involves, in addition to a cognitive dimension, both intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions. In the latter sense, this requires the learner to use feedback in making sense of another's perspective. Mezirow (2003) writes "What one talks about needs to be distinguished from what it means to the speaker and why he or she talks about it. Understanding depends on the nature and goal of the situation and its social relationships" (p. 60). He referred to this interpersonal exchange in adult learning as "critical-dialectical discourse" or "reflective discourse," a central concept around which this study is designed as will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Though the academic pathways of educational psychology and adult learning have historically been forged in relative isolation from one another (M. C. Smith & Pourchot, 1998), convergences are being sought increasingly and articulated such as the one described above in Mezirow's theorizing. In particular, adult learning theorists consistently find common ground with educational psychology's notions of socially-mediated development (Bonk & Kim, 1998; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007) and the role of identity in learning (M. C. Smith & Pourchot, 1998; Tennant, 2006). Nonetheless, relative to the focus of the present study, there are

still very few academic bridges from either educational psychology or adult learning to prejudice and prejudice reduction, even from within the social interactionist paradigm.

One such a bridge does exist, however, and was built when the attention to discourse and discursive practices dawned within the field of social psychology. Harre (2003) referred to the laboratory-driven pre-discourse age of social psychology (e.g., the theories of prejudice overviewed at the beginning of this chapter) as “the old paradigm” which he criticized for privileging “the cognitive and emotional states of individuals as the source of the properties of the patterns of social interactions they engaged in” (p. 688). The “new paradigm” of social psychological research, including a cadre of scholars studying prejudice (and a few honing in on sexual orientation prejudice), takes the interactionist perspective that a method for analyzing discourse is necessary for understanding the largely symbolic nature of social life in which the prejudice occurs.

As the reader will recall from early in this chapter, the established social cognitive view on prejudice relies fundamentally on the notion of categorization. That is, social cognitivists assert that inherent in human cognitive processing is a basic, adaptive tendency to stereotype (categorize) for purposes of simplifying and organizing the complexity of perception and assisting in the decision-making process. Thus, by this account, the phenomenon of prejudice comes with a high degree of inevitability. Social psychologists who study discourse, taking an interactionist view, have vehemently disagreed. Billig (1985) argued that the emphasis on cognitive categorization has ignored an equally natural and opposing process called “particularization,” which allows for the possibility of less rigid, more flexible and tolerant attitudes to occur in interpersonal interactions. As defined by Billig, particularization refers to

“the process by which a particular stimulus is distinguished from a general category or from other stimuli” (p. 82), thus the stimulus is treated mentally as a ‘special case’.

Billig’s (1985) conclusion was that neither categorization nor particularization are so inherently tied to the social phenomena of either prejudice or tolerance so as to make these manifestations inevitable. Instead he proposed that prejudice is a rhetorical phenomenon, influenced of course by perception, but not strictly perceptual as implied by the categorization model. Thus, consistent with sociocultural notions from educational psychology such as ‘situated learning’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and ‘mutually constitutive’ individual and cultural processes (Rogoff, 2003), Billig’s interactionist model of prejudice said that an individual may tend toward expression of prejudice under one set of situational variables and expression of tolerance under a different set. A rhetorical approach to understanding prejudice examines the varying sets of situational factors in search of patterns for when prejudice arises over tolerance and vice versa.

Not only does Billig (1985, 1987) outline a radical departure from the conventional cognitive categorization notions of prejudice by pointing to situational discourse as the medium of determining factors, but he further highlights the rhetorical, or argumentative, nature of human cognition. Billig (1985) stated “(i)f the world can be categorized in different ways, then the choice of one particular [attitude] can be seen as being part of an argument against another way of viewing things, and is to be defended by argument against argument” (p. 97). The resonance here is noted with Wortham’s aforementioned conception of interactional positioning in autobiographical narrative. One recognizes a convergence in Wortham’s discussion of how a narrator will organize her identity by positioning herself in relation to other social voices, with

Billig's assertion that expression of prejudice or tolerant attitudes is inherently an argument against some other socially stored attitude.

Only in the more recent decades have scholars considered these predominant theories on identity (cognitive and interactional) in conjunction or complementarity with one another. In Howard's (2000) review she emphasized that these two perspectives on identity are "intimately intertwined" (p. 371) and that the link between the two paradigmatic traditions is language. With the present study, I am interested in contributing to the exploration of how these two theoretical perspectives on social identity formation may separately, simultaneously, or interdependently help explain the potential transformation of sexual orientation prejudice through the mediation of identity among heterosexually-identified people.

Sexual orientation prejudice & heterosexual identity: The social interactionist perspective. Among the scholarly ranks of those who have examined prejudice through a social interactionist lens, few in number are the investigations of sexual orientation prejudice specifically, and even fewer are accounts of this form of prejudice from the vantage point of education or its sub-fields. Nonetheless, there are a few. Perhaps the most central distinction between cognitive and interactionist views on sexual orientation prejudice is represented by the interactionists' dominant choice of the term "heterosexism" (over mainstream psychology's "homophobia") which foregrounds the interdependent, structural nature of this bias. As Kitzinger (1987) explains, the concept "homophobia" implies a "personal pathology of specific individuals who deviate from the supposedly egalitarian norms of society, thus obscuring analysis of our oppression as a political problem rooted in social institutions and organizations" (p. 154). As discussed above, the social interactionist view is that, like other aspects of identity,

prejudice is constructed and enacted through largely language-based interaction among individuals and groups. In the case of sexual orientation prejudice, heterosexual people's identities are both partly constructed by and contribute to the normative discourse regarding what Adams (1998) refers to as "the social opposition to same-sex desire and its embeddedness in contemporary society" (p. 387). Thus, from an interactionist paradigm, prejudice against gay and lesbian people is socially constructed as the deviant alternative to society's norm of heterosexuality.

Friend (1998) talks about the maintenance of heterosexism within the culture of K-12 schooling through an intricate weave of systematic exclusion and systematic inclusion. Systematic exclusion is the invisible, often unspoken process by which the stories and lives and lesbian and gay people are publicly silenced. In the school context, this is seen in numerous ways such as the absence of any mention of sexual orientation in the curriculum or library holdings, omission of openly gay and lesbian role models, and policies that prohibit the formation of a Gay-Straight Alliance or admittance of same-sex couples to the student prom. In the adult world, modern forms of systematic exclusion are seen in workplace policies that exclude same-sex domestic partners from health insurance coverage and other employee benefits, civic law and policies that restrict same-sex couples from adoption and marriage, and all forms of media and advertising that emphasize exclusively heterosexual love and families.

Conversely, Friend (1998) explains systematic inclusion as the consistent linking of homosexuality with pathology, sexual activity, and/or danger. The examples he gives of systematic inclusion in schools are when the subject of homosexuality is found next to subjects of pedophilia or pornography in the library's index, is only discussed as connected to HIV/AIDS education, and is equated with sexual behavior. This last discursive pairing, that of

homosexuality and sex, is messaged to all ages in our culture, adults and children alike, and systematically obfuscates the complexity and sophistication of gay and lesbian lives which involve art, music, politics, history, work, and family. As Friend (1998) comments, “Framing ‘others’ as sexually dangerous, out of control, or as asexual is a common tool of oppression” (p. 147). Connecting back to a Vygotskian view on how learning occurs, if the above is true about the signs and artifacts that imbue our interactions, there should be no wonder that heterosexism remains the norm of society.

A subset of social interactionists, those looking through a discourse analytic lens, utilize an even lesser known term for sexual orientation prejudice: heteronormativity. The notion behind this term rests on the premise that heterosexuality and homosexuality are a binary inherent in our language system that sets up the false understanding that these characterizations are opposite each other, that heterosexuality is intrinsically anti-homosexual (Adam, 1998). While acknowledging that these three leading terms are not categorically distinct from one another but instead have areas of overlap and intersection, he offers the following organizer:

Table 1

Terminology by discipline for sexual orientation prejudice (Adam, 1998, p. 389)

Term	Discipline	Analytic Unit	Alleviation
homophobia	psychological	personality	therapy, education
heterosexism	sociological	social structure	social change
heteronormativity	literary	discourse	transgression

Wilkinson & Kitzinger (1994), both feminist constructivist psychologists, describe this normative sexual orientation prejudice as coercive in their examination of the varied ways in which heterosexuality is discursively “enforced”, “denied”, or apparently “chosen” (p. 314). These authors highlight the finding that even today, the vast majority of heterosexual people do

not readily claim their sexuality as an aspect of their identity, a reality they attribute to the hegemonic nature of heteronormativity in modern cultures. Building upon the work of Billig (1991), Potter and Wetherell (1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992), van Dijk (1987) and others who have taken a discursive lens to racist and sexist talk, Speer and Potter (2000) examine the discursive management of heterosexist talk. Using tools of conversation analysis, they strove to understand “the construction and precise nature of the ‘myths’, ‘stereotypes,’ ‘discourses,’ and ‘practices’ discussed in the heterosexism literature, and how they are constituted in talk and action” (p. 547).

Based on extensive analyses of conversations among heterosexually-identified subjects addressing topics of homosexuality, Speer and Potter (2000) articulate four ways in which heterosexism is manifested and managed in their talk: 1) Discounting heterosexism, 2) Displaying a lack of understanding, 3) Softening the blow, and 4) Conceding positive features. Using the first conversational resource, speakers actually reify heterosexist norms and expectations through the minimization or denial that heterosexism is at play. When employing the second resource, a speaker will deflect possible perceptions of himself as prejudiced by claiming an inability to comprehend something about homosexuality or homosexual persons. Heterosexist speakers who use the third rhetorical resource will ‘soften the blow’ (and thus thwart any accusations of prejudice) by following up a statement like “all male ballet dancers are queer” with “well, not *all* of them.” Finally, in Speer’s and Potter’s (2000) analysis, speakers will sometimes use a three-part rhetorical move to foreclose on any accusations of prejudice by asserting something that may be perceived as prejudice, then conceding some aspect of anticipated challenge to that assertion, and finishing with a reassertion of the initial statement.

Through the spotlighting of discursive episodes such as these, Speer & Potter (2000) have shown how:

Heterosexist talk is not a straightforward emptying out of preformed, stable, homophobic attitudes by the heterosexist *person*, nor something one can easily identify prior to analysis. Instead, statements and evaluative descriptions, assessments and so on, are often produced in ways that show a concern for the accountability and identity of the speaker. (p. 562)

Herein we see illuminated the bridge to the previously discussed post-Vygotskian notions of socially-originated identity, of mutually constitutive identity and interaction, and of cognition occurring as a function of particular situations. From a sociocultural perspective on learning, Speer and Potter's interacting heterosexist speakers are mutually constructing or enacting their identities relative to issues of sexual orientation, and specifically to issues of homosexual sexual orientation. The discursive approach to understanding heterosexism's mundane, everyday perpetuation offers a magnifying glass for looking at the intergenerativity of individual identity and social bias against gay and lesbian people. Speer and Potter (2000) affirm a call to action in saying "It is important that educators and trainers recognize this, and ultimately we may be in a better position from which to lay bare and disarm the mechanisms that construct and maintain such prejudice" (p. 564). It is my hope that results of this study will, in responding to Speer and Potter's charge, offer some insight to advance this cause.

Reduction of Prejudice

This section shifts the focus from the basic concepts surrounding prejudice and sexual orientation prejudice to the applied issues of what can be done to address these social phenomena in order to relieve the resulting oppressions, ultimately creating a more inclusive and equitable society. Scholars and practitioners from numerous disciplines have studied the effects of various

approaches to changing minds and hearts about the rejected 'other'. Beginning first with approaches grounded in the social cognitive perspective, and then with those designed around interactionist principles, I will summarize findings from social psychology, education, and other closely related efforts such as social work, where efforts have been put forth to affect this prejudice through educational intervention. Special attention is given throughout this review to the theory and application of dialogue as an educational intervention, highlighting the particular assumptions about learning in this format that inform this study.

Social cognitive perspectives on prejudice reduction. Social psychologists, many working in educational settings and collaborating with educators, have applied their understandings of prejudice in multiple ways in an attempt to dismantle and diminish it (C. W. Stephan & Stephan, 2001; W. G. Stephan & Stephan, 2004; W. G. Stephan & Vogt, 2004). The earliest set of tactics that emerged in the 60s, 70s and 80s were largely devoid of a theoretical grounding in psychological processes, and thus "seemed to have a 'hit-or-miss' quality about them" (Monteith et al., 1994, p. 326). Only since the 1990s have practitioners begun to derive their interventions from tested psychological constructs of prejudice, and thus yield more useful and adaptable knowledge of 'what works' in changing people's negative attitudes. And still today efforts to reduce prejudice across a variety of applied settings are criticized for lacking theoretical grounding (Paluck, 2006). As discussed earlier, the social cognitive research on prejudice has found that the cognitive and emotional reasons for prejudices differ across people and across situations, and often are not consciously available to the people who hold these prejudices themselves. It follows then that strategies to alter prejudice, in order to be effective, must be carefully devised to match the approach with the audience (Monteith et al., 1994).

Oskamp (2000), borrowing and extending notions from Duckitt (1992), asserted that most psychologists and educators focus their applied efforts to reduce prejudice in the broad category of “social influence” (in contrast to other routes of reducing prejudice which might target law or policy change, or individual personality modification). Social influence approaches, by far the most common type of prejudice reduction effort, involve the use of mass media, educational modalities, or employment settings. Oskamp further delineated this category by distinguishing between normative and informational types of social influence, the former meaning attempts to shift perceptions of what is normal or acceptable, and the latter meaning efforts to instill cognitive knowledge. Additionally another distinction used in describing social influence approaches to prejudice reduction is that of passive versus active. A passive intervention is one where the recipient is, for example, listening or watching a video whereas an active intervention requires their dynamic engagement with material or other people, often with members of the outgroup. Oskamp (1991, 2000) pointed out that deeper and more lasting results in reduction of prejudice have been found when more active interventions are used.

A final set of descriptors used by Oskamp (2000) in his overview of efforts to reduce prejudice holds true to classic concepts in applied psychology by organizing intervention methods into the categories of behavioral, cognitive, and motivational (while acknowledging that some approaches have elements of more than one category). Behavioral approaches are active approaches that engage individuals in a multi-pronged fashion (likely drawing on cognitive and motivational components simultaneously) such as intergroup contact under specific conditions, cooperative learning exercises, and structured activities where one experiences a version of what it is like to be the target of prejudice. By far the most prominent approach in the behavioral category are those involving intergroup contact, an approach grounded in an extensively

theorized and researched notion in social psychology called *the contact hypothesis*. The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) has been shaped and refined and now articulates a complex set of conditions under which contact between groups (one dominant and one target) should result in improved relations. Unfortunately, despite the exceptionally avid study of this theory, even leaders in the field lament the complexity of the literature and discontinuity of findings that make it difficult to identify a clear path forward for real world application of the contact hypothesis (Monteith et al., 1994; C. W. Stephan & Stephan, 2001). Most recently, a meta-analysis of intergroup contact theory using 713 independent samples from 515 studies confirmed the strength of intergroup contact to reduce prejudice among a variety of different groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Conclusions from this extensive review emphasized the importance of attending to mediators such as intergroup anxiety, threat, and perspective-taking, and the need for further research to understand the nature of negative processes that interfere with the positive effects of intergroup contact (A. B. Dessel, 2008).

In Oskamp's (2000) second classification of approaches, cognitive, one finds the clearest examples of interventions derived from a purely social cognitive perspective in that these interventions attempt to 'reorganize' the thinking of the prejudiced person. Cognitive approaches strive to alter stereotypes and attitudes through various mechanisms such as re-categorization of ingroup/outgroup status into a common ingroup identity with superordinate goals, or de-categorization of ingroup/outgroup status through the implementation of crosscutting roles and activities that promote perceptions of sameness and equality (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1999; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009). Examples of cognitive approaches are teaching exercises that, for instance, emphasize a shared identity of "American" over racial differences, or videos of gay or lesbian couples telling their stories emphasizing crosscutting

interests in achieving the “American Dream”, and thus de-emphasizing differences related to sexual orientation.

Oskamp’s (2000) third classification of approaches, motivational, includes those strategies that aim to reduce the recipient’s feelings of threat from an outgroup, emphasize the interdependence between “us” and “them”, or call upon a sense of personal accountability for the dynamics between groups. For example, one motivational intervention is to counteract symbolic threat about members of an outgroup by publicizing role models who contradict that perception of threat, such as Michael Jordan to counteract racism against blacks or Sandra Day O’Connor to counteract perceptions of women as unsuitable for leadership roles. Another type of approach, often called the *value-confrontation method*, combines cognitive and motivational bases for prejudice reduction by pointing out inconsistencies in people’s values thus engaging the self-concept, inducing feelings of guilt, and motivating people to alter beliefs and behavior in order to achieve greater consistency with strongly held values such as fairness and equality.

Efforts to reduce the most ‘contemporary’ form of prejudice, the form interchangeably known as implicit, unconscious, spontaneous or automatic prejudice, have grown rapidly since the mid-90s and have built upon the categories outlined above, but with a more precise focus on creating awareness of people’s unconscious biases. When implicit prejudice first began to be studied, Monteith et al. (1994) had concluded that “(t)he central challenge [in reducing this form of prejudice]... appears to involve bringing their personal beliefs to mind so that these beliefs can provide a basis for responding before automatically activated stereotypes are used in the response-generation process” (p. 337). In the years to follow this preliminary conclusion, a veritable explosion of research on implicit prejudice and its “malleability” took place (Bargh, 1999; Blair, 2002). In a systematic review of nearly 50 studies done during that time period,

Blair (2002) outlined five general classes of moderators found to affect the flexibility and responsiveness of automatic stereotypes and prejudice:

- 1) *Self- and social motives.* This class of evidence has shown that highly motivated persons can modify the automaticity of stereotypes and prejudice. Findings indicate that people whose self-image has been threatened are more likely to automatically activate negative stereotypes. Similarly, people are more likely to automatically inhibit negative stereotypes and activate positive ones if it benefits their self image, and/or if doing so would protect them from being discrepant with social norms.
- 2) *Specific strategies to counter stereotypes.* Two types of strategies, suppression and promotion of counter-stereotypes, have been found effective in modifying the activation of automatic stereotypes.
- 3) *Focus of attention.* The depth and focus of a person's attention has been found to have a notable impact on the automatic activation of stereotypes such that, contrary to previous assumptions about automaticity, a lack of attention to certain social category cues (e.g., skin color) can actually have the effect of reducing the likelihood of automatic prejudice occurring.
- 4) *Configuration of stimulus cues.* This class of evidence offers proof for the Gestalt-like notion that automatic responses to social category cues do not operate independently of one another but depend on the context or 'whole' of the situation and will vary accordingly. One example given is the Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park (2001) study which showed that different automatic responses were elicited by the same Black person depending on whether he was on a city street versus inside a church.
- 5) *Characteristics of individual category members.* The previous four classes of evidence suggest that, because stereotypic response varies with experimental manipulations of motive, strategy, and context, implicit prejudice is influenced by a person's goals and intentions and responsive to situational variables. This final class of evidence examines how implicit prejudice varies with differences in the characteristics of different outgroup members. Findings show that an outgroup member whose physical features are less typical, who has a less familiar name, or whose likeability is incongruent with common perceptions of his/her group will be less likely to trigger the automatic stereotypes associated with his/her group. (Blair, 2002)

Blair (2002) drew three guiding conclusions from her review, all of which are important in understanding the malleability of this modern phenomenon called automatic or implicit prejudice. First she asserted that, contrary to frequent early assumptions, automatic prejudice is controllable and responsive to a person's goals and intentions as well as to social norms, social

context, and situational pressures. Second, she clarified that the bias that can follow from automatic stereotypes is not “obligatory” but instead may be mediated by a person’s goals and intentions at even the earliest stages of information processing. Thus, Blair (2002) reminded us that “educational efforts aimed at decreasing discrimination and bias need not be singularly focused on ‘post activation’ control strategies” (p. 256). Blair’s third conclusion from her review of the evidence calls into scrutiny the established psychological construct of an ‘attitude’ as something that is stable and generalizable across situations, the notion that knowing an individual’s attitudes toward elderly people, for instance, will predict that individual’s response in any encounter with an elderly person. She pointed out that psychological research has been challenged to demonstrate such qualities of the attitude over the decades and admitte that while it may seem like a radical proposition to some in her field, the “now-bountiful” evidence is suggesting that “an attitude, whether automatic or more controlled, is inherently flexible and sensitive to the immediate context” (p. 257).

Educational perspectives through a social cognitive lens. In considering the social psychological research on reduction of prejudice, I find it noteworthy how often “education” is used as the label for promising interventions to alter the cognitive, affective, or in some cases behavioral components of prejudicial attitudes (e.g., Sritharan & Gawronski, 2010) and how frequently such interventions are referred to as “learning processes” (e.g., Monteith et al., 1994). Yet this expansive scholastic discourse seems not to have caught the attention of scholars in education but for a rare mention. Particularly within the sub-discipline of educational psychology, a conversational bridge to how prejudice is learned and might be unlearned seems to me a curious gap. Still there are key contributions from education, especially the subfields of multicultural higher education and adult learning that deal with the facilitation of perspective

change and help to substantiate the rationale for the present study. In this section I discuss contributing strategies from these arenas that fall primarily within a social cognitive perspective on learning or (more accurate to this context) on *unlearning* thought patterns underlying prejudice.

Agreement is widespread among adult learning scholars, including those who look through an individualistic cognitively-oriented lens, that changing adults' attitudes requires more than strictly providing them with more or different information. In her book entitled *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators*, Cranton (2006) asserted that critical self-reflection and expanded self knowledge happen when learners encounter a point of view that is different from their own, an event potential that is encouraged by any strategy that offers new perspectives or challenges existing assumptions. She highlighted many of the most tried and true approaches for fostering critical self-reflection and self knowledge in adult learners in the following categories: 1) questioning, 2) consciousness-raising experiences, 3) journals, 4) experiential learning, 5) critical incidents, and 6) art-based activities. As will be elaborated upon in the next chapter, according to Mezirow's (1990, 2000a, 2003) theory of transformational learning, such critical reflection and expanded self knowledge are necessary following the encounter with a new point of view ('disorienting dilemma'), for the adult learners to be able to ultimately adopt a new frame of reference around any topic.

In their work on developing "intercultural maturity" in college and post-college adults, King & Baxter Magolda (2005) concluded that "(t)he changes in students' intercultural skills being called for today require not just knowing more facts or having more awareness, but a genuine maturity, an individual transformation..." (p. 586) across cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions. These authors highlighted several practical approaches that have been

used on college campuses in an effort to facilitate young adults' development from early to more mature stages of intercultural competence. One such classroom approach by Ortiz and Rhoads (2000) guides the individual journey toward intercultural maturity as a series of five increasingly complex steps that lead students from understanding culture, to learning about different cultures, to deconstructing White culture, and finally to recognizing legitimacy in other cultures, and developing a multicultural outlook. Another framework, the Learning Partnerships Model (LPM) developed by Baxter Magolda has served as the theoretical basis for a study abroad program called *Casa de la Solidaridad* (Yonkers-Talz, 2004) which combined classroom pedagogy, living/learning community, experiential components, and an emphasis on reflection to promote the development of 'self-authorship'.

Dialogue as cognitively-oriented intervention. Dialogue as a pedagogical strategy has been taken up and explored by scholars from various academic disciplines over the last two decades, including those in education, peace and conflict studies, social work, civic and political science, communications, business, organizational learning, and more (e.g., J. Brown, 2005; Burbules, 1993; Isaacs, 1999; Schirch & Campt, 2007; Vella, 2002; Walsh, 2007; Yankelovich, 1999; Ximena Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). An increasingly popular approach to anti-bias education and intercultural development among college students and in workplace and community settings is known as intergroup dialogue, or IGD (Schoem & Hurtado, 2001). As an intervention with a demonstrated potential to disrupt prejudicial thinking patterns and instigate alternative perspective-taking, IGD represents the core conceptual model for the intervention under investigation in the present study (with one critical departure taken in The Straight Talk Dialogues, as explained later in this chapter). From an analytic viewpoint, the processes of intergroup dialogue have almost strictly been studied through a social cognitive

lens, as opposed to looking to understand how dialogue influences people's interactions. In other words, researchers have sought whatever changes might have taken place as a result of an individual's participation in the dialogue as located inside the individual, and measurable by comparing a participant's pre-dialogue 'test' to the same person's post-dialogue 'test.' As will be articulated more in the following two chapters, both the intervention conducted and the analyses proposed here are rooted in a theoretical hypothesis that the changes brought about in a dialogue experience may be even more deeply understood by looking at the interaction between participants. Nonetheless, in this section I present a definition and description of IGD and our understanding of its effectiveness so far, as a multidisciplinary practice of social change being taken up by a growing number of practitioner scholars in the 21st century.

Biren Ratnesh Nagda, one of the foremost current leaders in the empirical study of dialogue processes, and his colleagues credit the foundations of their approach to IGD as derived from the long line of social psychology's research on "intergroup relations." Intergroup relations theory involves an intentional emphasis on bringing into contact two or more social identity groups with a history of conflict or the potential thereof (X. Zuniga & Nagda, 1993). Nagda worked with undergraduate and graduate students on campus, primarily ones who were studying to become social workers, facilitating and evaluating the effects of intergroup dialogue across a range of settings, contexts, and issues. He described intergroup dialogue processes as "centrally concerned with developing an ethos of social justice and competencies for interacting with people across differences and responding to social inequalities that impact on human life" (B. Nagda & Derr, 2004, p. 135).

Nagda credited the perennial research of the psychologist Allport (1954) and his contribution of "the contact hypothesis" with the earliest inspiration behind contemporary

intergroup dialogue (B. Nagda & Derr, 2004). The contact hypothesis, in short, asserts that interaction among people from different social identity groups will result in reduced prejudice. In a well-known study that examined the contact hypothesis, Sherif (1966) concluded that certain conditions, including cooperative interaction and similarities among the groups, were necessary for the prejudice to be reduced. Intergroup dialogue, say Nagda and Derr, builds on these findings but is a distinct approach in the lineage of intergroup relations research, one that brings to bear both the similarities and the differences between participants. “Dialogue” they stated, referencing the influential work of Bohm (1996), “aims to discern understanding and insights through the generative power of conversation” (B. Nagda & Derr, 2004, p. 136). Nagda and colleagues have termed their approach a “conflict-community approach” derived from its origins in theories about conflict resolution using dialogue and the potential for community-building across difference.

There are five foundational assumptions that characterize Nagda’s (2004) conflict-community approach to intergroup dialogue, and upon which many scholars and practitioners have built:

1) *Conceptualization of intergroup relations as a multicultural mosaic.* Replacing the previous metaphors for cultural diversity in U.S. society, the melting pot and the more recent salad bowl, intergroup dialogue has adopted the metaphor of a mosaic – the essence of which is the discovery and construction of “a shared wholeness through interaction” (B. Nagda & Derr, 2004, p. 136). As in the creation of a quilt by many, both the process and the end result of creating the multicultural mosaic value and affirm the difference among the parts along with the interwoven whole.

2) *Acknowledgment of difference, conflict, and possibilities for community.* Unlike previous notions of how to go about achieving positive intergroup relations, intergroup dialogues “situate themselves fully in existent societal power relations yet challenge them” (B. Nagda & Derr, 2004, p. 137). Dialogue participants are provided with the space and the invitation to use critical inquiry in identifying and honoring their differences while at the same time defining their roles in forging community across these differences.

3) *Contextualization of group differences and intergroup issues in social power relations.* Intergroup dialogue assumes and makes explicit aspects of structural, institutionalized power/privilege inequalities that form the container for particular issues of friction between people and groups rather than simply conceptualizing these as “miscommunications or misperceptions” (B. Nagda & Derr, 2004, p. 138).

4) *Formation of connective ties across differences.* Because “the spirit of dialogue is building a greater wholeness” (B. Nagda & Derr, 2004, p. 138), this approach encourages “qualities of friendliness” (such as listening, sharing, supporting, questioning, openness, engaging, etc.) that naturally enable trust to develop in relationships typically assumed by society to be adversarial and incompatible. Rather than maintaining a focus on “other” during a dialogue, participants are continuously invited to resume a critically self-reflective process focused on their own experiences thus fostering a deeper inquiry and the expansion of viewpoints.

5) *Creation of a facilitative and supportive structure.* The final basic assumption of intergroup dialogue conveys an ethical and social responsibility of the group facilitator(s) to clarify and maintain an interpersonal environment “in which the conditions of social democracy are fostered” (B. Nagda & Derr, 2004, p. 139). Nagda & Derr reference Mezirow’s work here in asserting the importance of an operating standard that all voices are valued and equal in order to create the possibility for transformative learning (2004, pp. 136-139).

Dessel (2011) has offered the first cross-disciplinary historical overview of the application of dialogue theory and methods to improve intergroup relations and effect social change. She drew the connections to dialogue’s origins in the Greek philosophy of Socrates and Plato, and traced it forward through contexts of artistic performance and literary production to dialogue’s 20th century surfacing in the writings of Buber (1937), Bakhtin (1935/1982), Saussure (2006), Freire (1970), Bohm (1996) and others. Dessel described contemporary intergroup dialogue as “a facilitated group experience around highly polarized social issues designed to avoid past entrenched and unproductive exchanges and to foster the cocreation of new knowledge and action” (Chasin et al., 1996; A. B. Dessel, 2011). The goals of such engagement, she explained, include learning, improved relationships, impact on public policy, and empowered participants. Though there are currently no standardized prescriptions for the technique of

implementing a dialogue to these ends, Dessel (2011) stated that common characteristics include “facilitation, authentic engagement, suspension of assumptions and judgment, development of listening skills, participant equality, and the co-creation of new meanings” (A. B. Dessel, 2011, p. 169).

With regard to the outcomes of dialogue interventions, research indicates it is a promising practice for improving intergroup relations on polarizing subject matter (A. Dessel & Rogge, 2008; B. A. Nagda, Gurin, Sorenson, & Zuniga, 2009; Spencer, Brown, Griffin, & Abdullah, 2008; C. W. Stephan & Stephan, 2001). In particular, findings from intergroup dialogues among college students include reductions in stereotyping and anxiety over intergroup contact, and increases across multiple variables such as perspective taking, critical self-reflection, knowledge of other groups and societal discrimination, empathy, alliance building, and bridging differences (B. A. Nagda et al., 2009; Ximena Zuniga et al., 2007). Findings of dialogue evaluations in community settings are noted as decreased stereotyping and increased trust, effective communication, perspective taking, commitment to social justice action, as well as establishment of common ground and grassroots collaborations (DeTurk, 2006; Diez-Pinto, 2004; LeBaron & Carstarphen, 1997; Pan & Mutchler, 2000; Rodenborg & Huynh, 2006; Spencer et al, 2008 as cited in A. B. Dessel, 2010). Despite these promising starts, experts assert that rigorous field research on dialogue outcomes is sorely lacking (A. Dessel & Rogge, 2008; C. W. Stephan & Stephan, 2001). Relative to the present study, Dessel (2010) is the only other existing study of outcomes of a dialogue focused on attitudes of heterosexuals toward lesbian, gay and/or bisexual people or issues. This recent effort took a particular focus on dialogue among public school teachers, and is reviewed in the next section.

As the reader will learn in the sections to follow, contemporary dialogue practices have only recently been taken up by those with less cognitive, more sociocultural lenses on learning. As this interest advances, we are likely to benefit from a discussion of new and expanded views on outcomes of the dialogue experience, outcomes stated at the level of interaction rather than the individual, stated in terms of the systems of inequality and normative influences which support the individual's prejudice. One example of this movement in academic circles is a recent issue of the journal of *Equity & Excellence in Education* (Volume 45, Issue 1, 2012), which focused on dialogue as an educational medium for change. The guest editors of that issue (Ximena Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, 2012) write of their optimism for this approach:

Engaging in dialogue is indeed “one of the simplest ways” for educators, students, activists, and community members to begin to take in and examine different perspectives and imagine new possibilities for thinking, relating, and taking action (hooks, 1994); yet intergroup dialogue is not easy. When done well, it is a complex and situated practice that goes beyond diversity and difference to examine the power relations that underlie diversity and difference. Intergroup dialogue engages the multiple voices and experiences being heard as participants from different identity groups co-participate and struggle in making meaning of contested perspectives and imagining new possibilities. (p. 2)

Overview of social-cognitive strategies. Documented efforts to influence U.S. society's perceptions of homosexual people have been traced as far back as the 1800s (Peel, 2002). Such efforts have been successfully aimed at multiple levels of society, aiming to affect change across many people at one time or alternatively, in small groups or even one person at a time. Indeed, when it comes to society's changing perceptions of homosexuals, one would be hard pressed to determine which interventions have been more influential in changing attitudes, the societal level law and policy changes or the “one by one” instances of individual level change. Experts suggest that both levels of change are needed, have been influential, and are likely mutually reinforcing (Herek, 2007). The present study is an investigation of the latter, of how individuals

in interaction with one another on a local scale might stimulate shifts in their own and others' views about homosexuality. Thus, while societal level approaches which aim to alter laws, policies, media messaging, governing religious systems and other institutions are keenly important, such efforts are beyond the scope of this framework, which focuses on psychological change and learning operating at the level of the individual-in-context.

The vast majority of the studied efforts to reduce prejudice described thus far have not examined sexual orientation prejudice specifically, but most often were looking at interracial prejudice as well as other forms such as prejudice against women, or against people from countries outside the U.S. In this section, conclusions drawn from efforts to reduce sexual orientation prejudice are summarized. I briefly discuss the established approaches to measuring this prejudice, within the social cognitive research paradigm, and then present an overview of conceptual and empirical findings to date on interventions to reduce sexual orientation prejudice. Although these studies have deepened the widespread agreement about the need for evidence-based approaches to intervention, practical recommendations for how best to conduct this type of training are largely absent in the literature (Paluck & Green, 2008; Peel, 2002).

Approaches to measurement. Before moving into the findings of the studies themselves, it is useful to overview the ways in which scholars donning from a social cognitive viewpoint have derived for measuring this form of prejudice (A. B. Dessel, 2008). Measurement of attitudes toward LGB persons has primarily taken the form of survey scales. One of the most widely used scales to measure attitudes has been Herek's (1994) Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gays (ATLG). Other scales used have included the Index of Attitudes Towards Homosexuals (IAH) (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980), Heterosexual Attitudes Toward Homosexuality Scale

(HATH) (Larsen, Reed, & Hoffman, 1980), and the Homonegativity Scale (Morrison, Parriag, & Morrison, 1999).

In an effort to create an instrument more sensitive to contemporary shifts and the full range of public awareness and opinion about gay and lesbian people and culture, Worthington, Dillon & Becker-Schutte (2005) developed the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale (LGB-KASH). This 28 item measure with a 5-point Likert rating scale has undergone rigorous validity and reliability testing, using samples of college and university students, faculty and staff from a number of disciplines. Exploratory factor analysis produced five subscales of hate, knowledge of LGB history, symbols and community, LGB civil rights, religious conflict, and internalized affirmativeness.

Beyond assessment of opinion and belief, affect or emotion about gay and lesbian people has been measured using a one item ‘feeling thermometer’ with a range of 100 points, with higher ratings indicating warmer positive feelings and lower numbers indicating colder negative feelings (Haddock et al., 1993; Herek, 2002). Qualitative measurement of attitudes has been accomplished through the use of ethnographic methods that included interviews, observation, and written responses (Casper & Schultz, 1999; Ngo, 2003). Implicit attitudes toward gay people and issues have been measured using the Implicit Association Test (IAT) (Banse, Seise, & Zerbes, 2001; Dasgupta & Rivera, 2006, 2008; Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2005; Seise, Banse, & Neyer, 2002).

The evidence: What we’ve tried and learned so far. Herek (2007) discussed two overall types of intervention to reduce sexual orientation prejudice (his term is “sexual prejudice”), individual interventions, which strive to alter the internalized negative attitude, and structural interventions that target the societal-level stigma against non-heterosexuality. Referencing his

model of sexual prejudice as a deeply seated internalization of society's stigma toward homosexuals, as described earlier, Herek (2007) asserted that "relatively brief or superficial interventions" are not likely to affect any lasting reduction of this form of prejudice. Furthermore, he proposed that those who wish to better understand how to affect it actually spend their time "observing naturally occurring instances of prejudice reduction among heterosexuals" (p. 913) in order to identify and disentangle the complexity of factors that comprise sexual orientation prejudice. Based on the replicated findings of studies done by Herek and his colleagues (Herek, 1988; Herek, 1994; Schope & Eliason, 2000), there is strong evidence to suggest that heterosexuals can be motivated to undertake the cognitive effort of reducing their own prejudice toward homosexuals through positive contact and by developing relationships with one or more gay men or lesbians. The social cognitive explanation of this psychological change is the values conflict that arises for the heterosexual who comes to recognize his/her egalitarian self-image as discordant with harboring a negative attitude toward gay or lesbian people. Herek saw two main implications of these findings for intervening on sexual orientation prejudice, the first being that one of the best approaches to reducing this form of prejudice may simply (or not so simply) be to facilitate positive contact and even friendship between heterosexuals and homosexuals. Secondly, Herek (2007) pointed out that "further motivation and support for an individual's efforts at sexual [orientation] prejudice reduction can come from other heterosexuals who have already been successful in this regard" (p. 914). Referencing the fact that women have been found to harbor much less sexual orientation prejudice than men, Herek offered the suggestion that these women may be especially powerful catalysts of encouragement for their husbands, sons, brothers and straight male friends to examine their own prejudice. This implication raised by Herek, of 'intragroup' influence, heterosexuals influencing

other heterosexuals, is a core dimension of the present study design, the rationale for which is elaborated in the next chapter.

The body of social cognitive research that looks at sexual orientation prejudice as a function of protecting one's own self-image has also generated some promising insights into practices for reducing this prejudice. Consistent with early findings by Herek (1987), Fein & Spencer (1997), and the research of Moradi, van der Berg, and Epting (2006) further suggested that heterosexuals who experience a high threat to their self-image when confronted with the notion of homosexuality are more likely to hold and express anti-gay attitudes and behaviors. Thus, as these authors explain, reducing the intrapersonal threat experienced by these individuals may be key in reducing, or altering, their anti-gay attitudes. They remind readers about the importance of remembering that high-prejudice (i.e., highly threatened) individuals depend on the expression of their anti-gay attitudes for protecting their own positive self-image. Consequently, they suggest, any intervention aimed at diluting the attitudes of these individuals needs to provide an especially anxiety-reducing "safe space" for them which both helps to remove the cognitive threat associated with homosexuality, while at the same time allows them to maintain an intact construal of their self-concept. These findings lend additional rationale to the design of the present study, which attempts to create the necessary social milieu for dialogue among heterosexual people to accomplish both these factors.

Educational interventions to reduce prejudice against gay men and lesbians have spanned a range from panel presentations by gay men and lesbians, to written and video educational materials, to experiential activities designed to evoke empathy (Rabow, Stein, & Conley, 1999; Tucker & Potocky-Tripodi, 2006). A review of these interventions found mixed results in their effectiveness in altering negative attitudes (A. B. Dessel, 2008; Tucker & Potocky-Tripodi,

2006). Tucker and Potocky-Tripodi (2006) considered 17 empirical studies conducted between 1995 and 2003 that were designed to improve attitudes toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual people among samples of heterosexual undergraduate, graduate, and medical students. These studies involved interventions including written and visual educational material, speaker panels, and instructor self-disclosure as being lesbian or gay. Overall effects of the studies varied, and these researchers determined that methodological limitations prevented conclusive findings from even a single study.

Nonetheless, the two strongest studies reviewed used random assignment and measures with previously established validity and reliability. Results from Grutzeck and Gidyck (1997) indicated that when controlling for context effects, exposure to a lesbian and gay speaker panel did not result in improved attitudes. Corley and Pollack (1996) found that exposure to a non-stereotypical description of a lesbian couple shifted attitudes positively for heterosexual males who held traditional sex-role views as compared to nontraditional males, and this effect was sustained one week later. Even these stronger studies received criticism for small sample size, absence of an established treatment manual, and failure to report attrition or control for possible pre-test effects (Corley & Pollack, 1996; A. B. Dessel, 2008; Grutzeck & Gidyck, 1997).

Other studies have examined interventions using experiential exercises in which students wore pink triangles symbolizing support for gay and lesbian rights. Findings indicated that these experiences prompted critical reflection about attitudes, long-held beliefs and assumptions related to homosexuality and the perceived superiority of heterosexuality (Chesler & Zuniga, 1991; A. B. Dessel, 2008; Rabow et al., 1999). Qualitative analyses revealed that, while some students demonstrated positive attitude shifts as a result of the pink triangle activities, students who were particularly religious and students of color did not (Rabow et al., 1999). Other studies

in college undergraduate classrooms have yielded similarly inconclusive or contradictory results. From a study of Israeli undergraduate social work students who took an entire course on homosexuality, Ben-Ari (1998) found no statistically significant differences in post-test scores between the experimental and control group, though students who took the class did exhibit positive changes, women more so than men. Another study examined the effects of viewing films about gay men and reading acceptance-oriented biblical scripture on the attitudes of Christian college students, a population of particular interest due to the strong correlation between religiosity and sexual orientation prejudice (Bassett et al., 2005; A. B. Dessel, 2008; Olson et al., 2006). Results demonstrated that while students made a distinction between valuing homosexual people and valuing homosexual behavior, no significant universal acceptance of gays and lesbians was revealed in the post-test (Bassett et al., 2005).

A focus on altering sexual orientation prejudice is largely absent within the academic sub-discipline of educational psychology, however pioneering educators from multicultural education, teacher education, K-12 education, business, communications, community psychology, clinical psychology, sociology, social work, as well as faith-based organizations have led efforts to identify effective practices in this regard at the individual and small group levels. Many such change agents, often working in relative isolation on this topic- and only some of whom are professional academics, were brought together in an unprecedented volume edited by James Sears and Walter Williams (1997) entitled *Overcoming Heterosexism & Homophobia: Strategies that Work*. Each chapter of this 450-page book describes a different approach to reducing sexual orientation prejudice, some derived from empirical studies and others strictly theoretical. Because this compilation represents a seminal contribution to work in this arena, and contains mostly strategies grounded in social cognitive notions of prejudice, key

concepts are summarized here according to the five organizing parts of Sears' & Williams' (1997) book:

Foundational Issues. Sears (1997), a professor of Curriculum Studies, launches the book with a critical overview of the scholarship up to that point in time regarding definitions, components and efforts to reduce homophobia and heterosexism. Though most studies suffered methodological shortcomings, these first serious academic evaluations of "homophobia education" efforts offered the first insights into what was working and what was not. Sears observed that the teaching methods of the day were generally failing "to move from the psychology of the other to the phenomenology of self" (p.26). He called on educators and researchers to pay greater attention to actual behavior change beyond strictly attitude change, to widen their inclusion of cultural identity factors in designing interventions, and to build closer working relationships between academics and activists in order to accomplish the shared interest of reducing this prejudice.

In another defining chapter of the book, Gust Yep, a professor of Speech and Communication, offers a fascinating application of theories of persuasive communication to the task of reducing sexual orientation prejudice. Starting off with the declaration that "People are not born homophobic or heterosexist", he explains that these attitudes are "acquired through interaction with others" and will require a change strategy that takes into account "who says what to whom and with what effect" (p. 49/50). Yep then outlines four classic approaches to attitude change derived from an extensive literature in the fields of social psychology and communication, and explains the implications of these theories for efforts to alter perceptions regarding gay men and lesbians. He calls for persuasive messages to reduce homophobia and heterosexism which are designed to: "(a) address the functions that homophobia and heterosexism are serving for the attitude holder, (b) create specific cognitive inconsistencies in the mind of the receiver and ways to reduce the dissonance in the direction of lessening their negative attitudes, (c) increase the receiver's latitude of acceptance by shrinking the regions of noncommitment and rejection, and (d) personally involve the receiver so that he or she will engage in central route processing, which will, hopefully, result in more permanent attitude shifts" (p.61).

Additional "foundational" strategies as identified by Sears & Williams (1997) are 1) self-disclosure ("coming out") on the part of people who are gay or lesbian, and 2) broadening our range of possible ways to view issues of gender and sexuality, including sexual orientation, by looking to non-U.S. cultures such as those of Native American tribes, Japan, Thailand, and India, all civilizations who have a rich history of contrasting norms in this regard.

Working with Ethnic Groups and Family Members. Each with a separately authored chapter, the U.S. minority groups of Asian-American, Latino/a Immigrant, African American, and Jewish are discussed in depth with regard to the intersecting dynamics of racial/ethnic oppression and the oppression of homophobia and heterosexism. Each set of authors provides a rich interpretation of the ways sexual orientation prejudice looks and acts differently from the dominant mainstream within the respective racial/ethnic identity groups in this country, and offers tangible recommendations for addressing these

challenges. Strategies proposed are wide-ranging and include calls for open confrontation of homophobia in the Black American church (“Cut off the church music, refuse to play the organ, and send the tenor section home!”), Rhue & Rhue, 1997, p.127) and numerous versions of panel presentations and educational workshops.

A subsequent series of chapters offer a smattering of strategies for addressing heterosexism and homophobia within the family. The national organization PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians & Gays) is spotlighted with its “three-legged stool” of support, education, and advocacy which is further broken down into the activities PFLAG is famous for: newsletters, helplines, educational programs and printed materials, support groups, letter writing, celebration, and outreach – all with the overall objective of support for the “coming out” path that must be taken by those in relationship with gay and lesbian people living in a heterosexist culture.

Extending similar concepts in an even more complex direction, Vennard (1997) presents the anti-homophobia strategy of supporting nongay spouses. Though not considered by most, Vennard describes the nongay spouse (the husband or wife who finds out while married or shortly after divorce that their spouse has come out as gay or lesbian) as a powerful force for educating others about homophobia and heterosexism. She articulates, “They have known intimately the coming out process of another. They have seen and experienced the pain that a heterosexist society has caused a loved one. They have felt the prejudice and discrimination of homophobia. Nongay spouses stand in a unique place to teach the true meaning of full acceptance of all sexual orientations” (p. 149).

A final chapter in this section introduces the strategy of using music integrally as a training tool in an educational workshop. Russell (1997) points to music’s ability to invite active listening and undercut resistances to challenging subject matter. She describes her effective use of music in prejudice-reduction trainings in two basic ways: as a medium for conveying information, and as a medium for facilitating participants’ access to their emotions about the subject matter.

Working with Students. This section in Sears & Williams (1997) includes accounts from six different sets of high school or undergraduate instructors about what they have found effective in tackling homophobia and heterosexism with their students. Three of these accounts are firmly grounded in interactional frameworks about teaching and learning and are thus reviewed later in this paper. Myers & Kardia (1997) described the Educational Outreach Program (EOP) at the University of Michigan, a 2-hour optional workshop facilitated by a team of one lesbian and one gay man that involves interactive experiential exercises, sharing of personal stories by the two facilitators, and an open question and answer period. These authors articulate a multidimensional theoretical framework for their approach in which they point both to principles of empowerment from feminist pedagogy as well as many of the values clarification elements of attitudinal change as described above from social psychological theory.

Van de Ven (1997) describes a learning module created for 9th through 12th grade students in Australia in response to an increasing number of anti-gay hate crimes being committed in inner-city Sydney. The module was comprised of six lessons which could be taught either as a full one-day workshop or a series of shorter workshops on different days, totaling approximately five hours of teaching time. Reflecting a Piagetian concept

of building on prior knowledge, Van de Ven describes the module as taking students “from the known (their present state of understanding) to the unknown...previous learning was reviewed and reinforced before each new topic was introduced” (p.224). Furthermore, Van de Ven calls on Herek’s (1986, 1987) theory (as described in Chapter Two) of the four attitudinal functions of homophobia and describes how the various learning activities built into the lessons effectively confronted each of the experiential, social expressive, value expressive, and defensive functions of this prejudice.

A final chapter in this section offers a perspective for how athletic coaches might go about tackling homophobia and heterosexism in the context of high school, college, and even professional level sports teams. The three authors of this chapter, all female coaches, discuss the important role a coach can play in combating the underlying notions of masculinity and sexism in the institution of “the great American sports machine” (p. 233). While the techniques and strategies suggested by these coaches are not novel or different (assessing the situation, prohibiting discrimination through policies and procedures, staff awareness training, infusing equity topics into the standard curriculum, and offering social support for students), their attention to anti-homophobia work in the context of sports and athletic teams represents a rare and significant contribution.

Working in Professional Training Programs. The strategies discussed in this and the next section of Sears’ & Williams’ (1997) book are focused strictly and entirely on adult learners in professional training contexts. A variety of professional training programs were described in this section with regard to their efforts to reduce homophobia and promote inclusive attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. The first two chapters present different approaches to building capacity of elementary school teachers and staff for teaching about sexual orientation diversity, in part by addressing their own bias in this area. Marinoble (1997) outlines a 3-hour staff development workshop in which the facilitator teaches concepts of identity development as they relate to sexual orientation, creates the opportunity for small group discussion, and offers a host of instructional resources for teaching children about respecting differences of people who are gay or lesbian. Hulsebosch and Koerner (1997) offer Family Diversity Workshops as professional development to teachers. During these workshops, which can range from 50 minutes to five hours in length, these authors “aim to help teachers support children from every kind of family (including lesbian and gay families) by acknowledging, responding to, and involving all parents in a respectful way” (p.265).

The next two chapters describe graduate level training for professional counselors and social workers respectively. In the first, counselors-in-training participate in three weeks of workshops that involve reflective exercises about their heterosexist assumptions, didactic teaching about sexual identity development and interactive learning using pre-written scenarios and role-play. In the second, a professor discusses the four strategies she uses in semester-long courses which include educational units, course assignments, instructor self-disclosure (as a lesbian herself), and speakers’ panels.

Wallick and Townsend (1997) describe the state of homophobia in American medical schools during the 1990s, and conclude with two basic recommendations to 1) improve the support and resources made available to gay and lesbian medical students themselves, and 2) integrate teaching about the clinical care of gay men and lesbians

throughout the medical school curriculum (in contrast to only covering the topic in conjunction with teaching about HIV/AIDS, for example). Iasenza (1997), a college professor of undergraduate courses in criminal justice, describes her teaching strategies to address these topics as creating a safe classroom environment, written assignments and group discussion about psychological aspects of prejudice, addressing students' questions about homosexuality through in-depth discussion, small group exercises and role plays. Lastly this professor, once again citing Herek's research, employed the strategy of facilitating contact between her students and gay men and lesbians, either as peer students in the class, guest speakers she brought in, or by disclosing her own lesbian identity to her students.

Stewart (1997) studied efforts made to conduct "cultural awareness training" for police and other law enforcement professionals, and endeavor often met with great resistance and controversy from within that field. His conclusions about what works in this professional training context were based on pre/post attitudinal testing as well as qualitative observational and interview data among officers and administrators in seven academies or agencies in California. Stewart's overarching assertion was that training alone would not fully achieve a reduction in this prejudice, rather "To make a law enforcement agency less heterosexist and more accepting of gays and lesbians, . . . Sexual orientation issues must become part of the daily routine and conversation" (p.334). Nonetheless, to achieve the best possible results of trainings on this topic he warns against using any sort of 'pre-package Homo 101' course that would have little relevance for officers but instead recommends starting with students' own feelings, experiences, and content they are interested in knowing. The most effective trainings he witnessed were ones in which officers were engaged in activities that related issues of sexual orientation to the police work they do everyday.

Working within Institutions. In this final section of the Sears & Williams (1997) book, the strategies for reducing homophobia and heterosexism took aim on a larger scale than those discussed previously. These approaches which include working within the church and clergy at different levels, a citizens league, the economy at large, corporate America, and the mass media, attempted to achieve individual-level change by working at institutional or societal levels, first altering the social norms by which people live and thus expecting personal beliefs and attitudes to follow. As a student of educational psychology, while acknowledging the importance of efforts to create change at these structural levels, I am focused on change strategies on a smaller scale, those that work with individuals and much smaller groups. Thus these large scale prejudice reduction strategies are beyond the scope of this review. (Sears & Williams, 1997)

The Sears & Williams (1997) volume remains unrivaled by any subsequent scholarly effort to compile what is known about applied interventions to reduce sexual orientation prejudice. Though still severely underfunded and often still limited in generalizability (Tucker & Potocky-Tripodi, 2006), research with this focus is slowly gaining in support and capacity across numerous social science disciplines. In general, educators of adults have approached this topic

from a more developmental angle (in contrast to the interventionist orientation of social psychology), referring to this type of education as the development of “intercultural maturity” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005) or “culturally responsive teaching” (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2003) or ‘teaching for social justice’ (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997), or the like. It may be speculated that perhaps one reason for this choice of framing among educational researchers is the still high degree of cultural controversy surrounding sexuality as a focus in educational efforts, especially with regard to non-heterosexual identities. Many have noted the lingering invisibility of sexuality across nearly all types of educational settings, even those thought to be the most diversity- and equity-minded (Hill, 1995; Townsend et al., 1995). Topics of sexuality, including lesbian and gay issues of any sort, continue to be viewed by many as having no legitimate place in workplaces or professional training (Martin & Collinson, 1999; Peel, 2002) and educators and trainers are compelled by their institutions in a variety of ways to dilute their teaching emphasis away from heterosexism specifically to a more broadly-stated focus on anti-discrimination practices (Munt, 1996; Peel, 2002; Trotter & Gilchrist, 1996).

By my search, only one study had been conducted on group dialogue intervention with a focus on reducing sexual orientation prejudice among adults. Dessel (2010) examined attitudinal, emotional and behavioral changes, both quantitatively and qualitatively, among public school teachers who participated in a series of intergroup dialogues on the subject of addressing sexual orientation in schools. Heterosexual teachers who volunteered for the study (n = 36), all from one public school district in a southern U.S. state, were randomly assigned to dialogue or comparison groups and subsequently participated in a series of 3 separate dialogue sessions over a period of two weeks. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) volunteers from the community were recruited to participate in the dialogue groups through local organizations. The

dialogue sessions, facilitated by Dessel herself, relied on an established dialogue protocol developed by the Public Conversations Project (Chasin et al., 1996; Herzig & Chasin, 2006). Each dialogue group had 2 or 3 teachers and 2 or 3 LGB community members.

Effects of the dialogue experience were assessed using a pre-test/post-test survey of items from established instruments assessing attitudes, affective response, perspective-taking, critical self-reflection, and anticipated changes in professional behavior related to LGB issues in schools. While teachers in the non-dialogue comparison group did not change significantly on any of the measures, teachers who participated in the dialogues showed significant positive changes from pre- to post-intervention on variables of civil rights, feelings about gays and lesbians, perspective taking, and behavior (A. B. Dessel, 2010). In addition to the quantitative surveys, ten of the teachers agreed to take part in a semi-structured qualitative interview that took place following the culmination of the dialogues. Analysis of the interviews yielded additional insights and clarified the survey results in the following four thematic areas: 1) types of positive changes in teachers' attitudes, feelings, and behaviors, 2) factors that teachers said contributed to these changes, 3) teachers' views on LGB public school culture and climate, and 4) teachers' suggestions for improving the dialogue process (A. B. Dessel, 2010).

Dessel's (2010) work is a uniquely important predecessor to the present study because of the close similarities in sample characteristics, the design of the intervention itself, and the methods of assessment. Specifically, ICG's Straight Talk Dialogues were similar to Dessel's dialogues among school teachers in that the intervention itself shared largely the same set of theoretical underpinnings involving social change, dialogue participants were post-college adults, the focus of both interventions dealt with the attitudes and prejudices of heterosexuals toward gay and lesbian people, and both studies use a mixed methods approach to assess change

both quantitatively and qualitatively. Nonetheless, the present study also possesses several important differences from Dessel's (2010) study as well. First, the ICG Straight Talk Dialogues did not share the same focus on gay and lesbian topics as related to the public school setting but rather aimed for a more general dialogue around broad social issues surrounding homosexuality, to which most adults in our society might relate on either or both a personal or professional basis. Second, the particular content and flow of the dialogue sessions (i.e., guiding questions, stimuli material, and structured activities) were different in that they were based upon decisions made by the different facilitators respectively, the lack of any established, standardized protocol for addressing these topics through dialogue, and the natural directions taken in conversation by the different groups of participants. The third distinction is one I will address in more depth in the next chapter, around the intervention design decision that the Straight Talk Dialogues involved *only* heterosexual participants, thus distinguishing and separating this intervention in a critical fashion from the Dessel (2010) study and its lineage of scholarship in intergroup relations theory within social psychology. Finally, a fourth distinction of the present study stems from my interest as the researcher in forging an exploration of dialogue through the lens of social constructionism as revealed through discourse, in examining the actual talk of a dialogue process to see how sexual orientation prejudice might be being mediated through social interaction. The next section explains this perspective on prejudice and the rationale behind the central method of narrative analysis that was employed.

Social interactionist perspectives on prejudice reduction. The postmodern turn in psychology (Gergen, 1985) brought about a different paradigm for conceptualizing and studying 'the self' including the phenomena of prejudice. It follows reasonably then that, with these new

lenses on prejudice, came different notions of how best to intervene to reduce or eliminate it. From the cognition-oriented perspective on prejudice reduction described in the prior sections, the locus of needed change is considered to be within the individual and thus educational interventions are aimed, and studied, in terms of altering the internal mental contents of individuals' thoughts. In contrast, the interactionist assertion is that prejudice is formed and transformed in the 'space between individuals' – the space that is most commonly occupied by everyday talk. It is in this discursive space where Rogoff's (2003) mutually constituted cognition, Kegan's (2000) shifts from subject to object, Mezirow's (1990, 2000a) emergence of a new frame of reference, and Ochs' and Capps' (2001) co-narration occur. It is in this space that people are constantly co-creating their own sense of self, their identities, in relation to any topic they encounter. Thus, interventions (and the studies of those interventions) that are grounded in an interactionist perspective and aim to achieve (and understand) the transformation of prejudiced attitudes are faced with design and measurement challenges different from those of trying to assess the mental contents of any given individual. From this perspective, the intervention and the examination of its effects are aimed at the ever-shifting organization, function, and consequences of interactive talk.

A respected cadre of discursively-oriented scholars has pioneered the way in bringing this social constructivist lens to the examination of prejudice (Billig, 1985; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; van Dijk, 1987). According to these researchers, prejudice is a function not of the internally held negative attitude toward an 'other' but rather of the interactional achievements in how people talk about 'other' (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Interactionists see prejudice not as an enduring way of thinking that people carry around and reproduce when the situation demands but instead as a "shared form of social representation in group members, acquired during processes of

socialization and transformed and enacted in social communication and interaction” (van Dijk, 1987, p. 13). Thus, the obvious questions become, if prejudice is acquired through socialization, how might society go about socializing our citizens differently? How might we marshal the influences within communication and interaction in order to transform prejudice?

However, when it comes to applying their analytical work to an approach for reducing prejudice, leaders in the analysis of discourse have tread much more tentatively. Willig (1999), in an introductory chapter entitled “Make a Difference,” lamented the common reluctance of most discourse analysts to step beyond deconstruction into recommendations for practice, all the while acknowledging compelling arguments both for and against doing so. She discussed three discourse analytic orientations to influencing social or political conditions, including discourse analysis as social critique, as empowerment, and as guide to reform. In the first approach, discourse analysis is concerned with uncovering the ways in which language operates to legitimize and maintain inequities. Building upon and extending such critique, the second approach is concerned with identifying counter-discourses, or alternative uses of language that go against the dominant discourse and develop opportunities for grass-roots resistance. Willig’s third approach most fully describes the intent and aspiration of the present investigation, to serve as guide to reform. As Willig (1999) herself described:

Discourse analysis as guide to reform is praxis-oriented in that it seeks to use the results of discourse analytic studies in order to develop social interventions. Discourse analysis as guide to reform is committed to radical social change but it does not limit its recommendations to action from below. Instead, discourse analysts who adopt this approach also formulate proposals for improved practice within existing institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and the courts. (p. 15)

In this light, the present analysis is one of the first to draw on discourse analytic methods to investigate heterosexual talk about topics of homosexuality, as a guide to reforming educational practices of adult learning.

Educational perspectives through a social interactionist lens. Though the literature base offers little to date in the way of discursive analysis as guide for intervening upon prejudice, any future efforts in this regard should be informed by and build upon the existing broad base of insight into the sociocultural nature of learning. Bonk and Kim (1998) were among the first to explicate connections between the mostly child-focused Neo-Vygotskian study of cognitive development and the realm of adult learning. They called upon educational researchers to examine the activity settings particular to adult learners and to consider how the central teaching constructs of scaffolded instruction, intersubjectivity, apprenticeship, and learning assistance operate during young, middle, and older adulthood. Indeed, with some exceptions (Fenwick, 2003; Lave, 1985; Lave & Wenger, 1991, 2005), learning scholars in the sociocultural tradition seem to have prioritized their analytical tools for the study of younger learners, a trend which we can only hope will broaden over time. Especially great is the dearth of research, through a sociocultural learning lens, examining interventions to reduce prejudice among adults.

Dialogue as interactionist-oriented intervention. Even in efforts to study the practices of group dialogue, which may seem naturally well-suited to a sociocultural lens on learning, interactionist notions of knowledge and identity construction have so far been largely overlooked in favor of more cognition-centered perspectives on the processes at work. Notwithstanding the excellent base of preliminary findings regarding the use of dialogue in higher education classrooms, and a handful of community settings (A. Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001; Ximena Zuniga et al., 2007), all of which are grounded in an individualistic definition of cognition and learning, I did not find in my review of the literature any empirical work on dialogue from an explicitly interactionist paradigm. In her recent, first-of-its-kind overview of

the history of dialogue as social change practice, Dessel (2011) acknowledged this emerging recognition:

For the purposes of an analysis of dialogue, however, tenets of social constructionism have great relevance, as both approaches attend to the meanings that people create about their own reality. An acknowledgment that individual views are socially constructed then provides room for the possibility of the existence of simultaneous different realities, and ultimately the opportunity for cocreation of new realities. (p. 176)

So within the interdisciplinary array of dialogue practice and research addressing prejudice, we find an interesting mix of overlapping convergences along with areas of underdevelopment. Broadly stated, those with a discursive lens have challenged the traditional ‘attitudinal’ view of prejudice, and yet have not applied their findings to investigating the discourse of a dialogue setting. Those whose purview of expertise is in dialogue seem not to have yet recognized the utility of interactionist notions of learning for designing or assessing their interventions. And finally, most relevant to the present study, none of the above insight has yet been applied specifically to improve our understanding of how adults in dialogue with each other may either perpetuate or attenuate societal stigma toward gay men and lesbians.

Overview of social-interactionist strategies. For the present study, the social interactionist framework I chose is a discursive one because I wished to look closely at how sexual orientation prejudice is not only managed, but also potentially transformed through ordinary talk. Earlier in this chapter, in describing social interactionist viewpoints on sexual orientation prejudice, a simple table of organizing concepts developed by Adam (1998) was reproduced (see p. 53). Though I have thus far used the terms education and social change when referring to interventions for alleviating sexual orientation prejudice, perhaps an even more accurate term to articulate the discursive perspective is “transgression,” as used by Adam and other literary-minded scholars. This same term was used by hooks (1994) when referring to “a

movement against and beyond boundaries” (p. 12), elicited by classroom teachers and engaged in by learners, to confront the status quo related to her own experiences as an educator in the decades following racial desegregation in schools. Though few in number, the studies that have tackled the reduction of prejudice from the interactionist viewpoint and are reviewed in this section share a common conviction with hooks, that education should be a “practice of freedom...urging all of us to open our minds and hearts so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so that we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions...” (p. 12).

Approaches to measurement. By virtue of the fact that interactionist researchers do not look inside any given individual for evidence of the “attitude” construct, but instead are seeking patterns and themes that emerge across the wide variety of situations in which humans socially construct their realities, measurement and analyses of these phenomena are most suited for qualitative research methods (Schiffrin et al., 2001). Furthermore, for the same reasons, the unit of analysis in interactionist studies is often not the individual participant or learner but is instead the learning activity itself, a whole classroom or community, or as elaborated below, the discursive exchange taking place. The studies that have investigated approaches to sexual orientation prejudice reduction from this perspective have utilized numerous data collection methods to gather perspectives and draw conclusions about how participants respond to the interventions implemented. Since the majority of these interventions have occurred in college classrooms or other campus-based scenarios, common sources of assessment data have been mid- or post-course student evaluations, student journaling or other open-ended writing response, or in-depth unstructured interviews, followed by identification and coding of relevant themes during analysis (Rothblum & Bond, 1996; J. Sears & Williams, 1997). Additional potential

approaches to assessment, though they have not yet been employed in any published literature on this topic, could include ethnographic methods of field observation involving an extended immersion by the researcher in the intervention experience to facilitate an up-close examination of the teaching strategies as well as learners' engagement patterns.

A particularly promising approach to deepening our understanding of both the processes and outcomes of interventions to reduce sexual orientation prejudice is through an analysis of how people speak on this subject. Earlier in this chapter, I presented the conclusions that resulted from the discourse analytic approach to measurement taken by Speer and Potter (2000) in their articulation of the four resources used by their speakers to manage heterosexist talk. These authors pulled together over 600 pages of transcribed talk that came from informal interviews, focus groups, moderated mealtime discussions, television documentaries, and a range of newspaper and magazine articles. Then, after selecting a corpus of relevant extracts, Speer and Potter (2000) drew upon various techniques from Conversation Analysis and discursive social psychology (Drew, 1995; D. Edwards & Potter, 2001; Heritage, 1997) to present their conclusions. As described by Speer and Potter (2000):

Rather than attempt to code and categorize the materials, the focus is on the situated nature and action orientation of participants' talk. Participants' own orientations are used as a principal resource for making sense of interaction (if participants treat something as an invitation, say, that is powerful grounds for the analyst treating it in this way). Analysis of this kind is at least partly a craft skill and therefore not easy to turn into a specific recipe. (Speer & Potter, 2000, p. 548)

Though few in number, subsequent studies have employed additional approaches to discourse analysis in examining the subject of sexual orientation prejudice. Gough (2002) utilized grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Pidgeon, 1996) to categorize sections of text and then to identify a set of themes in the transcribed conversation of male interviewees talking about homosexuality and related issues. Having identified the themes, Gough then moved to an

exploration of each theme in turn and how it showed up in recurring patterns of discourse, termed “interpretive repertoires” by Potter and Wetherell (1987). Gough (2002) described his analytical focus as follows, “Specifically, given the extent to which the texts invoked interpretive repertoires used to bolster inequality and uphold heterosexist practices, the focus is on this ideological dimension to the talk” (p. 224). In a separate study published that same year, Peel (2002) also applied Potter and Wetherell’s interpretive repertoires for her thematic analysis of individual interviews with adult trainers of “lesbian and gay awareness training.”

The evidence: What we’ve tried and learned so far. Brunner (1997), in her teaching of a large undergraduate literature course on sexuality, used student written response to reading, discussion, and creative performance activities to generate “classroom conversations that metaphorically (re)stage the myth of the official body by examining heterosexist mythologies and struggling against the homophobia that such taken-for-grantedness can create...” (p. 178). Similarly, Mager and Sulek (1997), undergraduate instructors at a historically Black university, used several provocative readings on gay subjects, a guest speaker, and an intensive multi-day role-play as the teaching activities to explore sexual orientation prejudice with their students. Their findings, derived from student reactions in self-assessments, journal pieces, and semester-end evaluations, indicate successful facilitation of students developing “frameworks for seeing and responding to homophobia” (p. 193). A third teacher (of college preparatory high school English) who employed similar classroom methods talked about the powerful ability of such teaching approaches to “spiral out from small centers, and that a classroom community or a student organization can be such a center” (Roy, 1997, p. 217). In the words of each of the above educators, one sees exemplified hooks’ movement against and beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable in the classroom and in society on the whole.

Just one year prior to the Sears and Williams (1997) collection, which came from within the field of education, Rothblum and Bond (1996) produced an edited compilation from within the field of psychology with strikingly similar timing and focus, with a key distinction being the overall framework on the problem of ‘heterosexism and homophobia.’ Although the first set of authors’ focus was on the individual-level changes necessary to shift attitudes and beliefs within applied educational settings, the second set of authors took a much more systemic, societal-level vantage point on the phenomena. This macro perspective is reflected in their introductory comments that, “It is clear that if we hope to move beyond a heterosexist society, we must pursue a number of strategies for rethinking and restructuring societal assumptions and practices” (Rothblum & Bond, 1996, p. xvii). Understandably, given their systemic lens on this prejudice, the array of selected contributions published here by Rothblum and Bond, described interventions across a wide-ranging spectrum of societal settings including psychotherapy and the mental health system, parenting of children, unification and visibility from within the LGBT community, and various political strategies. The majority of these selections are theoretical and prescriptive in nature, not necessarily reporting empirical findings of their own, in part due to the inherent methodological challenges discussed earlier of measuring these types of changes in society’s fundamental institutions and norms. Nonetheless, what follows is a summary of the chapters which most relate and inform sexual orientation prejudice reduction efforts to date, claiming an interactionist paradigm in so doing.

A notable distinction in the work of the scholars who approach this topic from an interactionist, social constructivist viewpoint is the emphasis on the importance of having a vision of a world without sexual orientation prejudice. From within an interactionist framework, we must have a vision of the society we intend to construct, since construction through our

interactions with one another is precisely how it will come to be. Livingston (1996) proposed a number of change efforts in two categories, individual actions and political strategies, but made this distinction only with a strong caution: “We need to understand that if we limit ourselves to individual action alone, we are only chipping away at a system and will not likely create a significant change. Nevertheless, we can make individual contributions while also participating in collective political strategies” (p. 260). In her category of individual action, she asserted that change agents must be willing to take risks in the ordinary, every day scenarios of their lives. Drawing from the work of the feminist scholar Lorde (1988 as cited in Livingston, 1996), Livingston reminded heterosexuals who want to make a difference, as well as gay men and lesbians who are privileged in aspects other than their sexuality, that we must “use our privilege in the service of the things we say we believe in” (p. 261). In terms of political strategies, Livingston urged us to “organize, organize, organize...Our political strategies cannot rely on education and attempts to change attitudes alone” (p. 264).

With a similar eye toward envisioning a world without heterosexism, Cogan (1996) contextualized the conversation in terms of what the effort must be to eliminate anti-gay/anti-lesbian violence, or hate crimes. She reminded readers that such violence is an extreme extension of the heterosexist ideology that dominates our social environment and takes a public health lens on abolishing it. In a cross-disciplinary approach, Cogan adapted an equation from primary prevention in public health that holds that affecting the incidence of hate crimes is a function both of transforming the social condition of heterosexism as well as bolstering the ego strength of all people to reject all forms of discrimination and violence.

Chan (1996) challenged institutions of education as a whole, with a particular emphasis on higher education and college campuses, to recognize and alter the ways in which their policies

and practices uphold sexual orientation prejudice. She described many mediums through which heterosexism is perpetuated in educational settings of society (which serve as microcosms of the larger society), including curricular content, research and scholarly pursuits, socializing norms for students, the presence or absence of role models, personnel policies, and through both covert discrimination as well as overt hostility toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. The greatest of these barriers to eradication of this oppression, says Chan, is the pervasive invisibility of lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues and topics. She outlined and encouraged a number of structural approaches for change agents to pursue in order to move their campus beyond a tacit acceptance of heteronormativity including establishing a commission on LGB issues, inclusive language in nondiscrimination clauses, comprehensive training of staff and faculty in all areas of campus life especially residence halls, student services, alumni networks, and athletics.

Rothblum's and Bond's (1996) volume is a particularly relevant and foundational one for both the present study and the entire social constructionist view on sexual orientation prejudice because it outlines an essential avenue from which to begin crafting the kinds of change called for by the aforementioned authors. In this same book, Kitzinger (1996) made the argument that language matters deeply in how society, including academics, professionals and all members, have come to think about "the form our oppression takes and how we might struggle against that oppression" (p. 8). She critiqued her own discipline for having led the movement to psychologize and thus depoliticize efforts to liberate gay and lesbian people, a result of the discursive frames put forth by psychologists. In her own words:

As people concerned with the prevention of heterosexism, we need to be aware of our politics, to be both self-conscious about the way in which our language reflects or undermines those politics and open to the possibility that there will be political disagreements between us that cannot – and should not – be camouflaged by the dishonest use of words. (Kitzinger, 1996, p. 17)

Kitzinger's work in the arena of discursive, critical, feminist psychology examining the oppression of homosexual people and resistance to that oppression has been trailblazing and inspirational guidance for those who recognize the power of language and discourse in shaping the prejudice experienced by lesbian and gay people in today's cultures. As a discourse analyst whose work is best characterized by Willig's category of 'discourse analysis as social critique,' Kitzinger herself typically stops short of offering recommendations to guide reform. However, those who have followed in her footsteps have begun to apply and extend her insights and comprise the remaining contributions to be highlighted in this section.

The study by Speer and Potter (2000), presented earlier as an example of the theorizing recently forged from the interactionist perspective on sexual orientation prejudice, while not an intervention study, offers a first-of-its-kind discursive analysis which could be extended to inform the design and evaluation of educational interventions for reducing heterosexist prejudice. Two additional studies, both mentioned above relative to their approach to measurement, should also be credited as informing the present proposal through the discourse analytic lens. Gough (2002), in his role as a university professor, led a series of conversations among heterosexual male university students on the topic of homosexuality. Using the aforementioned combination of grounded theory and discourse analysis, his central conclusion from his small sample revolved around the men's apparent devaluation of homosexuality serving to bolster their self-definitions of masculinity. Gough asserted both the utility of discourse analysis in interrogating the mundane talk that promotes homophobic ideals and the need to further our grasp on "the nature and range of repertoires used to protect and promote heterosexuality at the expense of homosexuality" (p. 235). Gough further proposed that "such analyses could usefully feed into

initiatives to combat homophobia and other forms of prejudice with men and boys in a variety of settings” (p. 236).

The unique investigation by Peel (2002) in which she conducted and discursively analyzed in-depth interviews with fifteen adult trainers of a lesbian and gay awareness program, identified these three themes: 1) challenging homophobia, 2) liberalism, and 3) managing stereotypes. According to Peel’s analysis, the trainers were able to reframe overt expressions of homophobia as educationally useful both by attributing the problem to a specific individual and by seeing prejudicial ideas as providing traction for the training. Even more than by overtly homophobic voicings, however, trainers were challenged by the common displays of liberalism, which they frequently saw as used by training participants to avoid an honest exploration of the issues and as a mask or smokescreen (a “defense”) for underlying heterosexism. Lastly, trainers spoke of their dilemmas in managing stereotypes about gay men and lesbians relative to their own presentation as a gay man or lesbian themselves. Peel claimed that the themes drawn from the trainers’ talk offer insight into ways to improve training efficacy and “Therefore arguments located within the framework of normative heterosexuality might work to undermine heterosexist beliefs by indirectly questioning the ‘homophobic,’ ‘liberal,’ or ‘stereotyped’ view” (Peel, 2002, p. 270).

Peel’s study, while being the only one taking a discursive view on an actual intervention, is limited in part by its focus on the perspectives of the gay and lesbian trainers themselves rather than examining the talk of the dominant and privileged group in trying to understand prejudice. To date, there have been no empirical studies that take a discourse analytic perspective in examining a real-world intervention to reduce sexual orientation prejudice among heterosexual adults- a gap that I hope the present study has begun to fill.

Summary

This chapter has cast a wide net in summarizing the extensive psychological literature on prejudice and prejudice reduction. Because one's sense of self (and other) is integrally connected to almost all notions of prejudice, individual and social identity has been a key concept as well. Within these domains, I have focused on available research looking specifically at sexual orientation prejudice, what has for decades been dubbed 'homophobia.' In representing the full range of scholarly perspectives on learning and cognition, the above review covers these research domains for both the cognitivist and the interactionist paradigms.

The social cognitive paradigm holds that attitudes and beliefs, including prejudices, exist as fixed though malleable sets of assumptions we carry in our minds. Whereas the social interactionist paradigm sees attitudes and prejudices as socially situated and arising in different ways with different functions depending upon our given interactive circumstances. From within the cognitive traditions, many intervention studies to reduce sexual orientation prejudice have been tried and tested to yield some significant insights, though few with real-world applicability. From within the interactionist traditions, only a very few scholars of dialogue and discourse have applied their analytic tools to the investigation of sexual orientation prejudice. It is toward this underexplored arena that I am directing my research.

Chapter Three: Conceptual Framework

In order to address my research questions about perspectives on homosexuality, and how such perspectives might be shaped through interactive talk, I rely on conceptual and analytic tools drawn from discourse analysis. Mezirow's conception of transformational learning rooted in an understanding of an individual's *frame of reference* grounds my analysis of the underlying set of cognitive, social, and moral expectations that constitute a person's perspective. To examine these expectations, I have drawn from Ochs and Capps (2001) notion of various dimensions of narrative, as well as Tannen's (1993) linguistic evidence for underlying frames. In this chapter, I introduce the meaning and usefulness of these tools and explain how I have productively applied them to deepen my understanding of the dialogue that took place.

Transformational Learning & Frames of Reference

Scholarship by educational researchers of adult identity development did not emerge until well into the 1970s and thus was, from its earliest stages, greatly influenced by notions of social interaction and context in learning even among the most traditionally cognitive viewpoints. These researchers often talk of one's identity "transforming" when adults learn. Kegan (2000) contrasts informational learning with transformational learning as follows:

Learning aimed at increasing our fund of knowledge, at increasing our repertoire of skills, at extending already established cognitive capacities into new terrain serves the absolutely crucial purpose of deepening the resources available to an existing frame of reference. Such learning is literally *in-form*-ative because it seeks to bring valuable new contents into the existing form of our way of knowing. (p. 48)

He asserts that the changes that occur through informational learning are critical and important, and absolutely worthwhile for teachers in all contexts to promote, when informational learning is what is called for. At the same time, according to Kegan (2000), transformational learning "has

an almost opposite rhythm about it” (p. 49). Rather than strictly filling in an existing way of knowing, transformational learning results in an altered form, a new way of knowing, and one with increased capacity.

In the context of the present study, I have found the concept of transformational or transformative learning (used interchangeably in the literature) centrally useful. The ideas of one adult learning theorist in particular, though not explicitly focused on reducing prejudice, have contributed foundational concepts to this study. Mezirow (2003) sees transformational learning as the highest goal of education with adults. He describes this ideal as:

learning that transforms problematic frames of reference – sets of fixed assumptions and expectations – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change. Such frames of reference are better than others because they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (pp. 58-59)

The construct of “frame of reference,” according to both Mezirow and Kegan, is the psychological form that transforms in transformational learning. Mezirow (2000) defines a frame of reference as a “meaning perspective, the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions” (p.16). He further says that our frames of reference typically have both cognitive and affective dimensions, may reside either within or outside of our awareness, and result from the interpretations we make about our own experiences. Mezirow goes on to describe frames of reference as often representing culturally normative perspectives (“collectively held frames of reference”) (p.16), including prejudices. Of particular relevance to this study, Mezirow asserts that our frames of reference are the anchors of our identity, stabilizing and supporting our values, moral convictions, and sense of self. When learning is transformational, according to Mezirow, it contributes to a frame of reference becoming more “dependable” than it was prior. In his own words:

A frame of reference that is more dependable, as we have seen, produces interpretations and opinions that are more likely to be justified (through discursive assessment) or true (through empirical assessment) than those predicated on a less dependable frame of reference. A more dependable frame of reference is one that is more inclusive, differentiating, permeable (open to other viewpoints), critically reflective of assumptions, emotionally capable of change, and integrative of experience. Insofar as experience and circumstance permit, we move toward more dependable frames of reference to better understand our experience. (Mezirow, 2000, p.19)

The frame of reference construct, as Kegan (2000) explains, points essentially to a ‘way of knowing’, or an epistemology. From his constructive-developmental lens, the core of an epistemology consists of “a relationship or temporary equilibrium between the subject and the object in ones’ knowing” (p. 53), or the equilibrium that exists when life and the world make sense to us. He further explains:

That which is “object” we can look at, take responsibility for, reflect upon, exercise control over, integrate with some other way of knowing. That which is “subject” we are run by, identified with, fused with, at the effect of. We cannot be responsible for that to which we are subject. What is object in our knowing describes the thoughts and feelings we say we have; what is subject describes the thinking and feeling that has us. We “have” object; we “are” subject. (Kegan, 2000, p. 53)

Kegan’s philosophical rendering gains educational traction with his essential claim that development, or learning, is the gradual process by which what was *subject* in our knowing becomes *object*:

When a way of knowing moves from a place where we are “had by it” (captive of it) to a place where we “have it,” and can be in relationship to it, the form of our knowing has become more complex, more expansive. (Kegan, 2000, p. 54)

With this explanation of Mezirow’s theory, Kegan describes a process of identity change that results in the individual understanding themselves and the world differently. Thus, if one accepts the premises offered by these theorists, the practical questions become ones of *how* to go about facilitating the transformation of the cognitive form in adult learners, how to support the movement from subject to object, how to expand an inflexible and constricting frame of

reference. Furthermore, in the context of this study, if a prejudice against homosexuality consists of one or more of Mezirow's frames of reference, how might we as educators facilitate these shifts? Operationally, I have adopted this concept of frame of reference as the central component that makes up prejudice, and will assume from here forward that, an alteration in one's prejudice involves an alteration in one or more frames of reference underpinning it.

Several fundamental components are necessary to achieve Mezirow's notion of frame of reference transformation. The process begins with a "disorienting dilemma" (1991, p. 168) in which some new experience or information calls into question previously accepted assumptions about the world, one's self, and/or others. These assumptions then undergo a process of critical reflection and re-evaluation that results in the generation of potential new or expanded interpretations on the situation or topic. Next the adult learner engages in what Mezirow calls "reflective discourse," an essential step in which the individual talks with others about these new options as a way of entertaining alternative perspectives, assessing justification for the new ones under consideration, and seeking consensual validation. Finally, the learner must actually act on the newly claimed perspective in order for the transformative learning process to be complete, and thus ready to begin again when the next incongruent experience comes along (Mezirow, 2000a).

Grounded in the pioneering work of Habermas (1984), Mezirow described this core transformative process as requiring two distinctively adult learning capabilities: the capacity to become critically self-reflective and the capacity to engage in critical-dialectical discourse. Critical self-reflection is defined as the adult's awareness of the sources, nature and consequences of their own beliefs and interpretations. Critical-dialectical, often called reflective, discourse involves assessing the assumptions and expectations that support the beliefs, values,

and feelings of self and others through verbal or written interaction with the aim of arriving at a tentative best judgment (Mezirow, 2000a). To clarify this key assertion of Mezirow's (2003), the judgments or interpretations arrived at by a diverse group of adults engaging in critically reflective dialogue with one another, informed by the most currently available evidence or knowledge of the topic at hand, will possess greater validity than judgments or interpretations derived through any other process. In other words, Mezirow holds that the conclusions people arrive at through an effective process of reflective discourse are the truest and the most socially just they can be.

Beyond the importance he placed on critical reflection and reflective discourse, Mezirow himself seemed less interested in technical questions of how best to facilitate transformative learning in practice. Leaving the development of instructional techniques or activities up to his contemporaries and successors, he closes an article entitled "Transformative Learning as Discourse" with the following call to action:

Creating the conditions for and the skills of effective adult reasoning and the disposition for transformative learning – including critical reflection and dialectical discourse – is the essence of adult education and defines the role of adult educator, both as facilitator of reasoning in a learning situation and a cultural activist fostering the social, economic, and political conditions required for fuller, freer participation in critical reflection and discourse by all adults in a democratic society. (Mezirow, 2003, pp. 62-63)

In developing the design for this study, Mezirow's concepts were intriguing and compelling for their apparent potential to explain a process by which people may be moved to revise their attitudes and prejudices. Even Mezirow himself, though strongly oriented toward the cognitivist paradigm, was acknowledging a critical role for the type of interaction and discourse that I intuitively believed was essential for this type of individual change to occur. So it could be said that, with this study, the adult educator in me was attempting a response to Mezirow's call

to action. It would seem useful then, to the overall interest in reducing sexual orientation prejudice, if we could recognize and grasp the frames of reference that may be operating when the topic of homosexuality arises in social interaction.

However, even after reading widely and deeply into Mezirow's own writings and those of many of his colleagues and successors, I was not gaining the analytical traction I was seeking in order to see a frame of reference in conversation. I learned that I was not alone, as many others before me had struggled to operationalize Mezirow's frame of reference in their research (Taylor, 2007). I, like those others before me, sought a way to observe Mezirow's reflective discourse in action without being inside the heads of those who were speaking. I needed a method of studying verbal interaction that would allow me to locate evidence of frames of reference in interactive talk. I found such a method in the multi-faceted realm of discourse analysis.

Narrative Analysis and Frames of Reference

This study draws upon two sets of analytical concepts from the realm of discourse analysis, and more specifically from the sub-field of narrative analysis. Ochs and Capps (2001) articulated a distinction between two overall poles of the oral narrative continua. At one end are narratives that convey a stable message; they are 'performative' in the sense that they deliver a relatively confident, well-considered, stand-alone message. At the other end are narratives that may not be recognized as a standard narrative because they are stories told in uncertain spurts. These narratives may be contradictory or incoherent and are what the authors called conversational or 'emergent.' According to Ochs and Capps, the latter storytelling format indicates identities that are in flux and formulation, understandings that are being co-constructed among tellers and co-tellers. As they explained it:

In essays of this [emergent] sort, the content and direction that narrative framings take are contingent upon the narrative input of other interlocutors, who provide, elicit, criticize, refute, and draw inferences from facets of the unfolding account. In these exchanges, narrative becomes an interactional achievement and interlocutors become co-authors. (pp. 2-3).

Worth noting is their use of the term ‘framings’ to refer to spoken or unspoken assumptions and expectations that underlie the narratives being constructed. I hypothesize and propose that Ochs and Capps are pointing to essentially the same psychological phenomena that is Mezirow’s frame of reference.

As shown in their table below (Table 2), these authors articulate five dimensions of personal narrative, each spanning a continuum between performative (middle column) and emergent (right column), which they employ to show the distinctions between a performative narrative and an emergent one. Narratives told at the performative end of the continua, often found in interviews or prepared speeches are understood by Ochs and Capps as indicating the teller’s stable, decisive construction of their past or anticipated future. In contrast, narratives told at the emergent end of the continua, common products of everyday, unrehearsed conversation, are seen as indicators of the teller’s unsettled desire for a construction of past or future that is authentic, and inclusive of the complexities in their experience. In their words:

Examining the spectrum of narrative possibilities helps us to fathom the essence of personal narrative, namely the oscillation between narrators’ yearning for coherence of life experience and their yearning for authenticity. That is, narrators contending with life experiences struggle to formulate an account that both provides an interpretive frame and does justice to life’s complexities. (Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.24)

Table 2

Narrative Dimensions and Possibilities (Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.20)

Narrative dimensions and possibilities		
Dimensions		Possibilities
Tellership	One active teller	→ Multiple active co-tellers
Tellability	High	→ Low
Embeddedness	Detached	→ Embedded
Linearity	Closed temporal and causal order	→ Open temporal and causal order
Moral stance	Certain, constant	→ Uncertain, fluid

In order to understand the distinctions between these different kinds of narratives and how they may reveal one's "frame of reference" in interaction, I review each dimension in turn. *Tellership* describes the involvement of conversational partners in the actual recounting of a personal experience, the telling of the story. The range of possibilities for this dimension spans from one active teller speaking in front of an uninvolved audience, to multiple active co-tellers where interlocutors mutually shape the story through their vocal or nonvocal attending, affirming or challenging the emerging storyline, or even initiating parallel storylines which add meaning to the one originally launched. Ochs and Capps are keen to remind us of the Bakhtinian notion that tellership is distinct from authorship in that the teller or co-teller, in nearly every case, has been influenced by the ideas of others who are not present and will assimilate those voices in the recounting of the story.

Tellability describes the extent to which a personal narrative relays a sequence of events and effectively makes a point. Whereas a narrative with high tellability clearly conveys both its

personal relevance to the teller and its import to other interlocutors, a narrative of low tellability may be portrayed with ambiguous or little relevance to the teller and seem relatively uninteresting to the potential co-tellers listening. Ochs and Capps identify several scenarios that reduce the tellability of a narrative including when a story is launched hesitantly and awkwardly, in an uncertain manner where the teller is searching for words. Further examples include when a teller stops and starts sentences repeatedly, alter their initial perspective, and seem uncertain as the direction or meaning behind their own story. Ochs and Capps attribute this low tellability to the reality that the teller his/her self is unresolved about the meaning of the experience and while s/he views it as somehow noteworthy, s/he is using this particular narrative as “a social forum for discovering what transpired and/or piecing together an evaluative perspective on an incident, including its implications for the future” (Ochs & Capps, 1991, p.36).

Embeddedness describes the extent to which a teller’s story is detached from the discourse that surrounds it or, alternatively, is thematically and structurally integrated (“embedded”). A detached narrative may comprise a lengthy conversational turn where one teller has ‘the floor,’ and may relay thematic content that is tangential or even unrelated to the topic being discussed. In contrast, an embedded narrative is recounted across multiple relatively brief turns and often by more than one co-teller, either because co-tellers are familiar with the experience being recounted, or because they are interjecting with questions or background information. Often, embedded narratives are organized entirely by specific activities of the surrounding discourse such as explanation, disagreement, prayer, or in the case of The Straight Dialogues, by the interactive activities led by the facilitator. Ochs and Capps (1991) explain that an embedded narrative is “characteristically indistinct from the turn-taking organization of routine conversational interaction” (p.39).

Linearity addresses the extent to which a narrative telling relates events as occurring in single, connected temporal and causal sequence or, alternatively, as occurring in uncertain, disconnected, or unpredictable patterns. Narratives possessing relative linearity depict an overall progression of events where one event temporally and/or causally precedes the next event. In contrast, narratives which are nonlinear possess an open-ended temporal and/or causal flow from one event to another. In the telling of such nonlinear stories, the narrator will often blur the connections, through confusion, disagreement or memory lapse, between events or experiences, or the teller may lose track and contradict themselves in relating the temporal or causal logic of their story. As Ochs and Capps convey, “the dimension of linearity lies at the heart of the tension that drives human beings to tell narratives of personal experience” (p.44/5) because while, on one hand, we strive for the logic and order that linearity offers, on the other hand we are inquisitive beings capable of recognizing a multitude of perspectives as truth. Thus while a lack of linearity may be a reflection of confusion and struggle to make sense of the narrative one is telling, the nonlinearity may at the same time be a sign of searching and openness to new modes of interpretation.

The fifth narrative dimension discussed by Ochs and Capps (2001), *moral stance*, is the one I drew on the most as an analytical tool for this study because of the commonly-made connection between homosexuality and morality. This dimension attests to the fact that, as human beings, the stories we tell are perspectives, rather than objective, comprehensive accounts. Ochs and Capps define this dimension as “a disposition towards what is good or valuable and how one ought to live in the world” (p.45) and state that moral stance is a central feature of most narratives grounded in personal experience. This feature shows up most clearly in narrative when someone has done or said something that violates the social expectations of the

teller. The act of recounting the violation while taking a moral stance regarding it serves as a discursive laboratory for tellers to reflect upon, clarify, reify or revise their own beliefs and values. As these authors further elucidate, the accumulation across time and communities of such common and frequent recountings results in the perpetuation of a moral point of view.

On Ochs and Capps' continua of narrative dimensions, moral stance ranges from presentations that are certain and constant throughout the telling to ones in which the moral stance is uncertain, fluid, indeterminate, or even unstable as the telling progresses. An important aspect to be clarified about this dimension is that, even for tellers whose accounts present a certain and constant moral stance, the telling itself is a method by which they locate their interpretation of goodness relative to the particular topic being discussed. In other words, Ochs and Capps (2001) remind us that:

The pursuit of goodness in the course of narration is not a matter of locating the whereabouts of a set of ready-made moral tenets, as on a treasure hunt. Rather, it is the pursuit itself...that builds virtue... The virtuous person is thus one who queries, seeks, and in so doing, learns what is good. Everyday narration of life experience is a primary medium for moral education, in that each recounting involves piecing together the moral meaning of events. (p.50-51)

Especially when the topic of dialogue, and thus personal narrative, is one such as "homosexuality and related social challenges," one might anticipate that the dimension of moral stance would play a strong role in characterizing the narratives, given the controversial 'moral' framing this topic has taken in current U.S. culture. Indeed, as will be shown through examples in the chapters to follow, there were many instances throughout the dialogue sessions where moral stance emerged as a key and defining dimension of the conversations. To further acknowledge at this juncture, it is precisely the powerfully formative nature of the moral stance dimension that drew me to explore narrative, in the form of group dialogue, as an intervention

for prejudice reduction. Because sexual orientation prejudice seems to be held in place, for many heterosexual North Americans, by their negative moral stances regarding homosexuality, I wanted to investigate the role that emergent narrative might be playing.

Locating Frames of Reference in Narrative

Conceptually then, my methodology rests on my interpretive conclusion that Mezirow's transformed frame of reference *is* the interactional achievement that occurs by way of Ochs's and Capps' emergent narrative, and can be examined through the lens of their five dimensions. And my own data, including the narratives told during the dialogue sessions, supported this conclusion as I reviewed it carefully for examples of Ochs and Capps' 'performative' and 'emergent' storytelling, while holding in mind Mezirow's descriptions of stable versus shifting frames of reference. As I considered *frames of reference* and *narrative* and the language Mezirow and Ochs & Capps used to describe these potentially or relateable processes, I developed an analytic "bridge" to articulate how I saw their connections (see Table 3, p.167).

At each end of the continuum of each of Ochs and Capps' narrative dimensions, I have described the characteristics of a frame of reference that would manifest at that location. In some instances the characteristics I articulated about a frame of reference are highly observable and low-inference (e.g., few assertions; many questions that seek perspective from others) and in other instances the characteristics are more interpretive and high-inference (e.g., teller appears motivated to tell). Of particular interest in developing this analytic tool was to somehow capture the moving, dynamic aspects of both Ochs and Capps' and Mezirow's transformational processes. All of these authors, in the respective language of their disciplines, talk of an individual's journey from less to more narrative coherency, and from a less to a more dependable

way of knowing. With the aim of depicting this movement, I added the terminology of “pre-transformational,” “mid-transformational,” and “post-transformational” to describe frames of reference at each end of the narrative continua. In addition, the large, sweeping arrows overlaying the table are intended to depict the cyclical, spiraling nature of an individual’s journey of perspective transformation in which their frame of reference may undergo, over time, a complete shift from a pre-transformational viewpoint, to a post-transformational one, only to then experience a new disorienting dilemma that begins again the cycle of further revising their frame of reference. This process of documenting, in a specific and graphical way, the emerging connections between these two concepts proved useful as I proceeded with my analysis and synthesis of *The Straight Talk Dialogues*.

Surface Evidence for Underlying Expectations: What’s In a Frame of Reference?

An important recognition came for me during the early phases of analysis upon realizing that these dimensions of narrative were revealing more about the relative stability or coherency of a teller’s frame of reference, and less about the actual frame itself. In other words, the dimensions were pointing me to qualities of the teller’s frame of reference (i.e., high tellability indicated a confidence in the reportability of the account, or an open linearity suggested a degree of confusion for the teller), but they were offering little insight into the actual beliefs, attitudes, or set of expectations that comprised the frame of reference itself – the actual contents of the teller’s thoughts. The one important exception to this observation was with the dimension of moral stance. As I explain further in Chapter Five, when referencing their moral stance in conversation, the degree to which a teller included mention of their own experiences or considerations (versus a tacit acceptance of societal ‘truths’) did allow some insight into the

content of their frame of reference, beyond locating it's transformative movement along the continuum of certainty to uncertainty.

Nonetheless, whereas the concepts presented thus far had facilitated my analysis primarily in response to Research Question 2 ('How are transformations expressed?'), I suspected that the many tools of discourse analysis could offer even further assistance in responding to the other two qualitative research questions ('How are frames of reference revealed?' and 'What is the nature of the transformations?'). The conceptual tool that proved most useful to this end was Tannen's (1993) articulation of numerous kinds of linguistic evidence for 'underlying frames.' In introducing the context for her work, Tannen talks of the widespread, cross-disciplinary interest in the notion of the "structure of our expectations," sometimes referred to as "schema", or "script," or "frame" depending upon the tradition in a given field of study. It is worth noting the parallellism between both Tannen's and Mezirow's references to this "structure of expectations" as the underlying mechanism through which our perceptions get filtered. In Tannen's (1993) own words:

The emphasis on expectation seems to corroborate a nearly self-evident truth: in order to function in the world, people cannot treat each new person, object, or event as unique and separate. The only way we can make sense of the world is to see the connection between things, and between present things and things we have experienced before or heard about. These vital connections are learned as we grow up and live in a given culture. As soon as we measure a new perception against what we know of the world from prior experience, we are dealing with expectations. (p.14-15)

I understood Tannen to be explaining the same aspects of human learning through experience as Mezirow spoke of in his descriptions of the transformational process; I believe her "frame" is the same as his "frame of reference." In particular, the "new perceptions" she mentions would, I argue, include Mezirow's "disorienting dilemma" and the alternative points of view he claims arise from reflective discourse. Furthermore, in the context of the present

study, I found Tannen's description of various ways of seeing a frame in discursive interaction to be supremely applicable to my quest for identifying dialogue participants' frames of reference regarding homosexuality.

Tannen articulates and gives examples for sixteen different kinds of linguistic evidence she discovered to reveal the existence of these expectations, or frames. Because some of her forms of evidence rely upon the researcher knowing the actual occurrences behind a narrator's story, beyond strictly the story they are portraying, I was not able to utilize all sixteen since I had no way of knowing the realities behind the stories told by dialogue participants. Nonetheless, for my analysis, I have borrowed and put to use the following forms of Tannen's (1993) linguistic evidence for underlying expectations, or "frame":

- Repetition of complete statements: the repetition of a complete statement, either identically or with changed wording, is thought to emphasize a key phrase or idea which serves to indicate the teller's interpretation, which comes from their expectations or frame.
- False starts: an instance of a statement being made or begun and then immediately altered is said to reveal the speaker's expectation that the first utterance would occur but then self-correcting to the second utterance which went against her/his expectations.
- Backtracks: a break in temporal or causal sequentiality that disrupts the narrative flow in order that the speaker may backup to an event that occurred earlier than one more recently mentioned, or in a causal backtrack, backup to fill in background information. Occurrence of a backtrack indicates the speaker's expectation that the telling be temporally and causally coherent.
- Hedges and hedge-like words/phrases: there are many words and phrases that linguists consider to be hedges or hedge-like because in their qualification or modification of word or statement, hedges compare the word or statement against what is expected. These include expressions such as "really," "anyway," "just," "even," and "kind of" and are often used to convey a sort of cautionary implication of "not so much as you might expect."
- Negatives: Generally speaking, the presence of a negative statement indicates that the speaker expected the affirmative.

- Contrastive connectives: Words such as “but” are called contrastive connectives because they mark the disruption of an expectation about whatever was being said before, either just a preceding clause, or an entire preceding set of ideas. As such “but” is often accompanied by a negative statement as in “...but he didn’t go there.”
- Modals: words and phrases such as “must,” “should,” “must have” and so on, reflect the speaker’s judgment compared to her own standards, while words such as “may,” “can,” “could” and so on measure what happened against what is possible. Both types of modals are indicators of the speaker’s expectation.
- Inferences: these are statements by the speaker which, under most circumstances, could not be actually known by the speaker such as when someone reports another person’s thoughts, feelings, and motivations. Inferences are thought to indicate more about the speaker’s own expectations than necessarily what is or was actually the case.
- Evaluative language: Tannen describes two basic types of evaluative language, adjectives and adverbs. Adjectives, when used, are said to be significant as the speaker’s comparison against what might have been expected. Adverbs reflect an evaluative process because they describe the way in which something was done in contrast to the speaker’s expectations for the situation being discussed.
- Moral judgment: this type of evidence, unlike those reviewed thus far, is not represented by any particular linguistic construction or word choice, but is classified by its implied or directly-stated judgment about right/wrong, or good/bad of the situation. To note, this evidence is one in the same with Ochs and Capps’ (2001) narrative dimension of moral stance.

Intragroup vs. Intergroup Dialogue

Before concluding this chapter, a final defining feature of The Straight Talk Dialogues which differs from the related studies that precede it, and calls for explanation, is the design choice to have these dialogues include only heterosexual participants. Despite the established theoretical grounding among practitioners of intergroup dialogue for interventions that facilitate contact across social identity groups such as race, gender, and sexual orientation (A. B. Dessel, 2011; B. Nagda & Derr, 2004; B. A. Nagda et al., 2009; B. A. Nagda et al., 1999; Schoem, 2003), the design of The Straight Talk Dialogues was driven by a different priority. That is not to say that we lacked confidence in the power of intergroup contact to facilitate the many

prejudice-reducing effects with which such interventions have been credited. To the contrary, both myself and the trained dialogue staff at The Institute on the Common Good recognized the promise that lies in ever closer, more positive relationships between gay and straight people.

However, our central purpose was not to investigate the kinds of inner cognitive and emotional indicators which are believed to underlie the positive attitudinal shifts that are seen with intergroup contact, but rather to take a social interactionist view on how this form of prejudice is reproduced day after day in the ways people talk to one another. If we believe that prejudice is a social reality that is repeatedly constructed and reinforced in the organization and achievements of interactive talk, then it follows that, in the case of prejudice against gay and lesbian people, there are several reasons to suspect that talk among heterosexual people might be in need of attention. Even more inspiring are the good reasons to wonder if and how, given the ‘right’ situational factors, straight people might hold important potential to shape each others’ perspectives.

The design and facilitation of The Straight Talk Dialogues was in keeping in every way with the principles and characteristics common to the intergroup dialogues described in the literature reviewed in the last chapter, with the one exception that participants had to identify as heterosexual. There is a significant though inconclusive thread of research in the social psychological literature which argues against the presence of minority group representatives at ‘diversity training’ for various reasons including the risks that their presence may result in impression management (“political correctness”), tokenism, or the reliance on them by majority group members for ‘teaching’ about their lived experience, a reliance which in itself is seen by many as a form of privilege (Paluck, 2006; Walls, Roll, Sprague, & Griffin, 2010). Other research cited throughout the preceding chapters presents additional arguments against having

gay men or lesbians present at a dialogue with this focus, such as the increased chance of heightened anxiety for some heterosexual participants (Moradi et al., 2006) (which would likely translate into decreased openness in the dialogue), and the promising potential for less prejudiced straight people to positively influence those who are more prejudiced (Herek, 2007). Simply put, the developers of The Straight Talk Dialogues felt that what was most important in addressing the research questions was the creation of a setting that established the highest possible degree of interpersonal safety among dialogue participants, thus encouraging the kinds of self-reflection, critical discourse, and willing curiosity we believed would be necessary if transformation were to happen.

Summary

In this chapter, I explained the central concepts that informed the design of this study. It is a fundamental assumption of this study that Mezirow's "frame of reference" represents the very same mental structure as the building block of social identity known by cognitive psychologists as the "cognitive schema," and that it is this structure that transforms during any process of transformative learning. While there are various theories about the etiology of prejudice in general, and specifically about sexual orientation prejudice, they are consistent in their conceptualization that prejudices, like most beliefs and attitudes, comprise an array of "cognitive schemas" or "frames of reference" about the group of 'others' in question.

At the same time, the social interactionist research suggests that these frames of reference are not fixed but continuously re-constructed depending on the perceptions and interpretations we have about our social circumstances at any given moment. These frames of reference, with their shifting, dynamic natures – and the social identities they compose, are revealed and

reshaped in part through talk. Thus, in keeping with this line of reasoning, I set out to investigate the extent to which the frames of reference undergirding sexual orientation prejudice in adults might be transformed through a dialogue intervention.

Drawn from the sub-discipline of discourse analysis known as narrative analysis, I identified a set of analytic tools that would be most useful selected for my investigation of frames of reference in interaction. Key to my analysis is Ochs and Capps' (2001) articulation of five narrative dimensions existing on a continuum by which all narratives can be characterized served to identify, within the interactive talk, the emergent nature of identities and frames of reference undergoing transformation. To examine the intricacies of narrative, I also use Tannen's (1993) discussion of types of linguistic evidence that reveal the underlying structure of one's expectations. These provided the tools and insights that I used to answer to my research questions about heterosexual adults' mutual influence on one another's perspectives regarding homosexuality.

Chapter Four: Research Design and Methods

The focus of this chapter is the presentation and description of my study design, and methods of data collection and analyses. The dialogue series upon which this study is focused was conducted during the Fall of 2008, and all data were recorded and collected at that time under the auspices of a collaboration initiated by me with Dr. Alexander, the Director of the Institute on the Common Good, an interdisciplinary center at Regis University. Dr. Alexander and his staff shared a strong interest in the topic and had allocated funding and in-kind contribution for conducting the dialogues during the course of their regular, ongoing project work. The research methods described herein were submitted and approved by the Institutional Review Boards at both University of Colorado at Boulder and Regis University. I begin with a description of the study site, participants, recruitment strategies, the intervention, and the data collected in light of my research questions. For each of the major elements of my mixed methods design, I follow then with my methodological assumptions about how the data collected addresses the research questions. Finally, I outline my approach to analysis and strategies for validation of my interpretations, along with a discussion of limitations to my approach.

The overall aim of this study was to investigate the social cognitive and interactional changes in frames of reference that occurred among heterosexual adults in conjunction with their participation in an ongoing facilitated dialogue about homosexuality and homosexual people. Towards this end, I employed two different, but complementary modes of investigation. With the first branch of my design, grounded in a social interactionist perspective, I sought to explore the nature of any shifts in frames of reference that might have taken place, relative to this topic, through an analysis of participants' discursive interaction throughout the dialogue sessions. The second branch of my investigation, stemming from the social cognitive paradigm, surveyed the

attitudes of dialogue participants before and after the dialogue series using an established questionnaire, and compared their responses to a comparison group who did not participate in the dialogues.

Methods

The site. The Institute on the Common Good (ICG), established in 1998 and directed by Dr. Alexander, is a non-profit organization affiliated with Regis University in Denver, CO. The ICG was created to provide opportunities for people in the community with diverse perspectives to engage one another around civic and social issues. Their mission is “to promote the common good through the use of dialogue, discernment, and democratic deliberation”

(<http://www.icgregis.org/>). Dr. Alexander, whose own dissertation and career has centered around dialogue processes, agreed to collaborate with me as a doctoral candidate in sponsoring and orchestrating a series of small-group dialogues on the topic of “homosexuality and related social challenges”.

Though my primary lens on dialogue was one of learning, and his was one of democratic civic engagement, Dr. Alexander and I discovered a mutual passion for the theoretical intentions and the practical potential of dialogue as a change process. He shared my enthusiasm for the social relevance of this topic and immediately saw it as aligned with the mission and purpose of the ICG. Dr. Alexander extended the invitation for me to submit my ideas for a dialogue project on this topic, which I did. We met roughly a half-dozen times over the course of the Spring and Summer of 2008 to formulate and coordinate plans for the dialogues, gradually involving several members of his small staff in logistics and eventually including the contracted facilitator in the planning as the Fall approached. Though we would often discuss different ways to approach the intervention and the data collection, Dr. Alexander allowed me to make ultimate decisions on all

elements of the research design, whereas I deferred to his expertise in terms of the intervention. (See also Letter of Support, Appendix A).

Recruitment and study participants. I was primarily responsible for recruiting subjects and received assistance from ICG's Project Manager (Bowen). We sent the Call for Participants (See Appendix B) to all Denver/Boulder-broadcasting radio stations that allowed such submission via their website, and posted the Straight Talks Dialogue flyer (See Appendix C) on grocery store and coffee shop bulletin boards as widely as possible within a 5 mile radius of Regis University. We supplemented flyer and radio announcements by making initial phone calls and follow-up email contact with a number of community organizations in Denver and Boulder, using the Call for Participants (Appendix B) as a script to offer an initial explanation of the program and the research project and to request organizational leadership's assistance in making the opportunity known and available to their membership. Selection of organizations contacted was guided primarily by the intention to access the widest possible spectrum of perspectives on the topic, including some participants who are 'pro-gay' (affirming of homosexual people, their experiences, and their legal rights) as well as participants who are 'anti-gay' (disaffirming of same). Examples of organizations we contacted included: The Jaycee's, The Rotary Club, Knights of Columbus, PFLAG Denver, PFLAG Boulder, local churches in northwest Denver and Boulder, and Focus on the Family. For those who expressed willingness to help, we took guidance from the organizational leader as to how to proceed, but were open to any or all options including offering copies of the flyer to be given to interested members, our attendance at an organizational meeting to invite participation, and/or offering to meet with interested volunteers individually to answer questions about the project. Neither of these last two offerings were taken up and all recruitment-related interaction after the initial

contact ended up being done entirely through phone and email. To note, I as the researcher had no contact with any of the participants during any phase of the research, neither during recruitment, administration of baseline or post-surveys, nor during the dialogues themselves (as explained further below).

Ultimately, participants had to sign up to participate through a phone conversation with ICG staff to ensure key information about the purpose and process of the project was shared consistently with all who ended up participating. All promotional and recruitment efforts directed interested potential participants to contact the ICG office by phone or through email. If email was the mode of contact initiated, the ICG staff would follow up with phone contact to offer more information and register the participant using the established Phone Checklist. ICG staff used a pre-established Phone Checklist during these initial phone calls (See Appendix D). During these initial conversations with potential participants (and on the Consent Form), we explained that while interested volunteers must register to participate in the actual dialogue sessions, due to random assignment to groups, half of these individuals would be assigned to the survey-only (comparison) group and offered first priority on a waiting list for future dialogues on this topic at ICG. If an interested participant was unable to commit to all four of the set dates for the dialogue sessions, they were automatically placed in the survey-only comparison group upon registering them.

The dialogue group started out with 9 participants in the first session, one of whom did not return, bringing the number to 8 who participated for the duration of the series. The survey-only comparison group consisted of 7 participants, all of whom participated in both the baseline and follow-up survey. All participants had to be at least thirty (30) years of age and self-identify as heterosexual. All genders and racial/ethnic backgrounds were equally eligible. Further

demographic details about both the intervention and comparison groups are presented in Chapter Seven.

The intervention: A series of dialogue sessions. The four evening dialogue sessions took place in a classroom in the library at Regis University in northwest Denver. Each dialogue session lasted two and one half hours, and began with a light catered dinner as participants were entering and getting settled. The first two dialogue sessions occurred one week apart, while the third and the fourth each occurred two weeks after the previous session. Since participants completed the baseline survey over the internet prior to attending the first dialogue session, total time from baseline to post-intervention measurement varied from five to seven weeks, depending on how soon after registration the participant completed the baseline assessment.

The dialogue sessions were entirely managed and run by Dr. Alexander and his staff at ICG. He hired a contract facilitator to serve as the primary facilitator based on his knowledge of the project's focus and purpose as well as the skills and interests of his contract pool, and he himself served as a secondary facilitator during the first session only. Dr. Alexander ensured time on the first night for explanation and discussion of the research project itself and reminded participants of the key research aspects to which they had consented.

The facilitator hired to lead the dialogues was Leilani Rashadi-Henry, a colleague with whom Dr. Alexander had years of professional collaboration experience and for whom he held great respect and trust. In particular, Dr. Alexander sought out Leilani's talents when the topic of a planned dialogue event revolved around socially or culturally sensitive topics because he believed her skills to be exceptional in establishing the dialogic space for necessary safety while also inviting necessary honesty. Because there are many stylistic variations in facilitation of a dialogue process, Paul, Leilani, and myself established in advance that the facilitation of this

series would be consistent with the five foundational assumptions of Nagda's conflict-community approach to intergroup dialogue (B. Nagda & Derr, 2004 as described previously in Chapter Two). I offer further detail about the facilitation and activities that took place during the dialogue sessions, in Chapter Five.

Following the fourth and final session of dialogue, participants received a check for the incentive amount of \$80, mailed to them from ICG, along with the letter of appreciation. A \$20 check was mailed to comparison group participants at the same point in time.

Role of researcher. Even though I am the primary investigator on this project, was not actually present at the dialogue sessions. It was decided in pre-dialogue planning meetings among Dr. Alexander, Leilani, and myself that despite the methodological advantage of being present to observe the discussions directly as the researcher, the goals of the study would be best served if I was not present because of the chance that my physical presence could affect participants' willingness to express themselves as openly and comfortably as possible. In keeping with the intention to create group cohesion around the common heterosexual identity, and to avoid the "reactivity" of subjects to the presence of the researcher (Maxwell, 2005), especially a researcher they may have (accurately) believed to be a lesbian, our collective agreement was that I should not be present. I met ICG staff each evening before the dialogue session began to ensure the room and recording equipment were in order and then a few hours later, following each session, to collect the recorded data, take down and pack up equipment, and close up the room.

Social Interactionist Methodology: Narrative Inquiry

For my primary mode of investigating the dialogue among participants in the intervention group I drew from multiple sub-disciplines within the broad genre of qualitative research known as discourse analysis. Appropriate to the array of academic disciplines among which I am attempting to draw connections in this study, my methodological framework is also multifaceted. Specifically my analytic approach draws upon the rationale and methods of discursive psychology, interactional sociolinguistics, and most particularly from narrative inquiry to address the following research questions:

- 1) How are frames of reference on topics related to sexual orientation and lesbian/gay others revealed and asserted by participants through interactive talk?
- 2) If transformation in frames of reference is evident over the course of the dialogues series, how are these transformations expressed?
- 3) If transformation in frames of reference is evident over the course of the dialogues series, what appear to be the nature of such transformations?

From within the social interactionist paradigm, many scholars believe there is no richer, more revealing source of information about a person's identities, attitudes, and frames of reference, including their prejudices, than can be gathered from how s/he talks about the topic. I have elected to examine the conversations between and among dialogue participants in this study because I share this Vygotskian (1978) notion that the language people use and the ways in which they use it reveal much about who they are and how they understand and create their worlds. As Potter & Wetherell (1987) aptly note, "Research into discourse concerns crucial elements of people's lives, not only pleasure and desire but suffering and enslavement, and the possibilities for any kind of life in this society" (1987, p. 110). Since, as an educator, my keenest interest lies in 'discourse analysis as reform' (Willig, 1999), I chose to examine the participants'

interactive talk as a way of growing my own and other educators' abilities to "see" frames of reference in the teaching/learning context. My choice of methods is rooted in my belief that by becoming more skilled at recognizing frames of reference – how they are constructed, revealed, maintained and transformed – we can more effectively intervene against the perpetuation of prejudice and in support of social justice.

The "new paradigm" of psychology (Harre, 2003, p.689) known as discursive psychology has held a general yet central influence on my choice to examine participants' discourse. This relatively recent turn away from traditional experimental methods in psychology for studying various aspects of cognition, including attitudes and prejudice, is entirely consistent with my situated view on learning. Jaworski and Coupland (2006) assert that discursive scholarship will be credited with bringing psychological research around to examining attitudes as the localized and contextualized phenomena they are. My analytic approach draws broadly yet directly from Edwards' (1997) rationale that "one of the reasons for pursuing discursive psychology is the requirement to re-conceptualize relations between language and mind, and to find alternative ways of dealing empirically with that 'constitutive' relationship" (p.44).

At the heart of the sub-discipline within discourse analysis known as interactional sociolinguistics is Gumperz's (2003) notion of "conversational inferencing" (p.219) which he defines as the interpretive process that takes place between two or more people in interaction (verbal and nonverbal) by which each person assesses what the others are intending with their communication and upon which each person then bases their next response. In other words, Gumperz and others in interactional sociolinguistics are focused on the inferences people make about one another's intended meanings within an interaction, which includes the interpretation one another's "frames" (Goffman, 1974) or "metamessages" (Jaworski, Coupland, & Galasinski,

2004; Tannen, 1986). Typically, the purist researcher of this method looks both at the content of an interaction, as well as the linguistic organization such as pronunciation and prosody. In the present analysis, I rely substantially more on the former examination of content than on the latter, non-verbal micro-elements. Nonetheless, given the central role of frames and framing devices in interactional sociolinguistics, it is appropriate that I credit this body of work with informing my approach herein.

The area of discourse analysis known as narrative inquiry (or ‘narrative analysis’, depending on the source) has most closely informed my methodological approach to this study. Murray (2009) describes narrative inquiry as a process of eliciting and documenting stories, and then interpreting them in light of a field’s literature, leading to implications for theory, research, and practice. Although stories were not intentionally elicited as part of the dialogue facilitation, I selected this framework for examining the data after observing, through my transcription and initial review, the predominance of storytelling within the participant interaction. It was evident to me, even prior to an in-depth examination, that the stories being told by group members held a key function for their thinking about and relating to the topic of homosexuality. Though I did not yet know it early on, I was sharing in a growing recognition among qualitative researchers, as described here by Johnstone (2003).

As we continue to think about the uses of narrative in human life, we are paying increasing attention to the political effects of narrative, seeing storytelling not only as a way of creating community but as a resource for dominating others, for expressing solidarity, for resistance and conflict; a resource, that is, in the continuing negotiation through which humans create language and society and self as they talk and act. We see narrative more and more as a way of constructing “events” and giving them meaning, as we pick out bits of the stream of experience and give them boundaries and significance by labeling them. Like all talk and all action, narrative is socially and epistemologically constructive; through telling, we make ourselves and our experiential worlds. (p.644-5)

Grounded in the theories from narrative inquiry that I presented in my conceptual framework (Chapter Two), I have drawn heavily upon two sets of analytic tools to examine how

frames of reference about sexual orientation or gay/lesbian people were displayed and negotiated throughout the dialogue. In this section I offer a brief summary of each theory's key concepts and tools in light of how they were applied in my analysis. The reader is referred to Chapter Two for a more extensive review of these concepts.

Analytic tools of narrative inquiry. Ochs and Capps (2001) presented a system of understanding how informal interactive conversation functions as a central mechanism by which humans accomplish the making of meaning in their lives. These authors theorize a continuum of five dimensions underpinning all forms of narrative, from the polished performative speech or essay at one end of the continuum, to the ordinary, emergent conversation at the other. The five dimensions by which narratives can be characterized, according to Ochs and Capps are as follows:

- *Tellership*: describes the involvement of conversational partners in the actual recounting of a story, ranging from one active teller speaking to uninvolved audience to multiple active tellers mutually shaping the emergent story through verbal and nonverbal interaction.
- *Tellability*: describes the extent to which a personal narrative relays a sequence of events and effectively makes a point, ranging from high tellability in which both personal relevance to the teller and import to the audience is clear to a narrative of low tellability which may be portrayed with ambiguity or little apparent relevance.
- *Embeddedness*: describes the extent to which a teller's story is detached from the discourse that surrounds it such as when one teller 'has the floor' or, alternatively, is thematically and structurally integrated ("embedded") such a narrative is recounted across multiple brief turns often by multiple tellers.

- *Linearity*: addresses the extent to which a narrative telling relates events as occurring in single, connected temporal and causal sequence or, alternatively, as occurring in uncertain, disconnected, or unpredictable patterns.
- *Moral stance*: represents the teller's orientation toward what they view as good and right within the narrative account, ranging from presentations that are certain and constant throughout the telling to ones in which the moral stance is uncertain, fluid, indeterminate, or even unstable as the telling progresses.

The central premise of Ochs and Capps' (2001) framework asserts that storytelling that tends toward the emergent end of the spectrum (multiple tellership, low tellability, high embeddedness, relative nonlinearity or uncertain moral stance) represents a "narrative exploration" (Ochs & Capps, 2001) by which the participants are striving to achieve authentic ways of comprehending their unresolved personal experience surrounding the topic under discussion. I coded and classified all instances of storytelling in the dialogue transcripts according to Ochs and Capps' five dimensions (defining criteria for storytelling is explained below). In particular, the dimension of moral stance offered substantial traction in shedding light on how dialogue participants collaboratively discovered, disrupted, and developed their assumptions, beliefs, and feelings about people who are not heterosexual.

In addition to using Ochs and Capps' lens to look broadly at the degree of stability (performative vs. emergent) in the narrative dimensions of the stories told by participants, I sought a tool that would allow me to get an even closer look at narrators' actual language for clues to the actual content of their frames of reference surrounding homosexuality. I found such a tool in Tannen's (1993) work *Framing in Discourse*. Tannen defined a frame as a "structure of expectation" (p.15), notably the same definition verbatim given by Mezirow (2000) for his

“frame of reference” (p. 16), and describes a frame as the “organized mass” (Tannen, 1993, p. 21) of prior experiences we store in our brains. This prior knowledge is both a blessing and a curse, because while it forms the basis of the cognitive efficiency that allows us to interpret any given situation based on past experiences, it also comes with built-in expectations which filter our new perceptions through the light of our past experiences. Tannen articulated sixteen different kinds of linguistic evidence she discovered, through her own research, to reveal the existence of these expectations, or frames. Through my systematic review of the stories told, I found several examples of the following forms of Tannen’s (1993) linguistic evidence for underlying expectations, or “frame” (see Chapter Three, p.109 for detailed definitions):

- *Repetition of complete statements*
- *False starts*
- *Backtracks*
- *Hedges and hedgelike words/phrases*
- *Negatives*
- *Contrastive connectives*
- *Modals*
- *Inferences*
- *Evaluative language*
- *Moral judgment*

By utilizing Ochs and Capps dimensions of narrative and Tannen’s evidence of underlying frame as lenses through which to examine my data, I gained a walk-able path toward responding to my research questions. These conceptual tools offered access points by which I could enter the storytelling of dialogue participants and identify when and how they were

revealing a frame of reference about homosexuality or homosexual people, as well as the contents of that underlying structure of expectation. Furthermore, and most importantly, these tools have provided me a way to conceive of and discuss how participants' frames of reference did or did not shift over the course of the dialogue sessions. In other words, these tools of narrative inquiry gave me a vantage point to see what one narrative researcher calls the "revising" of identities in interaction (Josselson, 1996).

Approach to Qualitative Collection and Analysis

Video-taping. All four dialogue sessions were video-recorded from beginning to end on digital video tapes, resulting in nearly 10.5 hours of tape. The Institute on The Common Good (ICG) had a standing arrangement with Regis University's media services department for recording various events, and Dr. Alexander agreed to utilize this resource for this project. The equipment was set up each evening by professionals in the Media Services department and overseen by myself, the primary investigator. A staff person from ICG, was specifically assigned to conduct the taping, based on extensive pre-consultation with me regarding the priorities for capturing as much research-relevant information as possible. This individual marked and compiled the actual tapes each night and handed them off to me later each evening. Two cameras were utilized to record each dialogue session, one from each side of the room, for the purpose of maximum data capture. We agreed that one camera would remain stationary so the camera person could attend to tracking participants' interaction with the other camera.

The classroom was somewhat small in size, accommodating 2-3 banquet-size tables and approximately 20 chair/desk combination seats. The primary facilitator, consistently positioned herself near the 'front' of the classroom, near the wall with the whiteboard and typically had her materials (papers, markers, her personal water bottle) on the front table. The chair/desks were arranged each night in a semi-circle format with participants all facing the open end of the 'U' at the front of the classroom, where Leilani sat and sometimes stood while facilitating. This arrangement was intentional so that all members could be 'seen' by at least one of the two video cameras which were positioned one in each corner of the front side of the room. The microphones were placed on a small table in the center of the semi-circle of participants but sometimes had to be moved aside to the larger table at the front of the room if they were in the



way of an interactive activity.

Figure 1: *Photo 1 of dialogue room (blurred for confidentiality)*



Figure 2: *Photo 2 of dialogue room (blurred for confidentiality)*

There are several advantages to having videotaped the sessions. Video recording can capture facial expressions, nonverbal communications, and emotions that might otherwise be missed in field-note records (Derry et al., 2010; Erickson, 2006, 2011). The audio track captured accurate sequences of talk as well as intonation and inflection. Such recordings can be used to produce detailed transcripts of what occurred during the dialogues, can be replayed as frequently as necessary to increase accuracy of representation, and ultimately enable a more nuanced analysis and validity of conclusions (Maxwell, 2005).

Transcription. I transcribed all four evenings of the video tapes in their entirety, resulting in 192 pages of transcript. As noted by many qualitative experts, such as Ochs (1979), Edwards (2003), and Gee (2005), my transcript is part of my analyses. Beyond the benefit of familiarizing me with the data, the process of transcription involves constant decision-making about the level of detail and nuance that should be included in the transcript, based on what seems relevant to both the situation on tape and my research questions and iterative

interpretation. Once transcription was complete, I created a content log (Jordan & Henderson, 1995), in order to begin organizing and categorizing my data.

Narrative selection and coding. I loaded all transcripts, the content log and the original video and audio tracks into the computerized qualitative analysis software NVIVO (version10) in preparation for coding. Initial coding included grouping the data according to each individual participant (everything spoken by each person) and each participant structure (all talk occurring during each facilitated activity; described in Chapter Five). Before moving to the narrative analyses, I first wanted to examine each participant's talk with the specific purpose of understanding their experience of the dialogue process itself. Consistent with a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) I developed a series of codes that emerged from instances when participants made mention of anything regarding the dialogue sessions or activities themselves. For example, comments such as "I feel very comfortable sharing, like I will be accepted no matter what I say" or "Well, the question you asked [to Leilani]..." were coded as participants orienting to the process itself. From these emergent codes, I employed a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1994) which ultimately led to identifying four qualities of safety, structure, solicitation, and authenticity that contributed to the emergence of transformational storytelling during these discussions.

Next, I deductively coded (Miles & Huberman, 1994) the entire series of transcripts for the occurrence of narrative by any participant. Important to clarify at this juncture is the definition I applied for identifying an instance of 'narrative' or 'story' in my data. First, and simply stated, I included only stories in which there was some evident connection to the topic at hand, homosexuality, gay/lesbian people, or anything related in any way to which I as the researcher or the participant themselves oriented. As would be expected in any gathering, there

were ‘off topic’ narratives told on occasion. For the purposes of keeping the research focused on the research questions, those passages were not coded.

In line with narrative researchers who have preceded me (e.g., Bamberg, 2004; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Polkinghorne, 1988; Reissman, 2008) my transcripts demanded a broader, “non-canonical” criteria for recognizing narrative activity beyond the traditional definition offered by Labov (1972), primarily because my data was not collected in the form of interviews or questioning that purposefully elicited storytelling. This latter type of “orthodox” narrative (p.123) Georgakopoulou (2006) calls a “big story” and contrasts such narratives with what she studies and calls “small stories,” which she describes as “an umbrella-term that covers a gamut of under-represented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell” (p.123). In fact, Georgakopoulou points out and credits Ochs and Capps’ (2001) for the revolutionary premise of their book *Living Narrative* which makes the case for narratives at the unprototypical end of the spectrum occurring every day, constantly in ordinary situated conversation. In accordance with Ochs and Capps (2001) and Razfar (2012) I identified narratives by the criteria that a narrative includes: 1) a sequenced order of events (not necessarily linear), and 2) a moral or affective stance. Beyond this minimal criteria, I drew from definitions and descriptions of other contemporary narrative analysts (Georgakopoulou, 2006) which allow for narratives not strictly involving past events, but stories which may be anticipatory or imaginative of the teller’s future as well.

My data contained a variety of stories, many “small” and some fitting with prototypical criteria of a beginning-middle-end plotline about a past event. Having identified the instances of each participant’s storytelling in the dialogues, I conducted a second review of the transcripts,

this time expanding the “storytelling” node to include all pieces of interaction, which contributed to or expanded upon the initial story. In other words, I widened my lens of what constituted a given story to include relevant questions or comments from other group member to the primary teller. I also connected, through coding, appearances of the same story across multiple sessions of the dialogue. In this phase of analysis, I conducted another full review of the data to code the storytelling episodes using Tannen’s (1993) evidence of frames and Ochs and Capps’ (2001) dimensions of narrative outlined earlier. This deductive work resulted in the findings discussed in Chapter Five, and the foundation for Chapter Six.

Case-study. Another major component of my analysis consisted of applying an in-depth case study approach to the examination of two of the participants’ processes. As reported in Chapter Six, I took a common turn in narrative inquiry away from traditional theme-building qualitative methods to explore Yolanda’s and Eli’s journey through the dialogues from within their individual narratives (Chase, 2005; Razfar, 2012). Guided by my central assumption that each participant’s experience and growth would be uniquely situated in their own individual context, this research method made sense for addressing my research questions, although it required narrowing my focus to only a small number of participants at that point, to achieve the desired depth of analysis. As Holstein and Gubrium (2000) explain, narrative researchers are often attending to “narrative linkages” (p.108) that a teller draws between her/his biographical particulars, on the one hand, and their available resources or barriers for constructing their world and identity, on the other.

My selection of Yolanda and Eli for the narrative case study analyses was based on two points of rationale, both of which are likely related and overlapping, but important enough to mention separately. First and foremost, Yolanda’s and Eli’s stories, in comparison to those of

others in the group, contained the clearest, most tangible examples of narrative dimensions at the emergent end of Ochs and Capps' (2001) spectrum. Based on the connections I have drawn to this set of narrative constructs in operationalizing Mezirow's frame of reference, it made sense to feature the data that most readily exemplified my interpretations. Secondly, and again related to the first factor, the group as a whole seemed to orient their focus on the stories of these two participants more than any others. In other words, when I surveyed the frequency and amount of time with which the group was engaged in responding to or participating in any given participants' storytelling, Yolanda and Eli received the most attention.

Memo-writing. To help me develop the connections I was drawing between the literature and my data, I made a practice of writing memos throughout both data collection and analysis (Maxwell, 2005; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Memos written during both phases served as repository for me to capture ideas or questions that needed further consideration or validity-checking in the literature. In some cases, upon returning to my memos during the writing process, I was able to expand a memo into a section for the pertinent chapter. In other cases, I merely consulted the memos to fuel my thinking when I got 'stuck' with my writing. In all cases, I found the analytical approach of writing memos useful for maintaining a reflexive, self-conscious approach to my personal and intellectual engagement with the material.

Development of theoretical bridging device. Ever since Mezirow's (1991), earliest theorizing about transformational learning and the frame of reference specifically, subsequent researchers and scholars have been challenged to define and identify this concept in their studies (Edward W. Taylor, 1998, 2007). My attempts to research and write about Mezirow's frame of reference were no different. Grounded in my intuitive conviction that narrative inquiry could serve as a powerful lens through which to observe this thing Mezirow called a frame of

reference, I realized that I needed an analytical bridge between the conceptual realms of Ochs and Capps narrative dimensions and Mezirow's transformational learning. I needed a way to connect the dots more directly between these two ways of talking and thinking about what I believed to be the same social cognitive processes, that of expanding one's frame of reference through reflective discourse in the form of emergent narrative. Thus, I spent time during my analytic process, to create and develop the chart on page 167 in Chapter Five as a theoretical bridging device to help clarify the connections that were emerging for me from both the theoretical literature and my own data. My process in developing this thought tool was iterative and parallel to my coding and memo-writing such that I moved back and forth, adding to the chart when a connection arose for me, and continuously revising if something no longer made sense. My aim was a mapping of my understanding of Mezirow's transformational process onto the five narrative dimensions from Ochs and Capps. The process of documenting, in a concept-specific and graphical way, the connections between these two domains proved useful to me as I proceeded with my analysis and synthesis of *The Straight Talk Dialogues*.

Validity. As with any research design, this one carries with it certain vulnerabilities to unchecked bias and other threats that must be addressed. I believe, as many scholars in the social sciences have asserted, that validity is not an all or nothing project but is rather something that an analysis can have more or less of and that can wane or grow over time as work in the field progresses (Gee, 2005). Especially coming from the social constructionist standpoint that I do, it's also important to acknowledge the inter-subjectivity (Chase, 2005) of discourse analytic work. As Gee (2005) explains, it is neither desirable nor possible that I would be able to extract all subjectivity from my consideration of this data:

Just as language is always reflexively related to situations so that both make each other meaningful, so, too, a discourse analysis, being itself composed in language, is

reflexively related to the “language-plus-situation” it is about. The analyst interprets his or her data in a certain way and those data so interpreted, in turn, render the analysis meaningful in certain ways and not others. (p.113)

As a researcher, my own background, beliefs and perceptual lenses are undoubtedly influential in this work. As Maxwell (2005) writes, referencing the statement of the qualitative researcher Hess, “Validity in qualitative research is not the result of indifference, but of integrity” (p. 108). Indeed I am anything but indifferent about the topic of this study. As conveyed in my opening chapter, I come to this topic with a significant degree of personal passion and background as a lesbian woman. Having reached my forties now and having been “out” since my mid-twenties, I have accumulated a substantial layering of my own experience living as a marginalized sexual minority in the United States at this particular time in history. In addition to my own sexual identity, my subjectivity as a researcher includes other qualities about me including but not limited to the facts that I am white, I grew-up economically and educationally privileged and I am drawn to professional and scholarly work that pushes for social equality and justice.

Though I am not indifferent to this topic, as a scholar and educator, I place a deep value on my integrity and have drawn on that integrity to maximize the validity of my conclusions in this study. As Maxwell (2005) emphasizes, it is evidence that ultimately rules out threats to validity, not methods. In my analyses of the collected data, I have employed the following techniques to draw upon the evidence behind my conclusions:

- *Rich & converging data*: Because I was working with nearly 10-hours of verbatim transcript of the dialogue sessions, this detailed and varied body of evidence allowed me to check and weigh my conclusions against multiple discursive instances between and within individual participants as well as all four dialogue sessions. Throughout my analytic process, as I coded and wrote memos, I habitually returned to the actual

transcripts to see if the data would confirm or deny a conclusion I had formed. James Gee (2005) calls this convergence, stating that an analysis of discourse is more “trustworthy” if the answers to its guiding questions repeatedly lead back to the same conclusions.

- *Comparison across sessions:* Since this study involved a multicase intervention (multiple episodes of interaction at four different times), it afforded the opportunity to compare discursive patterns and interactive achievements between one session to the next, and across all four sessions (Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994).
- *Reflective journaling about discrepant evidence:* While transcribing the video-taped sessions, I employed a routine practice of reflective journaling where I recorded my assumptions and emerging awarenesses, especially those that were not getting addressed through other memos or my formal analyses. My priority with this journaling process was to capture instances of discrepant data and exceptions to my conclusions. When such exceptions arose I would bring these to my next meeting with my advisor where I received her feedback and suggestions as to whether and how I needed to modify my conclusions (Maxwell, 2005; Wolcott, 1990).
- *Participants’ orientation:* In my interpretation of excerpts of talk I have attempted to show not only how I, as the analyst, drew meaning from a particular interaction but more importantly how the participants themselves recognized the same meaning. Examples include Eli’s repeated acknowledgment of being shocked by June’s response, and Yolanda’s recognition that people needed to know what a Brazilian was in order to understand her story. In my analysis of these excerpts, it was important to show Eli’s own recognition that his underlying expectation was not met, and

Yolanda's backtracking to ensure understanding before making the point of her story.

As Potter and Wetherell (1987) explain, findings are notably less trustworthy if participants' own orientations do not validate the interpretations of the analyst.

- *Quasi-statistics*: To support my claims that storytelling was prevalent in my data, and more so during certain participant structures than others, an inherently quantitative claim, I employed a validity test recommended by Becker (1970). Specifically, I utilized simple descriptive statistics and graphs (Chapter Five) to illustrate these claims (Maxwell, 2005).
- *Linguistic details*: According to Gee (2005), validity of a discourse analysis is partially determined by whether or not “the analyst is able to argue that the communicative functions being uncovered in the analysis are linked to grammatical devices that manifestly can and do serve the [specific functions they are ‘designed to carry out], according to the judgments of ‘native speakers’ of the social languages involved and the analyses of linguists” (p.114). In other words, one aspect of validity in my analyses depends upon whether I have leveraged the linguistic devices of Ochs and Capps' narrative dimensions as well as Tannen's evidences of frame to plausibly support my arguments. I myself cannot make this determination, and will entrust it to others more expert than I for the time being. As mentioned earlier, I anticipate the validity and contribution of this study to grow and metamorphose as I and others are able to build upon this effort.

Social Cognitive Methodology: Pre- and Post-Intervention Attitudinal Surveys

In accordance with the traditional psychological notions that prejudice is derived from internal cognitive schemas, as discussed in Chapter Two, my secondary mode of data collection involved the use of a compilation of pre/post questionnaires to address the following research question:

Research Question 4:

- 4) Is there a difference in pre-dialogue and post-dialogue attitudes or beliefs of heterosexuals about homosexuals and homosexuality?

This basic experiment involves a mixed between and within groups design with two independent variables of intervention (dialogue group) versus comparison (survey only) and pre-intervention versus post-intervention (time). Participants were randomly assigned to either the intervention or the comparison groups once they had registered to participate.

My fourth research question rests on the traditional social psychological definition of a prejudice as an internally-held negative attitude, a cognitive schema existing at or below the threshold of consciousness. As described in Chapter Two, when activated, the unexamined cognitive schema compels the prejudice person to evaluate the object of their prejudice as fundamentally different from and inferior to themselves. Such evaluations are detected through validated and reliable attitudinal scales such as the Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale for Heterosexuals (LGB-KASH) and the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gays (ATLG-R3) used in this study. If the dialogue intervention employed in this study were to engage the cognitive change processes theorized by the aforementioned theories on prejudice reduction and transformational learning, then the post-dialogue responses of those who

participated in the intervention may demonstrate change as compared to the survey-only participants.

Approach to Quantitative Collection and Analysis

Attitude and belief questionnaire. Once a potential participant agreed to a phone call for further explanation, the enclosed “Phone Checklist” (Appendix D) was utilized. If, after this phone call, the potential volunteer expressed interest in continuing in the project (and they met the recruitment criteria of age, sexual orientation, and acceptance of the parameters of informed consent as explained), then they were formally registered for the study and given the internet link to complete the pre-survey. Once all participants were registered, they were randomly assigned to the dialogue or comparison group. The survey packet included the LGB-KASH and selected items from the Attitudes Toward Lesbians & Gays instrument (described below, and see Appendix F for actual scales).

Having completed initial phone call and submitted baseline survey packet via the internet, dialogue group participants were contacted once more to remind them of the date and time for the first dialogue session. Once dialogues had concluded, following the fourth session, all participants were once again invited via email to complete the online post assessment. Both groups completed and submitted their surveys through the same SSL encrypted online format, for both pre- and post-administrations. Finally, once ICG received their submitted post-survey responses, participants were mailed a check for the incentive payment.

The survey instruments (See Appendix F for actual instrument):

- 1) The Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale for Heterosexuals (LGB-KASH) (Worthington et al., 2005).

This 28-item Likert-type instrument has yielded strong initial evidence of reliability and validity in measuring multiple dimensions of heterosexual attitudes about

homosexuality including: internalized affirmativeness, civil rights attitudes, knowledge, religious conflict, and hate. For the purposes of this study, the knowledge subscale has been removed, leaving 23 items from this instrument.

2) Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gays- Revised (ATLG-R3) (Herek, 1998).

This Likert-type instrument was designed and validated for use with adult heterosexuals in the United States, to assess affective responses to homosexuality and to gay men and lesbians. This scale has undergone extensive factor analyses and validity testing. Per Herek's (1998) recommendation, in order to allow for comparison of responses about gay men to responses about lesbians, the following three items were selected from the ATG subscale and presented twice, once in reference to gay men and a second time in reference to lesbians.

- Sex between two men is just plain wrong.
- Male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men. (Reverse scored)
- I think male homosexuals are disgusting.

3) The Feeling Thermometer was used to measure feelings or affective response toward LGBQ people, and has been used extensively in other studies (Haddock, Zanna & Esses, 1993; Herek, 2002). Scoring: Continuous variable, Scores of 0-100, with higher numbers indicating more positive feelings.

The quantitative research question in this study looked at the effect of the dialogue intervention on attitudes and feelings. In order to answer this question, a series of mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were performed to compare the baseline and post-dialogue survey responses of both the intervention and comparison groups. The mixed ANOVA is used to compare independent groups across a repeated measure. Statistical tests are based on accepting or rejecting a null hypothesis of no difference between two values (Hinton, 2004). Data analysis was conducted for this study using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 16) (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). Statistical significance was determined by an alpha of .05 or less (two-tailed). Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were calculated and reported. Results and limitations are discussed.

Reliability and validity. Issues of validity were addressed in the following ways.

Measurement validity was insured through the use of previously tested instruments. The LGB-KASH and the ATLG have undergone exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, convergent and divergent validity testing, and have evidenced strong test-retest reliability and internal consistency. Furthermore, the LGB-KASH has evidenced a low correlation with a social desirability scale. Quantitative data collection employed methods that insure confidentiality of respondents to reduce social desirability and experimenter demand bias. Participants completed the quantitative surveys electronically and anonymously without being asked to provide identifying information. To control for selection bias, an experimental design was used to randomly assign participants to intervention and comparison groups. Some self-selection bias does appear to exist in volunteers who chose to participate in this project. To address history effects, measures were given at approximately the same time to dialogue participants before and after the dialogue participation, and to the comparison group participants.

Chapter Five: Findings – The Emergence of Frame of Reference Through Narrative

In this chapter I describe the types of interactional contexts in which frames-of-reference-in-story emerged during The Straight Talk Dialogues, as well as the range of narrative characteristics with which they manifested. These findings respond to my first and second research questions. Important to keep in mind throughout this chapter is the conceptual linkages I introduced (Chapter Three) between Mezirow's (2000) frame of reference and Ochs and Capps' (2001) storytelling, upon which I will elaborate extensively later in this chapter. For now, the basic connection I have drawn is the operationalization of all five narrative dimensions as windows through which to view the relative stability of a speaker's frame of reference, and the particular dimension of moral stance as keenly useful for revealing glimpses of the frame of reference itself. As such, while it is practically certain that frames of reference do show up in dialogue outside of episodes of storytelling, I have elected to examine only those instances when frames of reference appear within conversational narrative, as broadly defined in Chapter Four. Given my interest in dialogue as an intervention to reduce prejudice, I made this analytical choice based on my adoption of Ochs' and Capps' theory that storytelling of the particular kind they call "emergent" is a principle interactive mechanism by which we learn, grow and change.

I will first describe the facilitator's approach to leading The Straight Talk Dialogues, and the various activities she used to engage members of the group around the overall topic of homosexuality. I present an analysis of how often and how much storytelling occurred within each of these interactive contexts. In this way, I demonstrate that storytelling appeared only within interactive contexts possessing a particular set of social conditions which I identify and describe. I will then use Ochs and Capps' five dimensions of narrative to exemplify the ways in which frames-of-reference-in-story showed up in dialogue as either stable or shifting.

The Facilitated Atmosphere of the Straight Talk Dialogues

Most of the decision-making about how to structure the discussion during the sessions and how to frame any facilitative prompts was Leilani's. On multiple occasions during the actual sessions, Leilani was transparent with group members about her thinking process in the moment by sharing, for example, that she was trying to determine what to do next, that she was confused by so many potential directions to take, and that she typically did not plan her facilitation in advance but preferred to be more spontaneous and responsive to directions that group members wanted to take. Leilani openly described her approach to facilitating dialogue as nontraditional on the first evening with the group, acknowledging right away her affinity for bringing in physical activity to the dialogue process. In her own words that first evening, Leilani explained her facilitation style:

And I've found in the years that I've been doing dialogue that I like the, the dialogue that caters to different learning styles. So some of you might want to just read on the internet. Some of you might want to get in there and get involved somehow. Some of you are visual. Some of us like hearing things. So the dialogue that I, that I hope that we'll, we'll practice is that we might get up and move around. You know, we might maybe do some journaling or draw some pictures. We might, I actually, we might listen to music. You know just to, just to break it up a little bit because eight hours of sitting on your butt, I think might not be conducive to anything. So, and to the, I'm going to ask you to be patient because some people, if we did do an exercise where we draw pictures, and some people might not like that. So we'll do hopefully a little bit of everything so that we can kind of pass it around. You know find something that you do enjoy. (Leilani, Facilitator, dialogue session 1)

Leilani's overall approach to the facilitation of the dialogue sessions was one in which she intended to de-center herself as the authority or leader as much as possible, in part by encouraging participants to develop ownership over both process and content. She stated on multiple occasions that she was intentional to not interject too much of her own story or perspective into the conversation, implying that the stories and perspectives of participants were

the priority focus. In addition, in several instances throughout all the sessions she solicited ideas from the collective about what might be the next question or prompt, or the next scenario during the enactment activity. Leilani made it evident to group members, through her open, invitational style of facilitation that she viewed them as experts on their own experience and that she saw herself as their equal and peer, not holding any “right” answers herself on the topic at hand.

Leilani’s opening activity, which she called “the agreements” set the stage for this type of nonhierarchical, inclusive and egalitarian environment. On the first evening of the dialogues, she introduced a collection of guidelines, inviting members of the group to add anything they thought was missing from a list she had posted on the wall. Her list of agreements included the following:

- Confidentiality
- Take care of yourself
- I-statements
- Collective learning
- Practice the skills of dialogue
- All viewpoints equal and important

Leilani went down the list item by item offering a brief definition of each concept and how she viewed it as applicable to these sessions. On a couple of the items, such as collective learning and the skills of dialogue, she presented a more detailed explanation than for the other items. She wound down her discussion of the agreements with an acknowledgment that dialogue is an:

...emotional process. And all topics, including this topic, have an emotional component. So what we want to do is create, by having these agreements, create a safe container where we can express our feelings as well as our thoughts. And share our experiences as well as the knowledge that we have about a topic. So it, it's really an adventure. (Leilani, Facilitator, dialogue session 1)

It is evident by the nature of Leilani's proposed agreements that she viewed the dialogue process in particular ways, namely as an egalitarian community of learners (Rogoff, 1994), with a co-constructed culture, on a journey of discovery together. Though invited to add to or amend her list, none of the group members had any additions to suggest; they all expressed comfort and willingness with the list as it was. From that point on, the opening agreements were not explicitly revisited again throughout the dialogues, though their principles were continuously reflected in Leilani's style of interacting with the group and her subsequent selection of interactive activities.

The Primary Participant Structures Employed in the Dialogues

The overall patterns of how people interact with one another, including and especially verbally, in a learning environment have been described as "participant structures" and are considered by scholars to be highly influential in both formal and informal settings (Philips, 1972). Participant structures impact any learning environment by the way in which they organize the social norms and expectations for people to engage with each other and the topic at hand. Depending upon an individual's familiarity and comfort level with a given participant structure, s/he will be more or less inclined to invest themselves in the activity taking place. In order to understand how and under what social conditions frames of reference regarding homosexuality came to light in The Straight Talk Dialogues, it was critical to elucidate the various types of participant structures that occurred and to examine these in terms of their capacity to encourage or not encourage the emergence of storytelling. Practically speaking, such an understanding is key to identifying the ways in which dialogue as an educational intervention may be employed as a forum that facilitates shifting frames of reference on this and other topics.

In the quotation above, Leilani transparently reflected on her predilection for facilitating participant structures of dialogue that are seen as "nontraditional" and involve alternating elements of physical activity with talk-based interaction. Through my analysis of the sessions, I identified a number of various participant structures employed by the facilitator to engage group members and examined the extent to which each occurred across all four dialogue sessions. Figures 3-6 below shows how much (percentage) of each dialogue session was devoted to each of the identified participant structures.

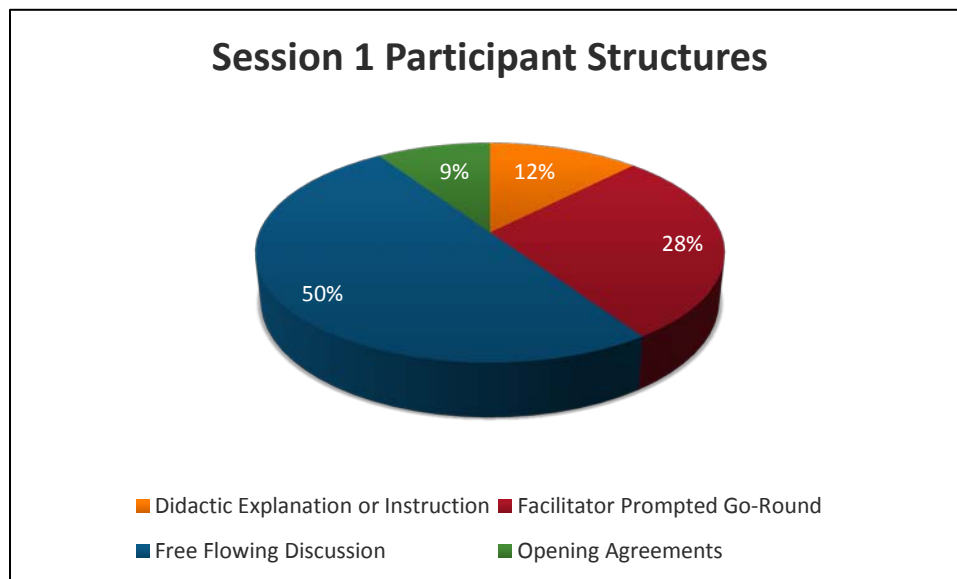


Figure 3. Participant structures by percentage for session 1

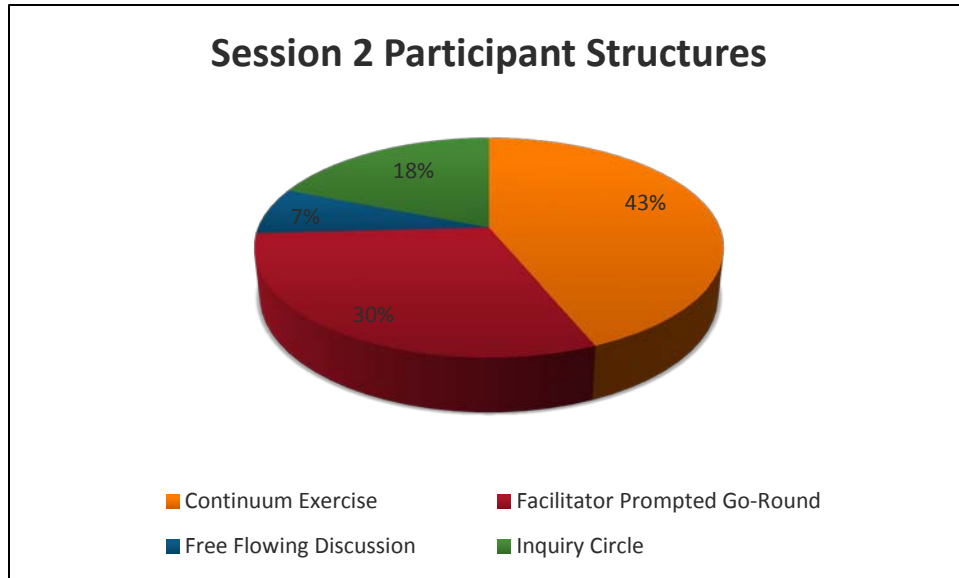


Figure 4. Participant structures by percentage for session 2

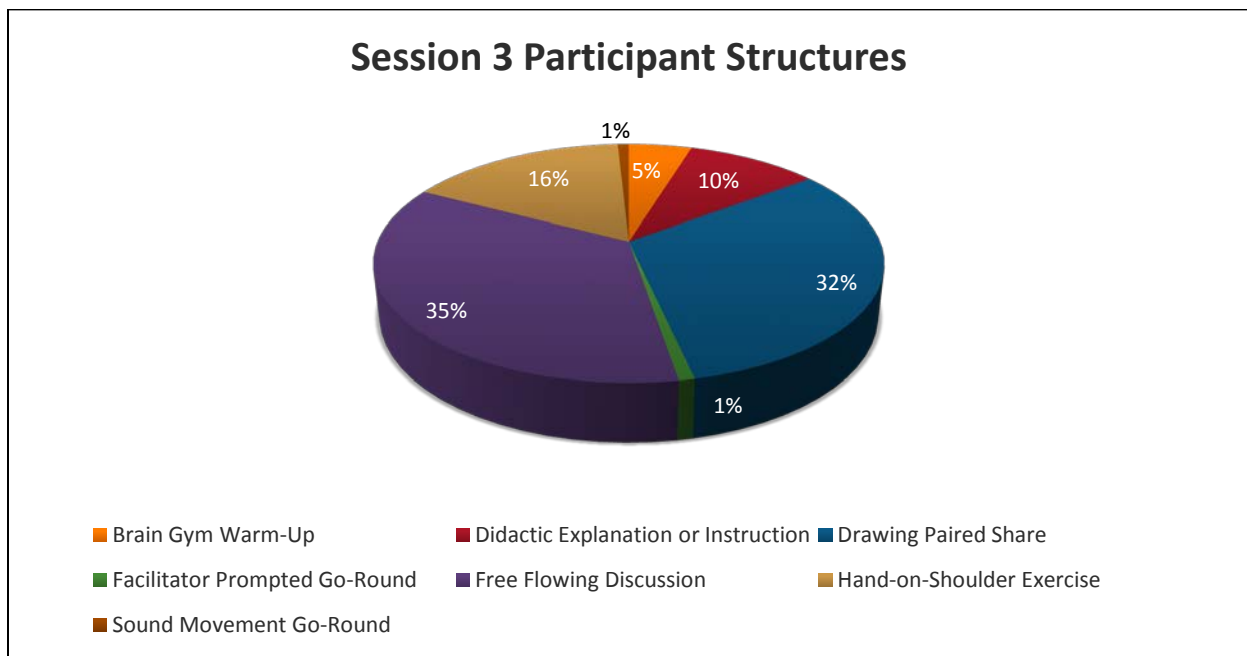


Figure 5. Participant structures by percentage for session 3

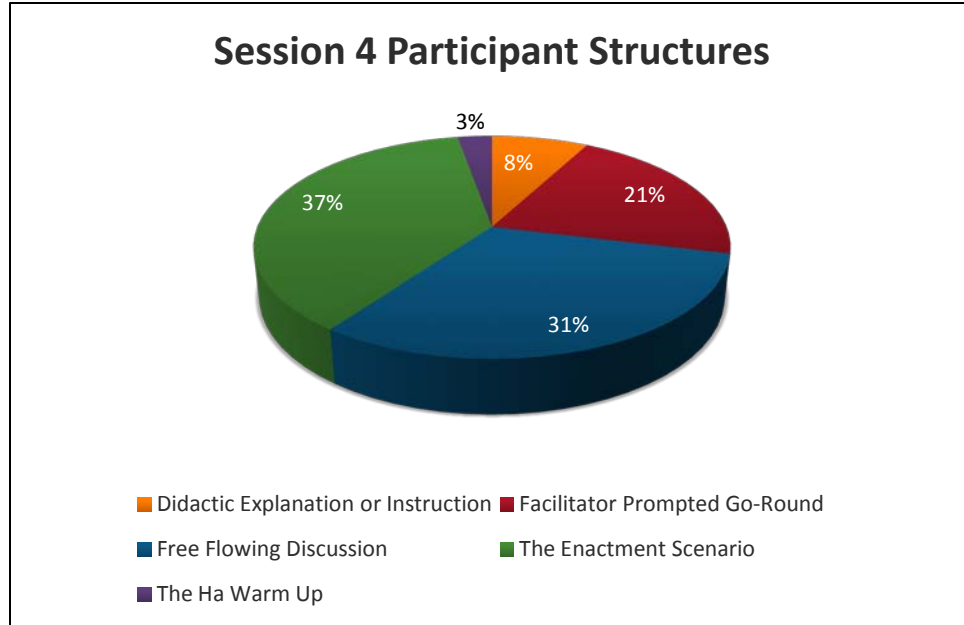


Figure 6. Participant structures by percentage for session 4

Additionally, I systematically identified the instances of storytelling across each of the various participant structures, and have shown these frequencies in Figure 7 below. In accordance with my conceptual framework, I used established criteria for defining storytelling including 1) a sequenced order, not necessarily linear, of two or more events, and 2) a moral or affective stance (Razfar, 2012; Ochs and Capps, 2001). Then, after identifying the main story from the primary teller, I expanded the code to include surrounding questions, comments and discussion from co-tellers that was directly connected to the initial telling so as to capture the interactive co-construction of narrative that is of core interest to this analysis. Also to note, I elected to eliminate from the analysis stories which appeared to be ‘made up’ or inauthentic to the teller (this applied only during the enactment activity and is explained further below). This examination of the dialogue activities demonstrates that some ways of organizing talk and interaction occasioned the emergence of storytelling more than others.

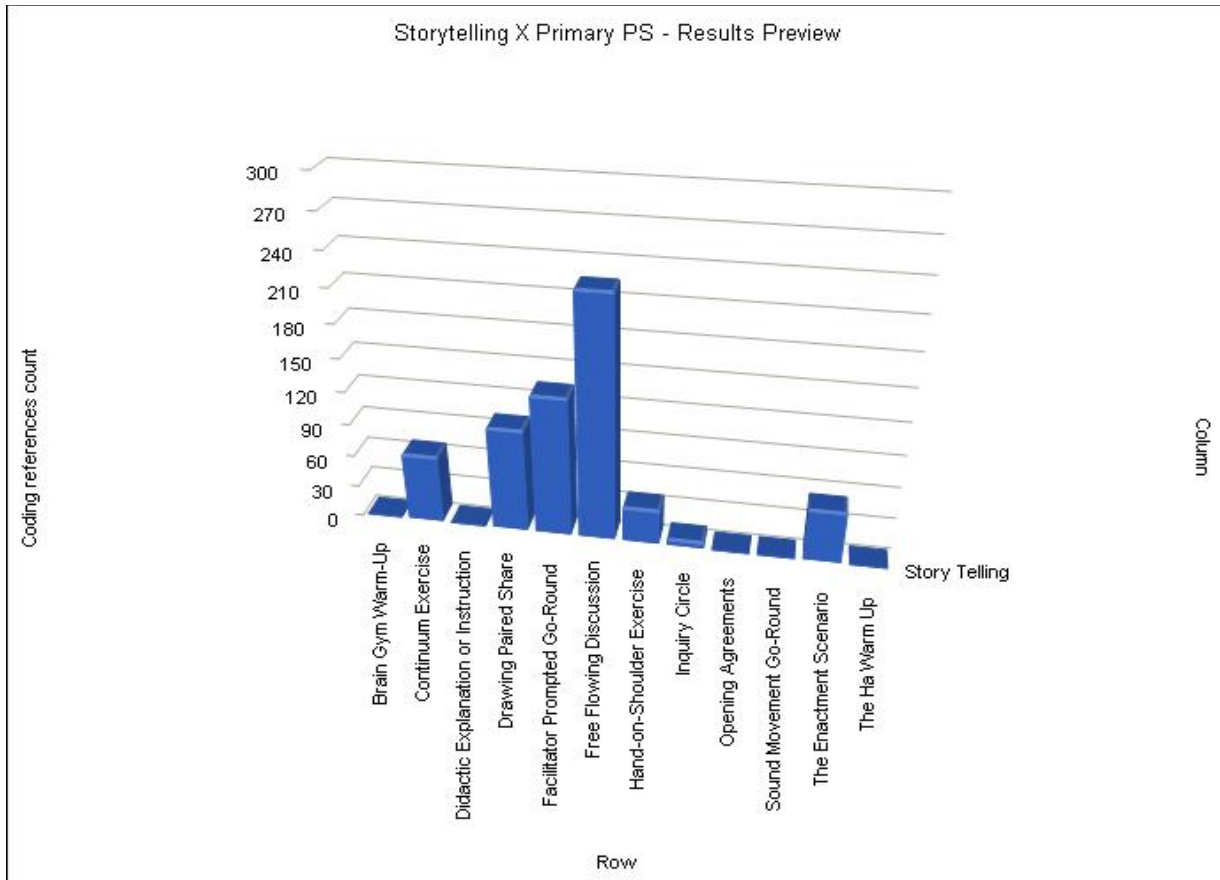


Figure 7. Coding reference count (Y-axis) of storytelling that took place within each participant structure (X-axis).

In the following sections I describe each of the participant structures shown along the X-axis in Figure 7 (omitting the opening agreements since those were described earlier). I have organized these descriptions according to those that either included or did not include the emergence of storytelling.

Participant structures that did not involve storytelling. A few of the facilitated activities Leilani employed were intentionally utilized not for the purpose of generating discourse on the topic of homosexuality but rather served as ‘warm ups’ or ‘ice breakers’ to promote relaxation and ease among the group (i.e., Brain Gym™, the ‘ha circle’). In other instances (i.e., the sound and movement playback), Leilani utilized an activity as a means for bringing the group to closure quickly, while eliciting the voice of each group member equally.

Because these opening and closing activities held purposes secondary to the focus of the dialogue intervention, however appropriately useful for their intended purposes, they yielded little to no occurrence of narrative expression. Each of those activities is described below.

- *Brain Gym™*. This one-time activity served as an opening "warm up" on evening three of the dialogues. Asking the group to stand up in a circle in the middle of the room, Leilani led them through a series of physical movements, called BrainGym™ (in which she had previously received specialized training) designed to support integrative, clear, connected thinking for children and adults.
- *Sound & Movement PlayBack*. For this very brief exercise (approximately 3 minutes in duration), which served to close out the third session, Leilani asked group members to go around the circle, all standing in the middle of the room, and share a sound and corresponding movement to represent what they were feeling in that moment. After each person shared their sound and movement, the group as a whole would mimic that sound and motion.
- *The 'Ha Circle' Warm-up*. This one-time activity occurred early on Night Four, as Leilani elected to utilize it to energize the group. This participant structure involved everyone standing in a circle and then one person clapping their hands together to point to another person in the circle, saying "Ha!" Whoever was pointed to would then point in the same way to another person in the circle, saying "ha!," and so on.

A fourth of the interactive structures, the enactment activity, has been classified here as not involving storytelling on a very different basis from the three above. Whereas the intended purpose of the enactment activity appears to have been, similar to the majority of other activities in the dialogue series, to draw out disclosure and discussion of the topic at hand, its hypothetical nature resulted in it being a poor conductor of storytelling as defined for the purposes of this study. First, to describe the enactment activity, this one-time participant structure was employed by Leilani only on the fourth evening. She introduced the activity as follows:

So if you're willing tonight I, this it's a, I call it enactment and you know it's not really role play. It's not really theater, but it combines all of those things where we step into roles and we try those on and we become somebody and we, we can interact with someone else or the group. And it's a, it works because you can do things physical, you don't have to talk necessarily. But it also gives us a chance to explore some edgy stuff without, you know kind of as a character, you know as a costume and yet it's real as well.

You can become someone else and try that on and step out of it. (Leilani, Facilitator, dialogue session 4)

As it went, Leilani asked Walter if he would be willing, and he agreed, to have the group enact a workplace scenario he shared the previous week about his challenges in managing the team he supervises which included one gay male employee.

Even though instances of storytelling (by the applied minimal definition used of a sequence of events and a moral/affective stance) *did* occur throughout the interaction of characters during this activity, I chose not to include these as examples of storytelling for purposes of this study because, by nature of the activity, I could not know the extent to which the ‘actors’ were representing their own actual experiences and perspectives versus contrived, imagined experiences and perspectives (Lazarton, 2009). Even though storytelling by other definitions may have occurred, it was intentionally contrived by ‘actors’ for the purposes of the hypothetical scenario and was not dependably authentic to anyone present whether primary tellers or co-tellers. In fact I had reasonable cause to believe, based on comments made by Walter and Bernard during the debrief of the activity, that they were intentionally enacting statements or strategies in the boss/employee scenario that they did not view as realistic choices they would make in ‘real life.’ Furthermore, in Leilani’s explanation of the enactment activity she encouraged actors to “exaggerate” feelings and actions for the purpose of making them noticeable to fellow actors and the observers. For these reasons, I chose not to interpret stories that emerged during this phase of the dialogues as meeting my definition of frame-of-reference-in-story.

With the possible exception of the enactment activity, the above participant structures were not intended to be direct instigators of dialogue on the topic, and as such would not be

expected to invite meaningful instances of storytelling. Instead Leilani was utilizing these structures to achieve secondary but important group effects such as focus, levity, comfort, and closure. In contrast, the remaining majority of participant structures were effectively chosen by Leilani as a tool for inviting a type of critically reflective discourse on the topic of homosexuality, which included an abundance of storytelling.

Participant structures in which storytelling occurred. In this section, beyond describing each of the participant structures where storytelling occurred, I present my interpretations about the social conditions present with each of these structures that facilitated this emergence. Specifically, using illustrative examples I argue that the particular qualities of *structure, solicitation, safety, and authenticity* were important for occasioning the storytelling that occurred. To begin, the two most prevalent participant structures were free-flowing discussion and the facilitator-prompted go-round, both of which took place multiple times during all four of the dialogue sessions.

Free-flowing discussion. The free-flowing discussion mode of participation includes the segments of group interaction when the conversation was open and unstructured. The interaction under this participant structure most resembled ordinary exchanges in casual social interaction. While these segments may have begun with an initial prompting question to the overall group from the facilitator, or a group member, they are distinguished by the open and shifting focus which departed from a strict 'responding' to the original question. Leilani participated at times in the free-flowing discussion with a prompt or a clarifying question to an individual or to the group, and at other times by "taking off her facilitator hat" and sharing personal perspective or experience.

Facilitator-prompted Go-Round. In this participant structure, which occurred at least once during all but the third session, the facilitator posed a specific question and/or gave a specific prompt to which the group members were asked to respond. The format for participating was going around the circle, one by one or in some cases 'popcorn style (not necessarily in seating order) and sharing one's response. For the most part, questions or comments from anyone other than the current speaker were neither invited nor expected during these go-rounds, even though some significant back and forth did variably occur. The implicit expectation seemed to be to hear from everyone with little to no interruption in the sequential turn-taking, but when questions to the speaker were asked either by Leilani herself or another participant, the flow of the group's attention easily returned back to whoever had not yet spoken once the speaker responded. The following is a list of all of the facilitator prompts employed by Leilani, in her own words and in the order they occurred across all the dialogue sessions:

- Session 1: *And something that you appreciate about your life and I would say about yourself or your life*
- Session 1: *What specifically drew you to have a conversation about sexual orientation? We could be talking about war. We could be talking about world peace. We could be talking about the economic system. We're talking about sexual orientation. So, what drew you to spend time on that topic?*
- Session 2: *I'm just thinking to say, to share what your week has been like in the context of our topic, gays and lesbians. Is there something that you reflected on from last time? Is there something that happened during the week?*
- Session 2: *Why don't we have everybody say something about what they're leaving with, how they're feeling right now or a comment about you know what, what we shared."*
- Session 4: *...who wants to start just for a few sound bites of anything that's come up since last Thursday and if, if not just how are you tonight?*
- Session 4: *Um, whoever wants to start, just kind of give your summary from the heart about your experience here."*

- Session 4: *Just a, so how about if each person throws one word into the circle* [gesturing as if placing an object in the middle] *and then we'll stir it up* [motioning as if stirring a pot] *and we'll lift it up and have it fall on all of us* [lifting her arms above head and then a raining down motion]. *So just one, one word to stick in.*

Continuum Activity. This is a participant structure guided by Leilani during Session Two only, in which group members were asked to stand up and physically locate themselves in the room, along an imaginary continuum, according to a question she posed. For each of the following four prompts, she first stated the prompt and articulated a description of each end of the imaginary continuum, and then asked participants to place themselves along the continuum:

1. How much agreement or disagreement do you feel is in this group around the topic of gay and lesbians?
2. To what extent do you support gay marriage?
3. To what extent are you comfortable visualizing or imagining same-sex sexuality?
4. How much exposure have you had in your life thus far, to the actual homosexual community?

For each of the four instances of this activity, each group member took their turn in speaking to why they positioned themselves physically on the continuum where they did. In this way, this participant structure became very similar in design to the facilitator-prompted go-round structure discussed above. The added factor that came with the continuum activity, which no other participant structure possessed in the same manner, was the physical, visual comparison among group members. Also, to some extent in each iteration of this participant structure, after group members had claimed their physical placement along the imaginary line in the room, a back and forth dialogue emerged that closely resembled the participant structure of free-flowing discussion. In this regard we begin to see that the participant structures utilized in The Straight

Talk Dialogues are not necessarily mutually exclusive but rather share some features and characteristics in common, a point on which I will elaborate later.

Inquiry Circle. This participant structure was also a one-time activity on the second evening of dialogue. Leilani labeled it as "Inquiry Circle" in introducing it, and explained that she would start by asking an open-ended question of the person to her right. After that person shared their answer, then that person was to come up with a new open-ended question to ask the person on their right, and so on around the circle. Leilani posed her question to June thus launching the inquiry circle and it proceeded exactly as she instructed with each person in turn responding to the question asked and then asking a different question to the next person. In this structuring of the interaction, because group members were the ones generating questions for each other, it became possible to hear an individual's perspectives not only in their response to the question asked of them, but also in their crafting of the question they then asked of the person to their right.

Drawing Paired Share. In this one-time activity facilitated by Leilani on the third evening, group members were first asked to make a drawing with the provided blank paper and markers, to the prompt of "What is your tension?" After approximately 10 minutes of drawing time, they were asked to find a partner and discuss their drawings. Lastly, after another 10 minutes of sharing in pairs, Leilani asked the group to go around the circle, each person holding up their partner's drawing and sharing with the larger group about their partner's depicted "tension."

Hand-on-Shoulder Activity. In this exercise, group members were asked once again to stand and to physically move toward and place a hand on the shoulder of a person of their choice, according to the prompt provided (listed below). This participant structure took place

immediately following the above Drawing Paired Share activity only once, on the third evening of the dialogues. Once group members had placed themselves as they deemed appropriate, Leilani asked them first to look around and observe the placement of hands. She prompted them to notice whether anyone had two or more hands placed on their shoulder, and then asked each person in turn to share their reasoning for choosing the person they did. The activity was conducted twice, using the following prompts:

1. *So put one hand on the shoulder of the person who seems the most different from you in terms of their attitudes, experience, exposure to the gay and lesbian community.*
2. *How about, who here would you like to confront about their position on gay/lesbian community? [After a long pause, she rephrases]...How about rephrasing it? Who here, Put your hand on the shoulder of someone that you would like to dig a little deeper and understand something else about how they think or feel.*

Characteristics of Story-Inclusive Participant Structures

The Straight Talk Dialogues involved an amalgamation of various participant structures selected by the primary facilitator Leilani, who most often selected these activities without predetermination but rather in the moment, responsively to what she thought would inspire the group to “dig deeper”. It is interesting to note that Leilani never once overtly asked participants to tell a story or recount any actual experiences, and yet, consistent with the findings of narrative analysts for decades now (Johnstone, 2003; Labov, 1972), humans naturally gravitate to the use of story as a primary mode for making meaning of their life experiences. What are the characteristics that make a facilitated participant structure inviting of storytelling? My early analysis eliminated a few of Leilani’s facilitated structures (Brain Gym™, sound-and-movement playback, the ‘ha circle’) for the practical reason that narrative telling requires that potential tellers be given the discursive space to use their language to reflect on their own experience.

With these ‘ice breaker’ or ‘closure’ activities, such reflection was neither the result nor the intention. Furthermore, I argued that in order to encourage storytelling that is grounded in one’s actual experiences, the structures of participation need to promote authentic participation in which the tellers are using and claiming their own voices rather than acting as a hypothetical person in a contrived scenario, such as that which was the focus of the enactment activity.

The six facilitated arrangements of the dialogue described above, while each having a slightly different instruction or prompting invitation for group members, all resulted in the establishment of a particular kind of social space from which authentic stories emerged. The conditions of this social space were an open, relaxed, flexible, and highly supportive interpersonal environment, in which participants were actively encouraged, often stimulated, and at times supportively challenged, to reflect upon their own experience relative to the prompt. Most of the participant structures (with the exception of the free-flowing discussion) provided a focused entry point for group members to access their own experience and then to share about it. The facilitator-prompted go-round offered a focusing question to which each individual was compelled to respond when the group’s attention made its way around to their spot in the circle. Similarly, the inquiry circle offered a focusing question, this time generated by a peer and personalized to the respondent rather than a more general question from the facilitator. The drawing paired share gave the focus of one’s own drawing, along with the prompt of ‘What is the tension?’ around which participants could consider and shape their responses. And finally, the continuum and the hand-on-shoulder activities brought a physical dimension to participants’ orienting themselves to the verbal prompt. The continuum activity added a visual polarity by which participants could consider their own ‘position’ relative to their perceptions of their peers’

positions. The hand-on-shoulder activity created a supported structure by which participants could gently challenge one another and be challenged according to the prompts.

Once a participant structure had been put forth, each with its focusing prompt and Leilani's supportive, encouraging demeanor as container for what may follow, then the necessary social space for storytelling had been established. In my assessment, the elements of this social space as shared by each of these participant structures can be described as structure, solicitation, safety, and authenticity. My identification of these four themes grew out of repeated reviews of the video-taped sessions along with the dialogue transcripts, with an eye for the common interactional characteristics that were present when storytelling took place. I was able to identify plethora of evidence for the presence of these qualities both in my interpretations of the overall social dynamics present, as well as in the actual content of many group members' comments. Here I will explain how I am seeing each of these elements in the dialogue and give an example for each.

Structure. The prompt, as well as the physical framing of activities such as the continuum or the hand-on-shoulder activities, created a structure that helped participants focus and organize their own reflection and responses. There was much evidence in people's stories that they were responding to the question that had been asked, in telling the story they were telling, and that the phrasing of the prompting idea had influenced the formulation of their response. An example of this is seen in June's response to a prompt within the continuum activity in Session 2. When the group arranged themselves along the imaginary line across the room, in response to Leilani's fourth prompt from the list above (*How much exposure have you had in your life thus far, to the actual homosexual community?*), June positioned herself farther than anyone else at the end of the continuum representing extreme, life-long exposure and

comfort with the gay community. When it was her turn, she offered the following story:

1 June: I do have I think an answer and actually it's something I've thought about. And in
 2 my own family I think it's kudos to my parents right now. I was born in 67. My
 3 parents are, let's see Republican, Methodists, very religious parents. They started
 4 taking in kids, not really a foster situation but through our church they'd take in kind
 5 of wayward teenagers. And they took in Ralph when I was about 5 years old. I don't
 6 remember when he came to live with us. I kind of remember him leaving when I was
 7 about 6. A very early memory, I remember a birthday present he bought for me. He
 8 was kicked out of his house because he was gay. My parents took him in. My mom
 9 just didn't want to hear about it. You know, loved him, supported him, wanted to
 10 you know get him into college and do all the things that he needed for support. But
 11 at the same time, and she had an ongoing relationship with Ralph until he died. And
 12 I was tough on my mom because she was so judgmental against him, that's what I
 13 saw but that was my experience from 5 years old, that that was Ralph. He just liked
 14 men I don't remember knowing anything different, so generationally you know.
 15 And then in my own life I've known many people so lot's of experience probably has
 16 me to this point.

The built-in comparison of the continuum activity which called upon June to explicitly compare, through the physical locating of her body in the room, her own exposure and comfort level to that of others' in the group. In this telling June seemed to have a sense of pride around her position at the very end of the continuum, as the one in the group with the most exposure and greatest comfort level with gay people and homosexuality. I argue that June's attunement and sensitivity to this comparison (as well as the shifting in June's frame of reference regarding her mother's attitude toward Ralph) was facilitated by the structuring which Leilani gave to the activity and thus the discourse. Without this comparison between herself and her peers, June may not have had the same depth of insight arise about her own experiences.

Solicitation. Secondly, it was important that the framing of each participant structure included an actual solicitation, a perceptible question to which group members were being asked to respond. Especially with topics about which people are unaccustomed to talking, such as the one at hand, it seemed that being openly, explicitly, and repeatedly invited was critical. To

illustrate, a basic example from the first evening of dialogue shows Leilani's solicitation and Lily's story-inclusive response:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|--|
| 17 | Facilitator | |
| 18 | [to the group]: | What specifically drew you to have a conversation about |
| 19 | | sexual orientation? We could be talking about war. We |
| 20 | | could be talking about world peace. We could be talking |
| 21 | | about the economic system. We're talking about sexual |
| 22 | | orientation. So, what drew you to spend time on that |
| 23 | Lily: | Well, we, we have friends that are, are gay. And one has |
| 24 | | recently had a lot of vandalism done to her car and I |
| 25 | | thinks that, I think it's because she's gay, I think she's |
| 26 | | targeted. And it's really hurt her financially and it |
| 27 | | bothers me that they don't have the same rights, |
| 28 | | especially with what we've gone through, that a gay |
| 29 | | person doesn't have the same rights if they go into a |
| 30 | | coma or you know, whether they die. |

Safety. Thirdly, the element of group members feeling emotionally safe and interpersonally supported to respond with whatever was true for them cannot be underestimated in its value. An early example in the first dialogue session involved a story in which Yolanda was the primary teller after being asked a question by Lily:

- | | | |
|----|--------------|---|
| 31 | Lily: | And you don't <i>have</i> to answer it; I don't want to put |
| 32 | | you on the spot... |
| 33 | Yolanda: | Yah, no. I probably should just say, you know just, |
| 34 | | I'm trying to think of ways to say it so it doesn't sound |
| 35 | | horrible but, |
| 36 | Facilitator: | Well no please, just, [<i>Simultaneous with Genevieve</i> |
| | | <i>shrugging shoulders and shaking head</i>]. |
| 37 | Yolanda: | I know. |
| 38 | Bernard: | Just say it. |
| 39 | Facilitator: | What's your experience? How, how, |

40 Yolanda: Well I felt that, you know the times that I, during the
 41 time that I grew up you know it wasn't normal to be
 42 gay. It wasn't normal to be anything other than, you
 43 know a boy and a girl and have a heterosexual
 44 relationship. And Lisa was heterosexual until last
 45 year. So, she was almost engaged and then it broke up
 46 and then she just said, I've had it with boys, you know
 47 guys, I'm just not going to date guys anymore. And I
 48 said, well alright so just take a break for a little while.
 49 And, so then she started dating girls but she didn't
 50 really tell us for a couple months cause she didn't
 51 know how I would take it. And of course I, you know,
 52 I didn't take it well because of the way she told me.
 53 So, I think it's just that I've always had, and I, really
 54 other people don't bother me at all. You know, other
 55 homosexuals don't bother me, but with her, cause she's
 56 my daughter, I, I just had this thing that it wasn't
 57 normal to be that way. And maybe that's hypocritical
 58 because I'm okay with everybody else. And my
 59 cousin, my first cousin, his son is gay and when he
 60 came out, and we all knew he was gay from when he
 61 was a little boy, and when he finally felt comfortable
 62 enough to come out, his mother refused to accept him
 63 and his father did. And so his father had a relationship
 64 with him cause he said, I don't care what he is, he's my
 65 son and I love him and I want to have a relationship
 66 with him. But his mother couldn't accept him and she
 67 won't tell the family and you know, and I kinda feel
 68 the same way. I haven't told my parents. My in-laws
 69 are gone so I don't have to tell them. I haven't told my,
 70 my in-law, sister in-laws, brother in-laws. I've only
 71 told a select few friends... cause I don't know how
 72 they're going to react.

In this story about Yolanda's daughter Lisa coming out as a lesbian, we see several group members, including the facilitator Leilani, rallying to show support and encouragement for Yolanda to be honest about how she feels, regardless of how it may "sound." Given the fact that Yolanda admitted to being concerned about how she would be perceived around this topic, the safety that was created with this encouragement from the group was likely essential for her to feel comfortable enough to explore her experience through talk as she did.

Many group members commented throughout the dialogues that they felt supported by the norms of respect and nonjudgment, and several connected this quality of the social space to their ultimate ‘take aways’ during the final check out on the fourth evening. It is no surprise that, especially with a culturally sensitive topic of dialogue such as homosexuality, it would be critical for any participant structure utilized to foster this type of fundamental social acceptance. In regard to this particular study, I would argue further that the level of emotional and interpersonal safety established in this group also supported the telling of stories at the emergent end of the narrative continua. Participants in these dialogues seemed to feel increasingly comfortable departing from their well-formed accounts and venturing into self-exploration through the stories they told.

Authenticity. Lastly, the fourth ingredient I believe was necessary, based on my data, for the emergence of storytelling to occur is authenticity. By authenticity I am referring to a genuine presentation of self and one’s actual perspective in life, as opposed to someone altering, distorting, or withholding their true perspective. During the debriefing of the enactment activity, Walter mentioned on multiple occasions that he had allowed the conversation with Bernard (his employee in the role play) to take a direction that he probably would not have in a “real” management scenario, as exemplified in statements like these:

Walter: Yah. Although that’s not, not something I would ever do either. But for the role play I thought that it would serve a purpose...

Walter: And actually that’s not something I’ve come across but for the purpose of the exercise I needed some way to criticize his performance

In contrast, during the inquiry circle activity in a previous dialogue session, when Walter responded to the question asked of him by Yolanda, the exchange went as such:

73	Yolanda:	Okay let’s see, how differently would you feel if you
74		would feel differently at all, if you had a member of your

75 family who told you they were homosexual?

76 Walter: Um, it's really it's speculative. It's hard to say because you,
77 I can tell you how I hope I would react but everyone is,
78 especially after listening to people in this room, there's a lot
79 pain, a lot of trouble that you go through to get to the right
80 answer. And not having had that experience I can say it's
81 only speculation. I would hope that I would quickly
82 understand that what I really want for my kids hasn't
83 changed. I want them to be happy. And that's the ultimate
84 criteria for a father or mother to guide their kids no matter
85 what age. So if, if I understand that to be the ultimate
86 criteria then that determines how I should handle that,
87 which is that you know, I love you, I'll support you and you
88 know I will accept you and your partner because if you're
89 happy then that is what matters. That, that's the theoretical
90 though and I realize it's a lot harder than it sounds. So you
91 know that, that's ideally how I would handle that but you
92 never know until you are confronted with it, so.

While in both of Walter's reflections above he's referring to not actual experiences but hypothetical ones, he is being authentic in the second whereas he is acknowledging not having been authentic in the first. Whereas Georgakopoulou (2006) might refer to each of Walter's disclosures as "small stories," in the second excerpt we can hear him projecting his frame of reference regarding the parenting scenario in a manner consistent with his own identity. Yet in the first excerpt we see the evidence that Walter's participation in the enactment activity was, for him, playing the part of someone besides himself, a manager who would make different decisions than Walter himself would make. My argument for authenticity as a necessary element of dialogue that evokes storytelling is essentially that the solicitations need to orient participants to their own experiences and perspectives, thus maximizing the opportunity for critical self-reflection to promote meaning for their "real" lives.

In taking a sociocultural perspective on how learning occurs, in addition to seeking the actual emergence and transformation of frames-of-reference-in-story (to which I turn next), it

was important to first gain an understanding of the social context in which such stories emerged. As my data suggest, the occasioning of storytelling did not occur arbitrarily across the group's interactions, but instead showed up when certain qualities of social space were present. For educators and facilitators, a capacity for establishing these conditions in their dialogue work with groups is likely to be significant. In the next section, I present the results of my iterative analyses to illuminate how frames of reference actually showed up in discursive storytelling.

Characteristics of Frames-of-Reference-in-Story

Mezirow (2000) said that a frame of reference is a “meaning perspective” and defined it as "the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions" (p.16). One of Mezirow's central claims is that transformations in frames of reference are facilitated through discourse, through critically reflective conversation with others. Grounded in the conceptual linkages I introduced in Chapter Three, it has been my guiding assumption that Mezirow's transformable frame of reference is the interactional achievement that occurs by way of Ochs and Capps' emergent narrative, and which can be examined through the lens of their five dimensions. In the chart below (Table 3), I have attempted to develop and display these links between each of Ochs & Capps five dimensions, at each end of its continuum, and the characteristics of the corresponding frames of reference that were being expressed during the Straight Talk Dialogues. The shaded columns are material that I have added to Ochs' and Capps' (2001) original rendering. I will argue in the analysis to follow that each of Ochs and Capps' five narrative dimensions serves as a kind of barometer indicating the current degree of stability in the teller's frame of reference. Furthermore, beyond the information it offers regarding stability of the frame of reference, the particular narrative dimension of moral stance also serves

as a direct window into the actual content of the teller's frame of reference, that is, into their actual beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives on the topic.

As outlined in Table 3, frames of reference about the topic being discussed (in this case, homosexuality) manifested on the more well-wrought, cohesive, "performative" end of Ochs' and Capps' narrative continua when the teller was either, as I have dubbed, pre-transformation or post-transformation on the topic at hand, when their meaning perspective was stable and unchanging. In contrast, the narratives of tellers whose frames of reference were mid-transformation, or in flux, around a topic manifested toward the emergent end of the five dimensions. Important to remember is that Ochs and Capps describe these dimensions as continua, meaning that each dimension possesses not merely two poles but an entire range of possibilities between the poles, anywhere along which a given storytelling may fall.

As discussed earlier (Figure 7), the transcripts of The Straight Talk Dialogues revealed many instances of storytelling across all four sessions. Included among these narrative tellings were stories which fell along the entire dimensional continua, including stories which I was able to characterize unambiguously at each pole on all five dimensions as well as stories falling somewhere in the middle along one or more of the dimensions. That is to say, my review of the transcripts uncovered stories containing frames of reference that were extremely stable, frames of reference that were undergoing significant shifting, and frames of reference with a varying combination of stability and shifting showing up. Next I will describe how each of these qualities appeared in the stories participants told.

Dimensions	Possibilities (Performative Narrative)	Stable Frame of Reference (Pre / Post Transformation)		Possibilities (Emergent Narrative)	Shifting Frame of Reference (Mid - Transformation)
Moral Stance	Certain, constant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-Transformation: reflecting and perpetuating the moral premises of socialization and cultural messages as if given; unquestioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-Transformation: inclusive, differentiating, permeable (open to other viewpoints), critically reflective of assumptions, emotionally capable of change & integrative of experience (from Mezirow, 2000,p.19) 	→ Uncertain, fluid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty over what is “good” or “right”; moral claims are tentative at most Few assertions; many questions that seek perspective from others Reflect a sense of being torn between once-accepted, unquestioned social/cultural viewpoints & more recent ‘unconventional’ beliefs
Linearity	Closed temporal & causal order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest the teller’s perception of logic, rationale, sequence, and order in their perspective Consistent causal, explanatory links expressed Reflect a relative sense of peace and contentment in one’s own interpretations 		→ Open temporal & causal order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest the teller’s confusion and relative perceived lack of logic, rationale, sequence, and order Causal, explanatory links vary in consistency and may contradict other links made earlier in the same telling Reflect a sense of restlessness and discontentment in one’s own interpretations
Embeddedness	Detached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A securely-delivered, ‘stand-alone’ statement Identifiable and distinguishable amidst surrounding conversation 		→ Embedded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerges across many conversational turns; may be not easily decipherable from surrounding conversation Requires piecing together to identify a coherent belief/attitude
Tellability	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects a personal confidence in this perspective as worthy of telling, of interest to self and others Exuding a claim, identification with the perspective Perspectives reflect high degree of comfort and stability Teller appears motivated to tell 		→ Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect self-doubt, disorientation, disequilibrium, anxiety, uncertainty, confusion, illogical, contradictory Teller wavers in and out of emerging ‘objectivity’ The sense that teller would rather hear from others than present her/his point of view
Tellership	One active teller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relative resolve and lack of seeking new interpretations Seem to be ‘owned’ and belong to the teller 		→ Multiple active co-tellers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relative openness to the interpretations of others Seem to have been ‘collected’ in parts or pieces by the teller from others

Table 3. Narrative Dimensions & Possibilities with Corresponding Frames of Reference

NOTE. Adapted from Ochs & Capps (2001, p. 20). The large looping arrows depict the adaptive movement of growth between frames of reference which are stable then move to shifting and then regain stability in cyclical fashion over the course of adult development.

Frames of reference in stable, “performative” storytelling. Based on my examination of both *what* tellers told (content) and in *the way* they told their stories (structure and process), I am proposing that a narrative that revealed itself on the performative pole of Ochs' and Capps' dimensional continua was also a narrative that indicated the teller's stable and unchanging frame of reference. Beginning with the dimension of moral stance, stories on the stable, “performative” pole did, as Ochs and Capps (2001) assert, reflect a certain and constant disposition towards what is considered good or valuable by the teller. As discussed earlier, I argue that this ‘disposition’ of moral stance points to, or suggests, the actual frame of reference of the teller on the topic, their attitude or perspective about whatever they are telling. At this end of the continua, frames of reference were firm, confident and unwavering. I will return to the dimension of moral stance momentarily after addressing the rest of the dimensions, to discuss an additional critical insight it provides into frame of reference, at the performative end of the continuum.

Along the dimension of linearity, when a teller's story exhibited a closed temporal and causal order, the emergent frame of reference was imbued with a high degree of logical explanation and sequential order. This type of perspective suggested not only the teller's perception of orderly rationale in their belief or attitude, but also their confident equilibrium in this viewpoint as a dependable way of understanding their own experience through this story. The highly linear account seemed to reflect a relative sense of peace and satisfaction in the teller's understandings that undergirded the story itself.

Along the dimension of embeddedness, when a relatively detached narrative was told, a story that was stylistically and rhetorically distinct from the conversation around it, the frame of reference contained within was similarly distinct and stood apart from other frames of reference

in the surrounding conversation. That is not to say that the teller of a detached narrative was in disagreement or conflict with others necessarily, but rather that this teller was so secure with her/his perspective that this security came through in the separateness of their story from the surrounding discussion taking place. Often elaborately detailed in their description, these frames of reference seemed to introduce a relatively new, theretofore unexpressed point of view into the conversation.

Along the dimension of tellability, the stories that I characterized as being a highly tellable account – involving reportable events delivered in a rhetorically effective manner, by Ochs and Capps' (2001) definition – were also stories involving frames of reference in which the teller was personally confident and motivated to claim and to tell. Tellers of highly tellable narratives appeared not just comfortable and content with their perspectives on the topic, but seemed almost to exude a subtle pride or identification with their perspectives.

Along the dimension of tellership, when stories could be classified as having one primary, active teller, the frame of reference being expressed seemed to be actively “owned” by that teller. In other words, it was evident in their telling that the attitude or perspective they were expressing belonged to them and they acknowledged it as such. In addition, tellers of stories located here on the tellership continuum seemed not to be seeking any alternative or new interpretations for the frame of reference, but rather seemed to possess a relative resolve that the present interpretation was appropriate for now.

The most salient conceptual bridge I am proposing, based on my observation of the stories told during these dialogues, is that between Ochs and Capps' dimension of moral stance and Mezirow's frame of reference. Based on my multiple reviews and observations of the data, I believe the former points the analyst, or any careful listener, to the latter. In identifying the

moral stance within a narrative, one has located clues if not a direct statement about the teller's frame of reference. Just above I confirmed Ochs and Capps' assertion, for my data, that stories on the performative pole did indeed reflect a certainty and constancy in their moral stance. Here I extend that claim beyond the realm of linguistics into the realm of learning by suggesting that the contents of any given moral stance within a story served as indicators of whether and how much transformation the inherent frame of reference has undergone to arrive as the present telling.

To explain this further, in comparison with stories containing uncertain and more fluid moral stances (discussed later), the stories told by dialogue participants in which the moral stance was certain and constant manifested with one of two basic kinds of frames of reference, which I have dubbed pre-transformation and post-transformation. In the first case, a frame of reference that was pre-transformational was one where the certain, constant moral stance contained substantive explicit or implicit referencing to societal or cultural messaging around the topic. Specifically, in a pre-transformational story, the teller's construal seemed to lack any reference to actual experiences s/he had encountered, upon which s/he was basing their perspective, but was instead reliant upon the teller's understandings of cultural-wide assumptions of "truth." Unlike post-transformational frames-of-reference-in-story where tellers would make reference to an eye-opening experience that caused them to reconsider their perspective, pre-transformational frames of reference were absent any indication of what Mezirow called a 'disorienting dilemma.' Instead of being justified, in the teller's eyes, by personal experience, these frames of reference were justified by "known" cultural values and thus were often relayed as obvious or given.

Alternatively, in the case of a post-transformational narrative, although these moral stances were still conveyed as certain and constant, they possessed a distinctly different quality of complexity and nuance that was grounded in the teller's personal experiences. In their claim of moral certainty, these frames-of-reference-in-story radiated nonetheless an implicit or explicit awareness of possible, alternative explanations along with an already-formed understanding of why the teller had rejected those in favor of their present perspective. Stories in this vein reflected a heavily-considered, hard-won moral stance which – whether consistent or inconsistent with any particular cultural norms or messaging – was sourced in the teller's prior encounters and contemplations. These tellings related an untroubled, resolved abandonment of previous perspectives, a clearly drawn connection between their current perspective and the past life experiences that brought them to this point.

In keeping with the performative pole of the moral stance dimension, both of these manifesting types of moral stance were expressed by participants as certain and constant, unquestioned by the teller, as if their perspective was beyond doubting. Both pre- and post-transformation narrative demonstrated Mezirow's equilibrium, for the time being, a stability in a way of knowing and understanding something. Tellers of both kinds of a moral stance were as Ochs and Capps (2001) described, “narrators of personal experience evaluat[ing] protagonists as moral agents, whose actions, thoughts, and feelings are interpreted in light of local notions of goodness” (p.47). The critical difference, I argue, lies in what individual tellers had come to understand as the ‘local notions of goodness’ that applied to a given frame-of-reference-in-story.

Following are two examples, one story with a pre-transformational frame of reference and the other with a post-transformational frame of reference. Based upon my close examination of all the stories told during The Straight Talk Dialogues, these excerpts were chosen for their

representativeness of the characteristics described thus far, their relative ability to display the features of a story at the performative end of the dimensional continua and specifically the features of a pre- versus post-transformational frame of reference.

A stable, pre-transformational frame-of-reference-in-story. This example of a frame-of-reference-in-story held by Walter occurred during the Drawing Paired Share activity on the third evening of dialogue. In response to the facilitator's prompt for them to draw about a "tension" they were holding around the topics discussed thus far in the dialogue, Walter had chosen to draw and discuss with Bernard a scene from his workplace where he was the supervisor of a group of about a dozen employees. This story came during the large group discussion afterward in which each pair was sharing brief highlights about their drawings:

- 93 Walter: And, and I do think that as a guy it's almost easier for me to supervise
 94 women because they're, you know if I sit down in the office with
 95 a woman and have a chat with her about something that needs to
 96 be taken care of, I don't think anybody would be walkin' by my
 97 office and wondering what's going on. But on the other hand if I
 98 was sitting, spending a lot of time on my staff who's gay, that
 99 might raise some questions. You know, why is he spending so
 100 much time with him? So, I, you know,
- 101 Facilitator: That's definitely a tension (laughing).
- 102 Walter: It's, it's, that's, that's the sort of thing that I need to avoid is the
 103 appearance that there's any kind of social component to that sort
 104 of thing.

Moral Stance. To begin with, the moral stance and frame of reference Walter expressed here was grounded in his then current understanding of "local notions of goodness" in the workplace related to issues of boss/employee relationships and straight/gay relationships in particular, in that context. Namely, his frame of reference seemed to be that the social standards of acceptability for a male boss's interaction with his gay male employee were importantly

different than the standards for that same boss's interaction with a female employee. First, in terms of the dimensional characteristics of this moral stance, Walter expressed it with certainty that any appearance of friendliness or mutual likability between him and his gay male employee was "the sort of thing that I need to avoid." He asserted this stance with firmness and without any apparent doubt in his own perspective, as if this reality was simply a 'given.'

Furthermore, Walter's moral stance exhibited a strong reliance upon his perception of cultural values about what was and was not appropriate behavior for a boss with his employees. This frame of reference, rather than being grounded in some actual experience Walter had had, was based upon social norms outside of himself which he had assimilated and which were, for the time being, serving as the lens by which Walter oriented his expectations and actions. I interpret these narrative indicators to mean that Walter's frame of reference around this particular scenario was pre-transformational. Even though, in other stories told by Walter during the dialogues he demonstrated more post-transformational perspectives regarding straight-gay relationships, his perspectives on this particular workplace context and scenario had not been separately examined from the sociocultural ground in which they existed. In Mezirow's terms, the frame of reference expressed here by Walter suggests that he had not experienced a disorienting dilemma that would have caused him to question or explore other possibilities for his interpretation of what was good and right in that context.

Linearity. Walter's account of this scenario, even though this particular account involved projected events (telling about anticipated or imagined events; Georgakopoulou, 2006), suggested a nonetheless closed temporal and logical order of what would happen, by his assessment. We can identify this order clearly in the series of if-then statements embedded in Walter's story in which he stated that *if* he were talking with a female employee in his office,

then other employees would not be suspicious, but *if* he were talking with a gay male employee in his office, *then* other employees were likely to be suspicious. The logical conclusion Walter had drawn from his frame of reference here was that the rational course of action was for him to avoid “the appearance that there’s any kind of social component to that sort of thing.” Within his logical, ordered understanding we hear Walter’s confidence and satisfied equilibrium that his current frame of reference about this situation was, for now, serving as an adequate explanation of experience and guide to action.

Embeddedness. On this dimension, Walter’s telling was more detached than embedded in surrounding conversation. Even though he was responding to the prompt and structure inherent in the participant structure (the drawing paired share activity), there is the sense that he was ‘claiming the floor’ with his response, actually taking it back from Bernard. He seemed to see himself as somewhat of an expert in regard to this topic of boss/employee office relations and held a clear intention to convey his expertise rather than to generate a conversation that might solicit additional alternative perspectives. Furthermore, in Leilani’s reaction to Walter’s story, she implied with her laughter and simple restatement, that his naming of such unspoken workplace norms as “a tension” was actually an understatement. Rather than making any space for her reaction or responding to it in any way, Walter continued right on with completing his telling (...”it’s that sort of thing that I need to avoid...”). Rather than being responsive to her comment in any way, which would have indicated a greater embeddedness, Walter forged onward with his relatively detached and carefully crafted explanation.

Tellability. Walter’s confidence about his frame of reference here also came through on the dimension of tellability. Though omitted due to space limitations, Walter actually began this discursive turn by taking it over from Bernard whose task it was, according to the instructions of

the activity, to tell the whole group about Walter's drawing and Walter's story. When Bernard had finished and asked Walter if he had accurately portrayed Walter's perspective, Walter demonstrated a motivation to elaborate and clarify, starting off what became a relatively long turn with "...I think just to wrap that up a bit" and continuing on with the explanation of which the above excerpt is the culmination. This is an indication of Walter's motivation to tell this story around this topic, and of his belief in the meaning behind his frame of reference.

Tellership: Related to its characteristics of tellability, we see in the way that Walter 'took back' this story from the original account Bernard gave that Walter felt the need to reclaim the telling and to further elaborate and perhaps even correct in some ways the account Bernard gave of his perspective. As such, even though Bernard began this telling of Walter's frame of reference because the activity was set up that way, Walter reclaimed his position as the primary active teller and held it until the group's focus moved on to the next pair. Walter sought no further input to the telling from Bernard who had begun the telling, nor did he respond to or build upon the interjection from Leilani when she commented and laughed "That's definitely a tension."

A stable, post-transformational frame-of-reference-in-story. In contrast to Walter's frame-of-reference-in-story above, the following is an example of a story on the performative end of the narrative dimensions, but demonstrating post-transformational characteristics. Throughout the dialogues, Genevieve' storytelling revealed a stable and unchanging frame of reference that acceptance of homosexuality, in her own life and in general, was something she believed was critically important though achieved only through significant pain and suffering. She frequently talked about the emotional and psychological struggles that had accompanied her journey around the topic of homosexuality, primarily though not strictly her experience of having

her former husband come out as a gay man. Based on my review of the entirety of Genevieve's contributions to the dialogue, her overall pattern of participation in the dialogues was to insert relatively lengthy monologues recounting her personal experiences and philosophies as related to the topic of discussion. On the first evening, during a segment of free-flowing discussion, we can hear the initial emergences of this frame-of-reference-in-story as well as identify its positioning at the performative end of the narrative dimensions. Here Genevieve was discussing her perspective about how difficult it seemed for people to accept and support others who are different, in particular others who are homosexual:

105 Genevieve: And that's easier said than done but I'm, I'm there and I
 106 have the advice of a very, very good friend who actually
 107 was my boss at work, and for a long time I didn't know
 108 he was gay and then I found out, and he said "I wished
 109 my parents had just let me be whoever I was when I was
 110 little and dress in whatever way I wanted to do and just
 111 be who I was because then I wouldn't be so screwed up
 112 now." Just all, all twisted and kind of tangled in a web of
 113 not really being able to be himself because he didn't, he
 114 didn't have the chance to do that when he was little. So
 115 it's a very, you know I mean everyday people give you
 116 gifts when they share stuff like that with you and you
 117 may or may not be ready to absorb it, but it's good to,
 118 you know not throw it away, keep it in your brain,
 119 eventually you'll start to process what's going on, my
 120 experience, in my life anyway.

Moral Stance. Genevieve held a moral stance that being a supportive and affirming ally to gay or questioning people is the virtuous path, and should be something to which straight people aspire, even if it is painful, as she also asserted it will be. This stance is evident in her labeling of her boss's advice as a "gift" and noting that "it's good" to hold on to such gifts. The certainty and constancy in Genevieve's moral perspective is seen not just in this one instance, with confident assertions like "...that's easier said than done but, I'm there" but across the vast

majority of Genevieve's extensive storytelling during all of the dialogue sessions.

Differently than Walter's account of office relationships above, Genevieve's frame of reference here was grounded in her personal experience. In particular, she was explicit about the experience with the boss who was gay and came out to her, but she also implies that she had had other additional experiences that contributed to this perspective. With comments such as "And that's easier said than done but..." and "...you may or may not be ready to absorb it", it is evident that Genevieve was aware of and had some empathy for possible alternative points of view that others may have, and yet she suggested that a morally righteous straight ally would eventually come to a place of deeper understanding, an understanding consistent with the frame of reference she held. While largely implied in this excerpt (though explicit in other instances of her storytelling), as listeners we get the sense that Genevieve viewed her own current viewpoint as having been hard-won through a journey of personal growth which included a challenging rejection of societal messages and cultural attitudes.

Linearity. In terms of linearity, she conveyed a closed sequential and causal order in the events of her boss experiencing suppression as a child resulting in his being 'screwed up now'; "I wished my parents had just let me be whoever I was when I was little and dress in whatever way I wanted to do and just be who I was because then I wouldn't be so screwed up now" as well as her urging listeners that changes in themselves would occur if they made a point to remember and not to dismiss these experiences, "but it's good to, you know not throw it away, keep it in your brain, eventually you'll start to process what's going on."

The logical sequence of rationality applied not strictly to the way in which Genevieve told this story but also to the content of what she was telling, to her frame of reference. She was telling listeners through this story that, despite what others may tell them and despite how

difficult or confusing it may seem, if they remained open (cause) to the “gifts” gay people have to share, then eventually they would struggle less and understand more (consequence).

Embeddedness. This story, as were most of Genevieve’s, was detached from the surrounding discussion possessing practically no embeddedness in conversation. Her fellow group members listened without interruption, and when she was finished the next speaker took the conversation in a new direction. Especially because this story occurred during a participant structure of free-flowing discussion, this lack of interactivity from group members suggests their perception that Genevieve’s telling was complete as it was, and that they found her claims to be relatively unrelated to and separate from the larger discussion underway.

Tellability. Genevieve’s tellings, including this example, almost always possessed a high level of tellability, clearly conveying both personal relevance and an intended rhetorical impact. It is evident that Genevieve had a level of pride in her possession of this perspective. We see this pride and motivation to let others know about it, with the phrasing in this case of “And that’s easier said than done but I’m, I’m there and I have the advice of a very, very good friend.” In the first part of that sentence Genevieve asserted that she had overcome notable hardship to arrive at her current perspective (“there”). And in the second half of the sentence she called upon the dependability and worthiness of her friend’s advice with her emphasis on the strength of their friendship (“very, very good friend”).

Tellership. When telling this story, as was frequently the case, Genevieve talked entirely solo while others listened with little to no verbal involvement. She actively claimed this frame of reference about the importance and difficulty of arriving at a place of acceptance. And she seemed to have no interest in entertaining any alternative or additional interpretations on this subject, as if none were needed due to the resolve she held regarding her current perspective.

Given the experience of having her marriage end when her husband realized his homosexuality, Genevieve's narratives around this topic were often oriented around pain, upset, and turmoil. She presented herself as a person who had 'learned the hard way' about the effects of prejudice and non-acceptance in people's lives, including her own. In fact, based on a consistent theme that emerged across Genevieve's storytelling in all the dialogue sessions, she seemed to possess an overall habit of mind that all forms of society's non-acceptance of people are both painful and at the same time difficult to change. The stories she told throughout the dialogue sessions repeatedly reflected the stability in her frames of reference that it is both difficult to achieve acceptance of people who are gay or lesbian, and keenly important to do so. These perspectives emerged repeatedly in Genevieve's stories, reflecting the same dimensions of coherent, performative narrative, and of an unchanging frame of reference, throughout the dialogue sessions.

Frames of reference in shifting, emergent storytelling. At the other pole of Ochs' and Capps' dimensional continua, the "emergent" pole is, I argue, where transformation in frames of reference appeared in narrative tellings. Ochs and Capps (2001) describe storytelling at this pole as "the country cousin of more well-wrought narratives" (p.3) and also as "narrative exploration" (p.6) and "a sense-making process" (p.15). These descriptors point to a central claim of these authors, that storytelling with these characteristics is a primary interactional mode by which people make sense of their lives. Mezirow's central assertion is that frames of reference transform when an existing perspective no longer fits and a new one is needed in order to make sense of experience. Thus, in my suggestion that "emergent" narrative is a process in which frames-of-reference-in-story are transforming, I extend Ochs and Capps' theoretical argument into the realm of Mezirow's transformational learning. Mezirow (2000) himself stated

that “transformation refers to a movement through time of reformulating reified structures of meaning by reconstructing dominant narratives” (p.19). I suspect that these authors would likely concur that, through their respective lenses, they are describing the same processes of human development. My purpose in this section is to show how such ‘country cousin’ narratives manifested in The Straight Talk Dialogues in service of frames of reference surrounding homosexuality that were undergoing transformation.

Previously, I described the frames of reference contained within narratives at Ochs and Capps’ performative pole as being pre-transformation or post-transformation on a topic. In keeping consistent with the language of ‘pre’ and ‘post’ which I have used to describe early and late-stage transformation, the frames of reference contained within narratives at the emergent pole can be described as ‘mid-transformation’, or as undergoing transformation in progress (see Table 3, p.167). It should be acknowledged that, this phase of being mid-transformation or living with a transformation-in-progress is not a rare or uncommon state of being. Most adults likely spend more of their lives in transformational states with their frames of reference regarding complex topics or issues than in states of pre- or post-transformation. This is so simply because complex topics are complex, and it is uncommon for the majority of adults to possess high degrees of certainty and clarity on such topics, especially when it comes to topics that are particularly laden with cultural controversy, such as homosexuality.

Furthermore, even once a transformational process has achieved relative stability (having critically examined all relevant previous assumptions on the issue or event, replaced them with new understandings more fitting to one's experience, and put these new understandings into action), it likely won't be long before a new layer of perspective is unearthed on the topic, through conversational or other experience, which creates the possibility for further

transformational processes to ensue. This explains why much of ubiquitous conversational narrative between humans displays qualities on the emergent pole of the figure above, the qualities of frames of reference in transformation. This adaptive movement of growth between stable to shifting and back to stable again in cyclical fashion is depicted by the large looping arrows overlaying Table 3.

Taking a closer look at the characteristics of a “mid-transformation” frame-of-reference-in-story at this end of the narrative dimensions, I will begin with moral stance. Once again, the dimension of moral stance is a signal pointing to, if not a direct statement of the frame of reference itself, the actual content of the teller’s perspective. However, at the emergent end of the narrative continua, all five dimensions including moral stance can be notably more challenging to identify, given their ambiguous characteristics. By Ochs and Capps’ articulation, moral stance at this end of the continua, manifests as uncertain and fluid, of which there were many examples that arose from the dialogues. These stories tended to lack conviction from the teller about what they thought was good or right, and any claims of moral correctness would be tentative at most. In these accounts, tellers made few assertions and seemed to ask questions (though not necessarily in explicit question form) and invite participation of their audience. In listening to these stories, there was a sense the teller was torn between a once-accepted, unquestioned viewpoint and a more recent alternative or ‘nontraditional’ belief.

The reader will recall, in both pre- and post-transformation narratives, the stability and assuredness of the teller’s moral stance, the former aligning largely with culturally conventional notions of goodness and the latter reflecting more of a personalized, critically wrought morality. In mid-transformation narratives, tellers' accounts seemed to waver back and forth between these externally and internally defined moralities, between thoughts and feelings they seemed subject

to and thoughts and feelings that seemed object to them. These meekly expressed frames of reference seemed to convey differing degrees of confusion, uncertainty, and self-doubt and exhibited easy deference to available co-tellers as well as an active seeking and inviting of their perspectives. Consequently mid-transformation frames of reference were, as would be expected, somewhat more elusive to identification and description in my analysis compared to those that were more stable.

Along the dimension of linearity, when a teller's story exhibited an open temporal and causal order, the accompanying frame of reference was imbued with a corresponding lack of logic or order. At times, causal or explanatory connections would vary in consistency and may contradict other connections made earlier in the same telling. This presentation suggested the teller's confusion and perceived lack of confidence in this tentative frame of reference as a dependable explanation for their actual experience and seemed to reflect a sense of his or her restlessness and discontentment with their own current understandings.

Along the dimension of embeddedness, when an embedded story appeared, one that was relatively indistinct from surrounding conversation, the frame of reference contained within was similarly interwoven and typically emerged across several turns of talk. In order to identify these frames of reference-in-story as the data analyst I needed to look across whole segments of conversation, often involving multiple co-tellers in order to piece together the perspective 'in aggregate' that seemed to be conveyed by the primary teller. Frames of reference associated with embedded narratives, when coherent enough to be identified, were inherently unstable and impressionable to other frames of reference being expressed simultaneously.

Along the dimension of tellability, the stories with low tellability as Ochs and Capps described were those in which the incidents being reported are of unclear or ambiguous

importance to the tellers themselves. Tellers telling stories of low tellability may be awkward, hesitant, or searching for words in their launching of such narratives. Accordingly, the frames of reference that corresponded with low tellability were perspectives reflecting self-doubt, disorientation, disequilibrium, anxiety, uncertainty, confusion, ill logic, and/or contradiction in the teller's process of expression. These frames-of-reference-in-story seemed to move in and out of objectivity for the teller, or in other words, wavered in the degree to which the teller was aware of factors influencing their own perspective. As an observer, frames of reference accompanying stories of low tellability often seemed unclaimed by the teller, as though s/he would rather hear from others than present their own point of view.

Lastly, along the dimension of tellership, when stories could be classified as having multiple active tellers, the frames of reference being expressed possessed a notable openness to the interpretations of others, an evident curiosity on the part of the teller as to how others may view the subject at hand. While often challenging and sometimes nearly impossible to actually identify with confidence, due to their discursive incoherence as well as being spread across multiple turns of conversation with multiple speakers, these frames of reference-in-story possessed a quality of having been *collected* in parts or pieces from others by the teller. Importantly, while at times the co-tellers of a story were the other participants present in the group, in other cases the voices of co-tellers seemed to be those of people from the primary teller's life, past or present, or cultural messaging wherefrom the primary teller seemed to have taken on a part of their frame of reference (Wortham, 1999).

A shifting, mid-transformation frame-of-reference-in-story. In responding to the facilitator's 'check-in' prompt at the opening of session two, Eli told a story featuring very different dimensions than those of both Walter's and Genevieve's above. The dimensions of this

excerpt from Eli manifested on the emergent pole of Ochs and Capps continua across every dimension, an example chosen for its ability to display this positioning. As will be elaborated upon in Chapter Six, I argue that Eli came to the dialogue sessions with frames of reference surrounding homosexuality that were already in disequilibrium, that he was seeking more dependable frames of reference by which to understand homosexuality in order to both make sense of his previous negative experiences as well as to guide future reactions. In this example, Eli talked about two friends who are a lesbian couple and seemed to be expressing significant discontinuity in his points of view about gay women and men overall. The predominant frame of reference at play for Eli appears to be a fluctuating point of view regarding whether gay and lesbian relationships are the same or different from the relationships of heterosexuals.

121 Facilitator: I'm just thinking to say, to share what your week has been like
 122 in the context of our topic, gays and lesbians. Is there
 123 something that you reflected on from last time? Is there
 124 something that happened during the week?

125 Eli: Well this week was, ah, you know it was definitely great to get
 126 everyone's feedback on this subject and I was glad to get
 127 Bernard's feedback you know. But yah I've had some
 128 experiences with two, two people in my life that are pretty close
 129 friends and they're both lesbians. And they like to garden and
 130 do the same things that all of us like to do so. But that's, they
 131 got together over the internet so that was how they found each
 132 other and stuff. I guess that's kind of risky these days, but I'm
 133 not sure, maybe women are more serious about how they want
 134 to get into a real, um meaningful relationship, more than men.
 135 I don't know that's, there's such a contrast there. That would be
 136 interesting to see what the different kind of sexuality exists
 137 between men and women, or as far as their homosexual
 138 tendencies and all that. But I'm open to their explorations, just
 139 like with heterosexuals you know. Eventually I think you'd find
 140 the right person and find out what you really want and stuff.

141 Facilitator: Mm, hmm.

142 Eli: And I really didn't have too many thoughts on homosexuality

143 this week. [*Mumbled under his breath*] It really was very
144 interesting so...great topic [*nodding*].

145 Facilitator: Say that last part again, I didn't hear you.

146 Eli: Um, it was great to get the insight of people on this,
147 homosexuality...how they perceived it.

Moral stance. Eli's moral stance expressed in this excerpt was uncertain. While the superficial theme of Eli's story focuses primarily on his ambivalence over how gay men and lesbians might meet one another and enter into relationships, there were several indications that the underlying frame of reference undergoing examination and transformation was more broadly about the acceptability of gay relationships in general. With the comment that it "would be interesting to see what the different kind of sexuality exists between men and women," Eli seemed to be considering a hypothesis that perhaps lesbian relationships would prove to be more like what he knew and accepted (heterosexual relationships) than those of gay men. He was evidently struggling with a lingering negative frame of reference about all gay relationships, in the midst of a newer, more favorable, but as-of-yet unformed perspective.

In nearly every sentence we can see his wavering between an affirmation of gay relationships as acceptable to him, and a questioning of their "likeness" with heterosexual relationships, which he had positioned, consistently with cultural messaging, as his standard of acceptability. On the one hand, his friends like to do the same things that straight people do, and yet on the other hand, they met over the internet which is perhaps "kind of risky these days." But then again, he seemed to imply, perhaps it is only with gay *men* where any unacceptability lies, since perhaps women are more seriously seeking meaningful relationships. He reinforced this subtle rejection of male homosexuality by stating that he thought it would be interesting to

better understand the differences between homosexual men and homosexual women, as though this may have provided grounds for accepting women's relationships over men's, but then followed this up right away with a contradictory assertion that he was "open to [all] their explorations." Eli appeared to be considering and wrestling to reconcile various potential frames of reference about the nature of gay and lesbian relationships as compared to heterosexual relationships, and the extent to which he could view these relationships as similar or different.

Linearity. Eli's confusion is seen most glaringly on the dimension of linearity. It is difficult to decipher any degree of temporal or causal order in what Eli is sharing. Though he started off as if he intended to tell of the "experiences" he had, he ended up not relaying any actual experiences, but instead sharing that his friends like to garden and that they met on the internet. He then jumped to speculating about the safety involved in internet dating in general, followed by a speculation that maybe women are more serious than men about their relationships, followed by a vague pondering about the sexual, and homosexual, differences between men and women in same-sex relationships. Finally, in a particularly awkward turn, he seemed to assert his own acceptance of these dating patterns among gay men and women. This fairly odd, disconnected chain of statements from Eli reflected his level of struggle and confusion to reconcile his relative discomfort with homosexuality and gay men, with the fact of his friendship with the two lesbian women.

Embeddedness. This account from Eli was highly embedded in the surrounding conversation as evidenced by his high degree of effort to respond precisely and accurately to what Leilani was asking. First he responded about the "feedback" he received the prior week (responding to her "something you reflected on"), then he relayed the account of his two lesbian friends (responding to her "something that happened"), and finally he abandoned his story and

attempted to correct or redirect his own response (after Leilani's "mm-hmm") by stating that he really didn't have any thoughts regarding homosexuality since the last session. Even though, in this example, Eli was not relying on co-tellers to elaborate upon or add to his frame of reference, his close tracing of the way the facilitator phrased her questions is an indication of narrative embeddedness and the fact that Eli did not see himself as having a coherent enough story to tell.

Tellability. The low tellability of this story is seen in Eli's hesitancy with how he should respond to Leilani's question. It is unclear what relevance Eli gave to the emerging account of these two friends and how they met one another, whether he was bringing them up as a reflection he had had since last week or perhaps an encounter or event, and generally unclear as to what point Eli was attempting to make. In his last statement, following Leilani's "mm-hmm", he dropped the level of his voice so much, a gesture of closing down his comments to allow the next person to speak, that many group members could not hear him and Leilani asked him to repeat. Again, Eli exuded an overall unwillingness to claim his wavering frame of reference and was highly subject to both what he thought others may have been expecting him to say, as well as how he should say it.

Tellership. In his tellership, though there was little actual interjection from others present, Eli seemed to be reacting to the ideas of others who were not present, for example, in his 'guess' that internet dating might be risky, but then stating "I'm not sure." Again he seemed to bring an idea from 'the outside' in saying "maybe women are more serious" about relationships but then stating "I don't know" relative to that assertion. In listening to this story (and many) from Eli, I was left with the impression that he would have welcomed, at any juncture, being interrupted by another group member who may have elaborated or countered his ponderings in order to validate or otherwise give him more confidence in his own perspective.

Thus in Eli's response to the facilitator prompt, we see an example of storytelling squarely on the discontinuous pole of Ochs' and Capps' narrative dimensions, and a frame of reference in flux. Eli appeared to be torn between his long-held negative perspectives about gay people, especially gay men (which he mentioned early in the dialogues) and his more recent experience of having a positive friendship with a lesbian couple. This is an example of a frame-of-reference-in-story that was undergoing some level of reconstruction. While this example alone could not serve to predict the eventual content of Eli's revised frame of reference or when and how he would achieve its next plateau of equilibrium, I will expand on his storytelling in Chapter Six to show that Eli's journey through these dialogue sessions was among the most transformative.

Summary

Throughout the four dialogue sessions, the facilitator employed a variety of participant structures to invite and encourage a compelling dialogue on the topic of "homosexuality and related social challenges" (as phrased in the titling of the dialogues). Key functions of these activities were to offer a clear structure for interaction, to solicit dialogue around a specific prompt, and to re-establish with each new activity a safe social space in which group members felt supported to share. In addition to structure, solicitation, and safety, a fourth important factor of the participant structures was that they invite authentic, true-to-life participation on the part of group members, rather than sharing that was contrived or artificial. Equally noteworthy was the way in which structures of participation directly impacted the content of the critical reflection that took place. Whereas certain participant structures compelled a comparison among group

members, others compelled a gentle challenging among peers. Across all the primary participant structures, the abundance of personal storytelling was consistent and central to this analysis.

Stories told in The Straight Talk Dialogues spanned the range of Ochs and Capps' narrative dimensions because participants spanned a range of stability in their frames of reference regarding homosexuality. In some cases, tellers expressed a high level of clarity and certainty in their moral stance, and remained relatively unaffected on those stances throughout the course of the dialogues. Whereas for others, the dialogues intersected with their lives at a phase of relative confusion in their points of view surrounding homosexuality, and served as a discursive forum for them to further a transformational process that was already underway. Yet for others the interaction that occurred during these sessions served as the catalyst that actually spurred them into questioning, reflecting upon, and beginning to revise a previous point of view. Thus, we see in their storytelling, evidence of frames of reference that were in various phases of transformation including relatively unchallenged views assimilated from the larger culture (pre-transformational), heavily questioned and complex views that were uniquely personalized (post-transformational), and fluid, fluctuating views which were undergoing transformation (mid-transformational). Even among a group of people who may have been seen from the outside, and did see themselves at first, as sharing largely homogenous viewpoints regarding homosexuality, this closer look at their personal narratives reminds us that frames of reference are both built and transformed locally, in individual minds through stories told and re-told, throughout our lives.

In Chapter Six I elaborate on the transformational processes encountered by just two of the dialogue participants, taking an up-close look at the evolution of certain frames of references across multiple instances of each person's storytelling. Relative to their expressed points of view about gay and lesbian people and topics, I examine particular changes that occurred for Yolanda

and Eli. Through the lens of dimensions of their storytelling, I have attempted to shine a spotlight on these participants' shifting assumptions, their evolving identities, in the contexts of this topic.

Chapter Six: The Shifting Frame-of-Reference-in-Story

Social scientists from numerous disciplines have highlighted narrative as a primary way in which individuals make meaning (Belenky et al. 1986; Bruner, 1991; Coles, 1990; Bamberg, 1997, Labov, 1972). As Johnstone (2003) conveys, “Like all talk and all action, narrative is socially and epistemologically constructive: through telling, we make ourselves and our experiential worlds” (p.645). Ochs and Capps (2001) assert that, while narrative tellings can range from performative to naturally-occurring, it is primarily in the naturally-occurring, conversational narratives where this sense-making takes place. According to these authors, the familiar and dialogic nature of such “emergent” storytelling creates the social conditions for people to navigate their ongoing struggle to possess both a stable but also authentic perspective on the complexity of their lives. Educators interested in the facilitation of transformational learning are constantly striving to foster such social conditions in the environments in which they teach (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1990; Edward W. Taylor, 1998), to invite the kind of exploratory, constructive interaction which Ochs and Capps have shown to be so influential in shifting our understandings of self and the world, in shifting that which, according to my argument, constitutes Mezirow’s frame of reference.

Within the five participant structures where storytelling occurred, there was evidenced “a range of possibilities, which are realized in particular narrative performances” (Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.19) across the five dimensions of tellership, tellability, embeddedness, linearity, and moral stance. Where a given narrative will fall on any one of these dimensional continua, as Ochs and Capps explained, depends upon the locally situated identities and perspectives which are being mutually developed in the interaction among tellers and listeners. In my examination of the storytelling across all the dialogue transcripts, I first identified narratives which were

sustained by their primary teller from their introduction in the first or second session through to the last session, in order to allow myself the most sustained access to witnessing shifts that might occur. I then characterized those narratives in terms of Ochs and Capps' five dimensions, and chose, for a more in-depth exploration, ones that displayed the highest degree of conversational incoherence, or qualities at the emergent pole. In other words, I purposely selected examples of narratives where the frame of reference surrounding some aspect of homosexuality appeared the most uncertain and fluid, ones in which the teller, according to the parallels I hypothesized in Chapter 5 was already steeped in or actively entering my so-called 'mid-transformation.' In so doing I excluded narratives in which frames of reference as expressed in the talk appeared stable and situated in either a 'pre-transformation' or 'post-transformation' state. Lastly, an important criteria in discourse analytic work holds that relevance should not be determined by the analyst's perceptions, but by the perceptions of the participants themselves, as revealed in their talk by the chosen orientation of their focus (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). In the cases of Yolanda and Eli, and consistent with the extended duration of their stories as well, the entire group oriented to probing, revisiting, and co-constructing these stories on behalf of Yolanda and Eli. This ongoing attention from the group at large was an indication of a shared perception that many group members saw Yolanda's and Eli's unfolding and shifting stories as most in need of support.

In this chapter I present the stories of two individual participants who came to the dialogues with frames of reference regarding homosexuality to which they were relatively subject (Kegan, 2001). In other words, the assumptions and expectations these two held about homosexuality or gay/lesbian people were ones they had taken on through cultural and familial messaging without, as of yet, having undertaken a level of self-examination that would make their perspectives more object to them. I characterized Yolanda's and Eli's frames of reference

highlighted here as being in mid-transformation because their talk revealed them already in flux and relative instability about these issues when the dialogues began, and displayed noticeable shifts as the dialogues moved forward. Using Ochs and Capps' (2001) dimensions of narrative to observe degrees of flux versus stability in how Yolanda and Eli tell their stories, I demonstrate their movement in the direction of the performative pole. And using Tannen's (1993) types of evidence as a way of 'checking in' on their shifting frames of reference, at various moments in time throughout the dialogues, I demonstrate how the underlying structure of their expectations surrounding this topic becomes more open and flexible, more accepting and less rejecting of homosexuality, as their relationship to the topic gains objectivity. Neither of these cases involve a 'completed' transformation, a revised frame of reference having been fully tested and put into practice, but both are examples of frames of reference that have traveled a distance along the transformative path.

Yolanda: Who am I if My Daughter is Gay?

Yolanda is a 55-year old white, married mother of two adult daughters, one of whom had recently disclosed to her parents that she was dating a woman and identified herself as a lesbian. During her introductory remarks on the first evening, Yolanda stated that she thought it would be 'good for her' to come to the dialogues, because she doesn't know how to talk to this daughter about this disclosure and doesn't want to alienate her because having good relationships, or as she called it, 'friendships' with both her daughters is very important to her. At the same time, Yolanda spoke early on about how homosexuality was not acceptable when she herself was growing up, and even though today she felt there has been a major increase in society's

acceptance, she admitted that she felt reluctant to tell her family and friends the truth about her daughter out of fear of losing or damaging these relationships.

In terms of her frames of reference, Yolanda's conversation and narrative suggest that she was already in the midst of transformation surrounding this topic when the dialogues began, and that her daughter's coming out was serving as a catalytic disorienting dilemma. In the early phases of dialogue there is much discursive evidence of Yolanda's pursuit, and struggle to conceive of a new 'way of knowing' about homosexuality that could include herself as the mother of a gay daughter, along with all the relationships (her daughter, parents, other family and friends) that she viewed as important to her identity. As it turned out, the notion of being the parent of a gay child was a prominent theme throughout the dialogues, since several other participants had adolescent or adult children and seemed to relate strongly to the topic. As such, the topic of Yolanda's struggle received a great deal of attention during the discussion, sometimes focused on her in particular but at other times focused on stories or accounts from other participants. In the late stages of the dialogue sessions, Yolanda appears to have co-constructed, with the help of her co-teller's, a revised set of expectations for understanding and working to accept the newly-announced possibility of her daughter's homosexuality. Below I present the examples of Yolanda's interactive narrative which I found to be the most demonstrative of this transformation.

Early stories: Yolanda. On the first evening of dialogue, when Leilani asked participants to share about their interest in the topic of these dialogues, Yolanda launched this narrative.

148 Yolanda: I feel the same way (referencing the comments of the person just
149 previous to her, Sally). Except my daughter told me last year she
150 was lesbian and so it's been really hard for me. Cause I really don't

151 have any problem with gays or lesbians at all. But they were always
152 somebody else until it was my daughter.

In this initial episode, Yolanda expresses a core element of her shifting frame of reference regarding the acceptability of homosexuality. Although she states here “I really don’t have any problem with gays or lesbians,” she follows this with a contrastive connective (the word “but”) which, according to Tannen (1993), marks the denial of the previously expressed idea. Thus, Yolanda’s statements here reveal her underlying frame that her daughter being homosexual is something with which she indeed ‘has a problem.’ Her moral stance reflects a point of view that homosexuality was only acceptable *at a distance*, not when it came to bear on her own family, her own daughter with whom she holds a strong positive identification. On others of Ochs and Capps’ (2001) narrative dimensions, this telling portrays a relatively low tellability, as well as a relatively high degree of embeddedness as seen in the nonchalant, almost minimizing manner Yolanda relays it as if the fact that she has a lesbian daughter was but a minor addition to what Sally had just shared. We also hear the relative lack of logical coherence among her statements that finding out her daughter is a lesbian has “been really hard” (line 150) accompanied with the contrasting statement that she doesn’t have any problem with gays and lesbians.

After each participant had shared on that go-around, the facilitator opened the floor for any questions or comments about anything that had been shared thus far. To that invitation, Lily directed a question to Yolanda that created an opportunity for this storyline to continue. Lily asked her to expand upon the underpinnings of her feelings, whether she would feel more accepting of her daughter being lesbian if homosexuality were more accepted by society as a

whole, or if instead her resistance stemmed from hopes of an "Ozzie & Harriet" family for her daughter. The conversation went as follows:

- 153 Lily: And you don't have to answer it,
- 154 Yolanda: Yah, no. I probably should just say you know just, I'm trying to think
155 of ways to say it so it doesn't sound horrible but,
- 156 Facilitator: Well no please, just,
- 157 Yolanda: I know.
- 158 Bernard: Just say it.
- 159 Facilitator: This whole experience, how, how,
- 160 Yolanda: Well I felt that, you know the times that I, during the time that I grew
161 up you know it wasn't normal to be gay. It wasn't normal to be
162 anything other than, you know a boy and a girl and have a
163 heterosexual relationship. And Lisa was heterosexual until last year.
164 So, she was almost engaged and then it broke up and then she just
165 said, I've had it with boys, you know guys, I'm just not going to date
166 guys anymore. And I said, well alright so just take a break for a little
167 while. And, so then she started dating girls but she didn't really
168 tell us for a couple months cause she didn't know how I would take it.
169 And of course I, you know, I didn't take it well because of the way
170 she told me. So, I think it's just that I've always had, and I, really
171 other people don't bother me at all. You know, other homosexuals
172 don't bother me, but with her, cause she's my daughter, I, I just
173 had this thing that it wasn't normal to be that way. And maybe that's
174 hypocritical because I'm okay with everybody else. And my cousin,
175 my first cousin, his son is gay and when he came out, and we all
176 knew he was gay from when he was a little boy, and when he
177 finally felt comfortable enough to come out, his mother refused to
178 accept him and his father did. And so his father had a relationship
179 with him cause he said, I don't care what he is, he's my son and I love
180 him and I want to have a relationship with him. But his mother
181 couldn't accept him and she won't tell the family and you know, and
182 I kinda feel the same way. I haven't told my parents. My in-laws
183 are gone so I don't have to tell them. I haven't told my, my in-law,
184 sister in-laws, brother in-laws. I've only told a select few friends
185 cause I don't know how they're going to react.

- 186 Lily: And how did your friends react, the ones you did tell?
- 187 Yolanda: They were a little shocked but you know, that's it. Nobody just said,
188 well I'm not going to be your friend anymore, or they're not going to
189 be her friend anymore, cause all of her friends are very accepting.
- 190 Facilitator: Will you, you be willing to share what she said and what you said
191 because you indicated that you didn't feel like you handled it well.
- 192 Yolanda: Yah, I didn't.
- 193 Facilitator: And part of it was what she did. So would you be willing to just kind
194 of share that with us?
- 195 Yolanda: Well she had been dating somebody that she said was named Kim and
196 she told me, and she led me to believe it was a man with children.
197 And I said, "oh, you're dating somebody with kids." She said, "yah."
198 And then a little while went by and she kept telling me about this
199 person and she called me up one day and said she wanted to come
200 over and talk to me about something. So I said, "okay." So she came
201 over and my husband, I wasn't home yet my husband was home so
202 she told him first and he was fine with it, which is funny because he's
203 very prejudice against every other, everything. He's prejudice against
204 other gays, I mean openly, verbally, he's, you know he's just not a
205 quiet person. So she tells him and he's okay with it. So I'm standing
206 in the kitchen and she comes in and she's like, "I have to tell you
207 something," and I said, "okay." And she said, "Kim is a girl." I said,
208 "oh, you're dating a girl?" She said, "yes." And I said, "oh," cause I
209 just was in total shock. And she said, "Okay I got that off my chest."
210 and she went upstairs,
[*Laughter from the group*]
- Yolanda
211 (continues): And ran into her sister's room and closed the door. So she comes out
212 like two minutes later and she yells down she said, "Well don't worry
213 Mom cause you know, Andrea can give you grandchildren." And
214 then she ran back into the bedroom and closed the door. So I was just
215 like, you know I was in shock that she told me this but then she
216 continued. So then she came down a little while later and asked me if
217 I wanted to talk about and I said, no I didn't. And she said, "Why
218 not?" And I said "because I have to process this first and I just can't
219 talk about it yet." And she said, "Okay." And I told her I wasn't
220 happy about what she said and then she left and then a couple days
221 later I saw her again and I told her I was very upset about the
222 way that she talked to me and the way, the thing that she said, the
223 things that she had said. I said I didn't think that was necessary and I

224 said, "I'm just not ready to talk to you about this." And she said,
 225 "Fine." And it was a couple of weeks before I could talk to her and I
 226 told her I didn't want to talk to her because I didn't want to say
 227 something I would regret later and I had to process it. And she was
 228 okay with that. So that's pretty much what happened. And then you
 229 know, she wanted me to start meeting all these girls that she was
 230 dating and I said no, that I wouldn't do that. And I told her I
 231 wouldn't meet anybody until she was serious and was going to have a
 232 serious relationship cause there was a revolving door like everyday
 233 she was with a new girl and she'd come home and tell me. I don't
 234 really want to hear it. So,

235 Sally: Is she still with Kim?

236 Yolanda: No, she's with, she's with somebody now that she's been with for
 237 about three months. They've moved in together. And I asked her
 238 when I, I guess when I calmed down, I guess that's the best way to
 239 put it. I asked her if she felt that this was the way she wanted to
 240 spend the rest of her life in a calm, you know calm manner, I just was
 241 really, just matter of fact about and she said she thought so. And I
 242 said, "okay." So, it's kind of where we're at right now. I've met her
 243 girlfriend, she's very nice and that's it.

244 Lily: How old are they?

245 Yolanda: Lisa's twenty-six and her girlfriend is thirty-four. I guess her
 246 girlfriend's been out for a while because her parents know about it
 247 and have accepted it and,

248 Lily: And does she have kids?

249 Yolanda: No.

250 Lily: No, she doesn't, okay.

251 Yolanda: But the two of them are talking about having children. So, but you
 252 know,

253 Sally: Well I, I'd like to comment a little bit on this because I, I know Lisa
 254 and I've known Yolanda for quite a while and I think that one of the
 255 reasons you were so surprised and maybe other people are is that
 256 Lisa's a very, kind of dramatic person and she's had a series of
 257 boyfriends and each one is, oh this is the one, you know we're going
 258 to move in together and then they go to look at a place and the, the
 259 future mother-in-law comes along and then that's it. She says, "No,

- 260 can't marry him cause I don't like that mother." So I, I think that it
 261 was kind of like a total reversal in a way that she was portraying
 262 herself. And I don't know that she was necessarily denying herself
- 263 before. I mean maybe, maybe she truly is gay, maybe she's bi-sexual,
 264 maybe this is just a phase she's going through. I, I guess I, that's kind
 265 of the way I'm... or Lisa. And I don't, I don't know how your other
 266 friends reacted. I don't think I was really shocked when you told me
 267 but it was like really, that's interesting.
- 268 Yolanda: Nobody was really shocked.
- 269 Sally: So, but I, I think, well for me and I can identify with a little bit what
 270 Yolanda's saying. If that happened to one of my daughters, and, and
 271 me, I think I would be upset from the standpoint of knowing the kind
 272 of life that they're going to have and how there is so much
 273 discrimination or prejudice, hate crimes. You know there's, there's
 274 no end to what can possibly happen just by somebody knowing that
 275 simple thing about you. And so that would be very much a concern
 276 for me. As would, you know almost anything that they came home
 277 with and said that they were doing something a little out of the
 278 ordinary. Wanting to marry somebody of a different race, my other
 279 daughter is dating somebody who's Korean and so you know they, so
 280 there's a lot of talk about that. He actually was adopted here by an
 281 American family when he was five. So he's very Americanized and
 282 calls himself a fake Korean. So you know I, I think about well, I
 283 don't perceive that's there's a lot of prejudice about Asians but I think
 284 that maybe there is cause she's told me that when they have gone like
 285 to an Asian market that the Asian's are giving her dirty looks because
 286 she's with him.
- 287 Kelly: Taking our good Korean boys.
- 288 Sally: Yah. So I understand that there are really pressures, discrimination,
 289 that kind of thing and so for that reason I, I would be very concerned.
 290 But my point of view is, if you're happy and you love each other then
 291 do what you need to do. You know, live your life.

Beginning with the lens of Ochs & Capps' dimension of moral stance, Yolanda's struggle for resolution is most evident. Upon agreeing to tell this story at her co-tellers' invitations, Yolanda engages in what, I contend, Ochs and Capps (2001) meant when they said that, in launching narratives "we ask for others' attention and work to incite interest and acceptance. We

elicit others' approval to begin unraveling the stories of our lives" (p.127). We hear this elicitation in her admittance that she was searching for a way to make it sound "not so horrible," an indication that at least one frame of reference Yolanda holds is telling her that others may judge her poorly for having these struggles to accept her daughter. And yet, with her daughter's self-disclosure, an apparently disorienting dilemma for Yolanda, she has been forced into questioning her previously taken-for-granted assumptions, her frame of reference, about homosexuality and homosexual people which held that "it wasn't normal to be gay." Yolanda's repetition in lines 161 and 173 of that statement in various versions is surface evidence for this underlying frame. Her assessment that "maybe that's hypocritical" with regard to her own judgment here is a sign of the self-questioning and exploration that had already begun. We can see the uncertainty and fluidity in her moral stance from her initial statement about how important it is to her to have a relationship with her daughter, in contrast to her later admittance that "I kinda feel the same way" as the mother (her relative) who, when her son came out, refused to accept him and apparently lost her relationship with him. It can also be noted that Yolanda's use of the hedge phrase "kinda" (line 182) is an indication that she actually feels much the same way as her cousin in terms of not being able to accept her daughter's homosexuality. In these comments, we witness the destabilization of Yolanda's frame regarding the 'normalcy' and 'acceptability' of her daughter being gay, a process in which she is shifting from being subject to her previously held assumptions about homosexuality for 'others,' into placing them as object where she is beginning to question them and take some authority over them. At the end of the above excerpt, Sally offers a potential moral stance for Yolanda to consider in the ongoing telling of this story.

There are several identifiable ways in which Yolanda's story can be characterized as 'open' on the dimension of linearity, as lacking a temporal and/or causal logic. For instance, her statement about her daughter being reluctant to tell her parents that she was gay "cause she didn't know how I would take it" but then acknowledging that she indeed did not take it well "because of the way she told me" reflects a disjointed causal logic in the telling of the story, one that seemed to make sense to Yolanda at the time, but was likely lost on an audience of confused listeners. To clarify, the linguistic negative of Yolanda's saying that her daughter *did not* come out to Yolanda and her husband is evidence of Yolanda's underlying expectation that her daughter would have done so. However, in the very next sentence she appears to justify her own self-described poor reaction, by saying it was "because of the way [my daughter] told me." If Yolanda had possessed greater coherency in the linearity of her telling at that time, she likely would have taken somewhat more responsibility in acknowledging that her daughter's hesitancy to come out may have been justified.

Another example of open causal linearity occurred shortly thereafter with Yolanda's telling about several family members not accepting her cousin's son when he came out as gay, when the father was the only one who accepted his son as he was, and maintained a relationship with him. However, in the very next sentence she says that she "kind of feels the same way" as her cousin (the gay son's mother) who could not accept him. Such ambiguity is indicative of Yolanda's internal confusion and effort to make sense out of this new development in her own family, within the context of her previous experiences and identity. In fact, linguistically, her use of the hedge phrase "kind of" suggests that her underlying expectations call her to feel much the same way as this cousin who could not accept her son being gay.

This account from Yolanda bears a high degree of embeddedness in the surrounding discourse. At first, she limits her telling to only the core of the story (line 148), that her adult daughter recently came out to her as a lesbian and that she is struggling with how to talk about it, with both her daughter and other people. She keeps her telling limited to fairly brief disclosures that respond strictly to the activity taking place (the initial two go-arounds responding to the facilitator's questions); the length of turns she takes is similar to those that preceded and follow. As opposed to a cohesive, continuous account, she tells bits of the story at a time (lines 187, 192, 195, 236), often prompted or inspired to continue only by a co-teller's comment or question. In these ways, Yolanda's story is highly embedded in the conversation of which it is a part and emerges through an extended sequence of turns with other co-tellers.

In terms of tellability, Yolanda initially almost downplays the magnitude of her recent personal experience of having her daughter come out to her ("I kind of feel the same way...except my daughter told me last year she was lesbian and so it's been really hard for me.") She offers very little elaboration on her "really hard" experience until Lily directly asks her, suggesting that Yolanda did not initially deem this as a story worthy or important enough to tell. Then when she went to answer Lily's question, she was hesitant and searching for words in order to "make it sound better," another indication that she was questioning both the morality and the reportability of this story. Additionally, she altered her original perspective about her daughter's coming out as "shocking". She first stated (on two separate occasions) that both she (line 209 and 215) and her friends were shocked (line 187), and later in that same segment contradicts herself by claiming that "nobody was really shocked" (line 268). This summary denial of others being shocked after she had described others just prior as having been exactly that, shocked, is an

indication of her own ambivalence about the tellability of this story. The unevenness and awkwardness with which Yolanda recounts this story suggests a low degree of tellability.

Yolanda's tellership of the story of her daughter's recent coming out is gradual and hesitant. She is caught up in questioning how she should think and feel about the possibility of her daughter being gay in light of authors of her story who are not present, her family of origin and the script set forth by the larger society. Yolanda not only allows but almost relies upon other group members to help her tell this story. Both Lily and Leilani participate as collaborative co-tellers by asking key questions that elicit her elaboration. Then Sally takes a very active role by adding her perspective as someone who has known Yolanda and her daughter prior to this discussion. The layers Sally adds to the story include both a point of view that Yolanda had not yet mentioned (being fearful that their children would experience discrimination), and also suggest a possible new frame with "But my point of view is, if you're happy and you love each other then do what you need to do. You know, live your life." With these subsequent layerings, Sally is offering a new and different identity for Yolanda to take up, that is the identity of the loving mother who is concerned for her daughter's safety and happiness. In fact, Sally diminishes and denies the importance of the first re-frame of concern with her use of the contrastive connective "but" thus emphasizing the re-frame about happiness and love. Interactionally, Yolanda is then in a position to accept or reject this casting, thus allowing it to complicate and dilute the picture of herself as a mother who is struggling to embrace her daughter as acceptable and normal, the identity she has foregrounded up to that point.

Finally, when both Yolanda and Sally appear to have said their piece, Bernard is eagerly awaiting the opportunity to begin his own parallel narrative, in which he is both exploring his own convictions around this subject and adding layers of perspective and possibility to Yolanda's

narrative. For example, Bernard states “Maybe it’s that because I grew up at a time when it [homosexuality] was still in the closet that there’s still that little, little piece of it that still feels funny when I actually do see it or come, come that close.” With this introspective speculation, Bernard makes a move to normalize Yolanda’s (and his own) reactions as appropriate in light of the cultural messages they both grew up with and internalized, thus supporting her explorations into why she feels the way she does, and her efforts to find a frame of reference that is authentic to her now. The location of this early storytelling of Yolanda’s toward the emergent pole of all five narrative dimensions as described thus far is evidence that she is exploring and quite unresolved with her frames of reference surrounding this discussion.

On the second evening of dialogue, another narrative arose from Yolanda during a period of free-flowing discussion. Leilani had posed a question to group, just following Bernard’s joking with Yolanda that he pictured her jumping up and down in celebration if her daughter were to go back to dating men. The exchange went as follows:

292	Facilitator:	Well I’d follow up with that to just understand, and this
293		would be for everybody. My question would be what
294		worries us that someone would have a lifestyle, a gay
295		and lesbian lifestyle. What, what kind of worries us?
296		What, what makes someone jump up and cheer or feel
297		relief?
298	Yolanda:	Well I know the things that my daughter has expressed
299		to me, because now she’s experiencing them, is the
300		prejudice and how, how there’s so much discrimination
301		against lesbian and gays, which she’s told me. You
302		know I never thought about it really, but, and I haven’t
303		told my family. I think because I don’t know if it’s
304		because I’m ashamed or you know my dad’s very
305		straight laced. When I was growing up, he didn’t even
306		accept African Americans. You know we weren’t
307		allowed to be friends with them. We weren’t allowed to
308		talk to them. I couldn’t bring anybody, you know even
309		if I had a friend I couldn’t bring somebody home. You

310 know just very, very closed minded about everything.
 311 So I haven't told them about my daughter. So you
 312 know, I think it's just what other people are going to
 313 think about it for me.

In this excerpt we hear Yolanda's continued questioning around moral stance and what, for her, is the right and good way to be – similar or different from her own father. In her negative statement in line 302, (“I haven't told my family yet”) alludes to an underlying set of expectations that telling her family is something one would and should do. She is once again highlighting the social conditioning she received as a younger person, that said differences in people (whether in race or sexual orientation) were not acceptable and cause for rejection of “them.” And yet, more so than in the excerpt from Session 1, she is largely pointing to forces outside herself (her father's attitudes) as the source of this prejudice. Through a linguistic lens, her use of the hedge word “even” in line 305 tells us that she would expect acceptance of African-Americans to be the least her father should have done. And thus she reveals a frame of reference that calls for people to actually be accepting of even more difference than that in life.

The uncertainty and fluidity in Yolanda's moral perspective is evident in statements such as “...I don't know if it's because I'm ashamed or you know my dad's very straight laced.” I argue this is an example of the movement of Yolanda's frame of reference from being subject to somewhat more object. In telling this story about her father's prejudice, she is displaying a deepened level of internal examination about how she came by the earlier-stated belief that ‘it's not normal to be gay’ and she is building an awareness and insight regarding her own ways of knowing about this topic. In Mezirow's (1993, 2000) terms, Yolanda is engaging in the reflective discourse and critical self-reflection inherent in the process of perspective transformation.

Later stories: Yolanda. Selections from Yolanda's storytelling occurring later in the dialogue series demonstrate further progress along this trajectory toward a transformed frame of reference, one more suited to the recently added complexities of her life and identity. On the fourth and final evening of dialogue, Yolanda told a brief story during the opening check-in go-round which went like this:

- 314 Yolanda: ... but one thing, you know we had talked about, you had
 315 asked me last week what my daughter had expressed as
 316 far as discrimination that she had experienced.
- 317 Facilitator: Right, yah. I did ask you that.
- 318 Yolanda: So I talked to her today and asked her. She was kind of in
 319 a hurry but she just said that she experiences a lot of
 320 discrimination from men when they see her with her
 321 partner. And then you know she's been working in a
 322 salon, she's an aesthetician, so she does waxing and
 323 facials and she does a lot of Brazilian's on women and she
 324 can't tell anybody what she is because these women
 325 would freak out if they knew a lesbian was doing
 326 Brazilians. You know, does everybody know what a
 327 Brazilian is? That's where, they wax all the hair off your
 328 bottom. Men and women. So she just said you know, she
 329 can't say who she is in the salon because these women
 330 would freak out if they knew. And most all her clients are
 331 women. So that was pretty much all she expressed.
- 332 Facilitator: Yah, thanks for doing that.
- 333 Yolanda: You're welcome.

In looking for Yolanda's moral stance in this story, her perspective toward what is good or right, we notice her use of the phrase "freak out" twice in describing the potential reaction her daughter anticipates from her clients if they were to find out she was a lesbian. The extent to which Yolanda's and her daughter's predictions are accurate that the women patronizing the salon would be bothered by having a lesbian perform this salon service for them carries little

import for the present analysis; it is their perception that this would be occur that is impacting their frames of reference. This choice of words suggests Yolanda's perception that a "freak out" reaction from the clients would be unnecessarily dramatic, fear-based and unwarranted for the situation. Linguistically, "freak out" is evaluative language that compares freaking out with another reaction that would be more in line with what Yolanda might think would be appropriate (something less dramatic and stigmatizing; something more accepting). Furthermore, in her explanation to the group that because of these potential over-reactions from female clients, her daughter is not free to "tell anybody what she is" or to "say who she is" in her place of work, Yolanda is acknowledging her recognition of this prejudice and stigma her daughter faces. In contrast to her early storytelling above, in which her fluctuating moral stance seemed to be dependent on deciphering whether her daughter's homosexuality could be viewed as 'normal' or 'acceptable,' here in this story, Yolanda's frame of reference has shifted to the prejudice of others as the non-virtuous phenomena.

This story also stands in contrast to Yolanda's earlier storytelling across the other narrative dimensions as well. In terms of linearity, this telling displays a degree of closed causal order unseen in earlier stories by Yolanda. She recounts this story in a completely logical fashion, first grounding its rationale in the conversation from the previous week, then giving the context of her daughter's job, and making the connection with "because these women would freak out if they knew a lesbian was doing Brazilians." When she realizes that everybody may not know what a Brazilian is, she assertively offers the explanation, and reiterates the causal connection of *if* clients knew their aesthetician was a lesbian, *then* they would be likely to "freak out." Further reinforcing the causal order, as mentioned, she also clearly draws the connection for listeners to the fact that, *because of* this social prejudice about lesbians, her daughter is not

able to be herself at work. Tannen (1993) calls this a backtrack because the speaker, operating from a frame that recognizes the need for causal coherence, doubles back to fill in the gaps of the explanatory chain.

On the dimensions of embeddedness, tellability, and tellership, Yolanda's telling demonstrates further movement toward the performative end of the narrative continua. The story, while shorter in length than the typical "detached" narrative discussed by Ochs and Capps (2001), is not embedded in surrounding conversation, but was launched by Yolanda during her check-in at a time when the group's conversation had not adopted any particular focus and thus her introduction of this material was disconnected from its discursive surroundings. In similar light, because she took the initiative to introduce the story at a time during the dialogue when it did not 'fit' within any theme underway, Yolanda saw this story as relevant and worthy of telling and listening, having high tellability. In contrast to the first story presented above when her telling was dependent at every turn upon the participation of her co-tellers to show interest and to collaborate with questions and additional material, Yolanda is the singular teller of this story. The relative movement of Yolanda's narrative along each of these dimensions, from relatively emergent to relatively more performative indicates an increasing stability and coherency in her associated frames of reference surrounding this topic.

To offer a final example of Yolanda's transforming frame of reference, this excerpt was spoken midway through the last session of dialogue in response to a prompting question from Leilani:

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| 334
335
336 | Facilitator: | What are the advantages to straight people when the acceptance is there? When there's a gay friendly environment, what do we [straight people] gain? |
| 337 | Yolanda: | Well then we can feel comfortable with everybody else |

338 because everybody will feel comfortable. You know
 339 there won't be that stigma, oh, you know if I'm talking
 340 to a gay person people are going to look at me and say,
 341 you know, oh is she gay? Where if it was accepted by
 342 everybody that, you know like I'm thinking, if it was
 343 accepted and my daughter had said to me, I'm gay, you
 344 know and if it wasn't even an issue in society what you
 345 are, then it probably wouldn't have been an issue for
 346 me either. But since it is an issue then it's an issue, I
 347 feel it's an issue for me, or it was.

Once again, at a subsequent point that same last night of the dialogues, we hear a similarly more certain and firmer moral stance that society's stigma around homosexuality is actually what produces the "issue" here. In her use of the modal "would not have been" in line 345, Yolanda is expressing an underlying expectation that she has not heretofore expressed and that contrasts with the elements of frame that dominated her talk early on. Since, according to Tannen (1993), the modal is an inference on the part of the speaker that represents evidence of her expectations, Yolanda is beginning to assert that the only reason homosexuality has been an issue for her is because she learned to feel that way from society. She is beginning to distinguish herself from society's dictates. With this forward-looking story, she imagines an alternate, improved reality in which her feelings toward her daughter would not be tainted by outside messages that condemn gays and lesbians. Yolanda's frame of reference has expanded its structure to include her deepened self-awareness of how powerful culturally-dictated stigma can be and how she had adopted "society's" issues as her own on the topic of homosexuality.

Drawing from a systematic review of Yolanda's participation, and specifically of her storytelling, throughout the entire corpus of dialogue data, I selected the preceding samplings to illustrate the nature of the transformation taking place in her frame of reference regarding homosexuality. I argue that Yolanda's way of knowing about homosexuality, transported along

by the vehicle of her experience of her daughter's coming out, was fundamentally expanded. When the dialogues began her narrative revealed someone struggling to unleash herself from social conditioning that forbade her from embracing this new information about her daughter, messaging that claimed non-heterosexual people were outside of normality and acceptability. And yet, through the narrative exploration of conversation in this environment, she came to recognize how the scripts from her upbringing were no longer fitting her identity as a fair-minded person and a mother who loves and wants to support her daughter. In Kegan's (2000) conceptual terms, Yolanda was making the journey from socialized mind to self-authoring mind in her emergent recognition that her perspectives about homosexuality had been based on the ideas of others, ideas which she could now see a choice to accept or reject. Although this transformation is likely far from complete for Yolanda, she departed The Straight Talk Dialogues with a more nuanced, more dependable frame of reference than the one she possessed when she arrived.

Eli: A Quest for New Perspectives

Eli was a 38 year-old single white male who was extremely quiet at first, speaking only a few sentences or even just a few words in response to Leilani's prompts or questions from others. As the dialogues proceeded, however, Eli seemed to relax and feel increasingly comfortable expressing himself within the group. He began taking risks to ask questions of others and increasingly accepted challenges from other group members who pushed him to explore his own perspectives. From his very first contributions it was clear to everyone in the group that Eli struggled to articulate his perspectives, and held some very confusing, even conflicting, feelings about gay and lesbian people.

In his opening comments he mentioned having had some negative experiences both as a child, when a gay piano teacher “hit on” him, and more recently as an adult when he lived in a neighborhood of Denver where many gay people lived and he apparently felt affronted by their interactions with him. At the same time, later in the dialogues, Eli told stories about a gay male couple with whom his parents were good friends, and also a lesbian couple he himself considered friends. When Eli would attempt to share his perspectives in the group, he regularly appeared nervous and spoke awkwardly and disjointedly in a tone of voice so quiet that others often had difficulty understanding him. Eli quickly became the focus of much curiosity and attention from others in the group, as evidenced by several of their questions to him as well as an extra effort by some to let Eli know he was supported in *whatever* he expressed.

Early stories: Eli. In his introductory remarks early in the first session of dialogue, Eli told a brief story about his experiences living near Colfax in Denver, an area where he perceived many gay men to frequent.

348	Eli:	So I mean, my experiences more, kind of brought,
349		brought me into thinking, it was a little bit of
350		prejudicial when I moved to Denver cause I kind of
351		had to watch out. I lived in a gay area so there was
352		more outgoingness there. Men would be advancing
353		themselves a little bit more cause it was more
354		widespread there. So my experiences were a little bit
355		more guarded. I, I kind of was maybe a little
356		prejudicial, I try not to be, accept them how they were.
357		And, so I kind of used society, society’s laws a little
358		bit to define homosexuals.

In this excerpt we hear an important frame-of-reference-in-story for Eli, his perspective that to some degree or in some contexts, gay men are a potential source of harm to him and are to be distrusted (“I kind of had to watch out”, “my experiences were a little bit more guarded”).

Also noticeable here are Eli's choices of words like "them," "themselves," and "they" to describe the category of 'gay men' which suggests the degree to which he perceives himself as unlike and apart from men who are gay. His use of the phrase "it was more widespread there" to describe male homosexuality in his former neighborhood suggests he may have viewed gayness as more of a problematic condition or illness rather than neutrally, as a demographic characteristic of a segment of the population (i.e., someone with a neutral view would not typically say about Black or Chinese or Jewish identity that "it was more widespread there"). It seems that Eli viewed the gay men's "advancing themselves" toward him during that time in his life as the type of "violation" Ochs and Capps discuss related to the dimension of moral stance. They assert that tellers will, as Eli does here, recount the violation and take a moral stance toward it in order to initiate a discursive forum to clarify, reinforce, or revise what they believe and value (Ochs and Capps, 2001).

Alongside his prejudicial and distancing language, there is evidence that such points of view do not define Eli's entire frame of reference regarding gay people and that he is self-aware of his own desire to embrace a different perspective, one that is truer to the complexities and range of his experiences with gay people. He uses the word "prejudicial" to describe his own views which he seems to imply he no longer holds and acknowledges an awareness that this "prejudice" stemmed from his internalization of "society's laws." These contrasting viewpoints are indicators of Eli's uncertain and fluid moral stance with which he entered the dialogue sessions. As the sessions progressed Eli grapples with this shifting frame of reference, the wavering structure of his expectations regarding gay people, even more openly and actively. In this regard, Eli's storytelling across the dialogues displays a strong example of what MacIntyre (1984, in Ochs and Capps, 2001) called the "narrative quest" and Ochs and Capps describe as "a

primary medium for moral education, in that each recounting involves piecing together the moral meaning of events” (p. 51).

On the second evening of dialogue, Eli’s frame of reference becomes further “destabilized” (Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.51) when it is challenged on two different occasions by stories told by other group members. During the continuum activity, after the group had responded to and discussed three of the continuum prompts Leilani had put forth, she began to solicit ideas for additional prompts from the group. At that point, the following exchange took place:

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---|
| 359
360 | Eli: | I want to, I’m just curious how people would react if they were hit on by someone of the same sex? |
| 361
362 | June: | If I go to a gay bar and I’m not hit on, I’m disappointed. |
| 363 | Eli: | Really? |
| 364 | Bernard: | Hit on by a man or woman? |
| 365 | Facilitator: | That’s why she’s down there
<i>[referring to June’s positioning at the furthest pole on the continuum]</i> |
| 366 | Eli: | That’s amazing <i>[extremely surprised tone of voice]</i> . |
| 367
368
369 | June: | More, more if I walk into a lesbian bar, I’m just like well what’s wrong with me, you know. I’ve been told it’s because I’m too straight. |
| 370 | Eli: | Wow. |

The actual story being told here is June’s in her recounting of a general sequence of events, supposedly based on actual past experiences, in which she implied her expectations that if one is a woman and one is in a lesbian bar then one ought to expect the possibility of someone

expressing an interest. In linguistic terms, we see this frame reflected in June's statement of the negative ("*not* hit on") since being hit on when in a lesbian bar is actually the expectation she holds. Additionally, she demonstrates her viewpoint that, when in a lesbian bar, being 'hit on' by another woman is a good thing, complimentary perhaps or affirming of one's sexual attractiveness in general. We see this underlying expectation in June's use of the evaluative language ("what *wrong* with me"), which suggests that being seen as attractive in that setting would have been "right". And her statement about being told she's "*too* straight", is a measurement against the proper amount of 'straightness' and suggests her belief that if she had less of this 'straightness' she would be more likely to pass as a lesbian herself and to be seen as attractive to lesbian women, a capacity she was apparently content to believe she possessed until others told her differently.

I present June's account here for the apparent impression it made on Eli who was visibly and verbally quite surprised at June's response to his question ("Really?," "That's amazing"; "Wow"). June's frame-of-reference-in-story presented a strong contrast and challenge to Eli's frame of reference regarding the meaning behind a person of the same sex showing sexual interest in someone, even when the recipient of that attention is straight. June's telling indicated that she feels entirely unthreatened by the hypothetical scenario under discussion, and to the contrary, that she views sexual attraction from anyone, gay or straight, as equally complimentary. As apparent from his reaction, Eli had not entertained the possibility of such a perspective, one that was far outside the realm of answers he anticipated to his question. I argue here that Eli experienced what Mezirow would call a disorienting dilemma, an event that further challenged his existing structure of expectations about what it means for a gay person to be attracted to a straight person. He elaborates further on his frame of reference a few minutes later:

- 371 Eli: So I would probably be on that side for that question
[*‘that side’ refers to the end of the continuum that is
opposite June’s position; ‘that question’ refers to the
one he himself asked of the group about how they
would feel if they got ‘hit on’*] .
- 372 Because if any guy comes on to me I know, you know I
373 really get standoffish and I tend to repel through
374 that...”.
- 375 Facilitator: How does it make you feel Eli, how does it make you
376 feel?
- 377 Eli: Violated.
- 378 Facilitator: Okay.
- 379 Eli: And it’s not that I don’t see it as like attractiveness or
380 maybe personal, what do you call it, assuredness? I
381 mean it’s more like they’re expecting me to be
382 something, it seems like with men. Now women I’m
383 fine, I mean that’s great. But men on the other hand,
384 it’s like they’re, you know it’s a sexual thing. So that’s
385 probably what they’re fantasizing about to you, doing
386 these certain things and so. And in an aggressive
387 manner, it’s, I mean I guess that’s where I tend to
388 change the, maybe the terms or something vs.,

In stark contrast to the frame that June conveyed above about ‘being hit on by a gay person,’ Eli’s statements here reflect his underlying expectations that a gay man coming on to him signifies an act of disrespect and even personal attack. Most directly, his use of the term “violated” is a moral judgment that implies a bad or unvirtuous intention on the part of the gay man, which is reinforced by the evaluative term “aggressive.” However, in the first and last sentences of Eli’s last comment above, he has shifted the focus of his attention on this topic from the hypothetical gay man to himself, acknowledging the role his own perceptions might be playing in his interpretations. I argue this shift of Eli’s focus and this occurrence of reflective introspection is a response to the contrasting frame presented just prior by June. He starts off

with a direct reaction to June's affirmation of feeling complimented by saying "it's not that I don't see it" the way June described, as a self-confident person seeing me as attractive (my rephrase). However, he goes on to explain that, when it's a *man* coming on to him, he feels the man is reading Eli as gay ("they're expecting me to be something") and that appears to be what bothers him. Thus we see Eli's frame that says gay men who make a pass at him are attacking him because, they are disrespectfully presuming that Eli himself is gay, or they have no regard for Eli's sexual orientation and are making the pass anyway. At the same time, in the next sentence, he comes back into reflection upon the premise for his own perspective on this, acknowledging the discrepancy between his standards for men and women in this regard ("I guess that's where I tend to change the, maybe the terms or something"). This is an example of Tannen's backtrack, a linguistic move to double back and fill in background information to lend coherency to his own account. In this instance, Eli doubles back to fill in the explanatory acknowledgment that perhaps his own logic, in 'changing the terms' is not entirely sound. This statement from Eli also reflects a shift towards a more closed linearity, and indication of emerging coherence in Eli's thinking on this topic.

A few minutes later in this same discussion, Bernard ended up telling a fairly lengthy story that occurred many years ago about having been picked up while hitch-hiking by an older gay man. The man ended up manipulating the situation and taking Bernard back to his home in a deceptive attempt to initiate a sexual encounter. When Bernard realized what was actually going on, as he told the story, he calmly told the man that he was not interested, left the house, and went on with his travels. Eli offered a singular comment in response to Bernard's story by saying "You handled that really well" which indicates his underlying expectation that this situation would be very difficult to handle, as evidenced by his use of the evaluative adverb

“well” with added emphasis from the hedge word “really.” Again we see the re-emergence of Eli’s underlying frame of reference that having a gay man express interest in him is an aversive, problematic situation. In these last two instances with Eli, within a matter of minutes the uncertainty in his moral stance is evidenced in his wavering between the aversive response and the self-questioning of that same response.

In Eli’s responses to both June and Bernard’s accounts of their own reactions to having been ‘hit on’ by a person of the same sex, we are witnessing several important elements in the progression of Eli’s transformation. Both of their stories present Eli with alternative frames of reference which undermine his existing frame of reference surrounding the scenario of a gay person acting on an attraction toward a straight person. Consequently these interactions have presented Eli with the opportunity to reflect upon the bases for his own set of expectations. Eli’s comments during the closing circle that night demonstrate that he was orienting to these exchanges as significant for his own expectations:

- | | | |
|-----|--------------|---|
| 389 | Eli: | It was really a, I mean it’s kind of by the, the answer I |
| 390 | | thought some people might be offended when they |
| 391 | | were, if they, if an advance was made on them by |
| 392 | | someone of the same sex. But that wasn’t the answer I |
| 393 | | got there. I was amazed that you guys were just willing |
| 394 | | to go with that. You know accept it and say, you |
| 395 | | know, it wasn’t anything against the grain or anything, |
| 396 | | so it kind of amazes me. |
| | | |
| 397 | Facilitator: | That was amazing to you? |
| | | |
| 398 | Eli: | Yah, I thought some more people would retract from |
| 399 | | that. |

Here again, in his use of the negative statement “it wasn’t anything...,” we see the evidence of Eli’s frame that it actually was ‘against the grain’ (odd) for a straight person to

‘accept’ a gay person expressing attraction toward them and to not be offended or repulsed by that scenario. Importantly, Eli’s self-awareness and acknowledgment of his amazement represents, I argue, evidence that he has embarked on the earlier phases of meaning clarification involved in transformational learning, namely the disorienting dilemma and the beginnings of critical assessment of his assumptions. In a story Eli told at the next dialogue session, his engagement with this process was further revealed.

Later stories: Eli. On the opening ‘check-in’ go-around of the third dialogue session, Eli shared the following story about a recent encounter with one member of a gay male couple who were friends of his sister’s. I include the telling in its entirety in order to most fully demonstrate the contrasting narrative dimensions from Eli’s earlier stories.

- 400 Eli: There wasn’t a lot as of late, though my sister is friends
 401 with a gay couple and they’re two men. One’s a lot older
 402 than the other. And we had a, I talked to the younger one
 403 there when we waited for his partner to come to the house.
 404 And he was, he was really a, you know seemingly an
 405 attractive guy and I’ve known him for a while. He’s an
 406 artist and he’s really into all these interesting sculpture
 407 designs and he has a couple...He was asking me about
 408 taxidermy cause he’s interested in a transformation
 409 between, or the beauty in like skeletal remains and things
 410 like that.
- 411 Facilitator: Interesting.
- 412 Eli: So he’s got some, yah, he’s got a fawn, like partly like
 413 decomposed, I guess it’s kind of part, its body is still in a
 414 skeletal form though, it’s in his freezer. And he’s got all
 415 these odd things with sculptures, I’ve seen one of his art
 416 shows and some of the, some of his sculptures were human
 417 babies and they still had an intact penis for some reason
 418 but anyways, they seem to depict these nude forms with
 419 male genitalia and all that. I just was kind of talking to
 420 him about this, I didn’t really go into that but, and ask him
 421 why he’s into this kind of transcendence stuff that he’s, I
 422 don’t know, interesting person and I wonder if he wants to

- 423 get married to his partner. He's a lot older than him, by
424 like twenty years. And supposedly he still looks for
425 younger men as an attraction sexually but they're still
426 together and bonded through emotional things and stuff
427 like, and other ways.
- 428 Sally: So the older guy is still looking for younger men? Or he, is
429 the younger guy is still looking for somebody closer to his
430 age?
- 431 Eli: The younger guy.
- 432 Sally: Okay.
- 433 Eli: Yah. And I guess, I guess Jim's not worr-, the older fellow
434 isn't worried too much about him cheating on him or
435 anything cause they've been together for years, it's a
436 positive relationship. And so maybe that's not the central
437 issue in their particular relationship as far as the age. It's
438 nice to see it working out for them and everything.
- 439 Facilitator: So where, where are you in all that, since you had that
440 interaction?
- 441 Eli: Well you know I wondered if he was thinking of me in
442 certain terms sometimes. Cause I was a little younger than
443 him, but I don't put that much weight on it you know.
444 They're, that, that kind of did bring me into that kind of
445 mental state where I was going, wow, I hope he's not
446 checking me out. Is he, because I know that his partner is
447 really, that's a, you know a, what would you call it? A,
448 almost like marriage you know it's,
- 449 Facilitator: Yah, sounds like a life partner.
- 450 Eli: Life partner I think, yah. It didn't make me uncomfortable
451 this time or anything like that, so it's interesting.
- 452 Facilitator: That's interesting, yah. What do you make of that?
- 453 Eli: Well I guess it seems like this group has made an
454 impression on me. No I have never really, you know I feel
455 like over time I've done a lot less worrying about when,
456 you know or being in the wrong part of, not necessarily
457 worrying but being, what would you call it, somewhat

458 biased or anything or judgmental. I try not to go there at
459 all and I see these folks with their own individual
460 personality and feelings also.

In considering its narrative dimensions, compared to Eli's earlier narratives, this telling is characterized somewhat further toward the performative end of Ochs and Capps' continua. On the dimension of moral stance, Eli seems to take a fairly constant position of 'live and let live.' Despite the fact that he is describing an individual who creates highly unusual sculptures and a couple's relationship that is unconventional in many ways (multiple sexual partnering, twenty-year age difference), the most evaluative adjectives Eli uses are "odd" and "interesting". He repeatedly adopts this moral stance of relative nonjudgment, calling it a "positive relationship" and saying only that he "wonders" about whether the age difference and fidelity issues are of concern for the couple. There is a subtle suggestion that *if* the man with whom Eli was talking *had* been 'checking [him] out' then Eli would view this as a moral infraction to the couple's partnership, but he mentions this possibility only hypothetically and remains consistent to his stance of nonjudgment.

On the dimension of linearity, while still somewhat difficult to follow, this is comparatively the most temporally and causally coherent story Eli told throughout the dialogues. The causal connections he draws, for instance, between the one man seeking partners outside the relationship, the other man not being 'worried about cheating,' and his conclusion that "maybe that's not the central issue in their particular relationship" are logically related. Eli's telling is more detached than it is embedded, though the second half of his story is compelled by a question from Leilani. Similarly, with the minor exceptions of the questions from Sally and Leilani, Eli is the predominant and singular teller. Finally, in terms of tellability, Eli seems to recognize a reportability from the very start of this story, an awareness that it bears some

newsworthiness, more so than he had with any previous narrative. Such positioning along the continua of dimensions is characteristic of a more coherent, stable narrative, relative to his previous accounts, and of a teller who is somewhat less discombobulated.

Relative to the scenario which had been previously so troublesome for Eli, that of having another man express attraction toward him, we observe continued narrative questioning and fluctuation in his moral stance there as well. Albeit, when Leilani asks Eli a broad, unspecific question soliciting his reactions to what he had just shared about the gay male couple, Eli goes right to explaining that the thought had occurred to him (“that kind of did bring me into that kind of mental state where I was going, wow, I hope he’s not checking me out”), which in itself suggests that this frame for Eli, the frame he highlighted earlier about having to be guarded and self-protective around gay men, was easily brought to bear in this scenario as well. Consistent with his self-report, the hedge phrase “kind of” is further linguistic evidence that this underlying set of expectations was at play for Eli. Also, in his use of the negative statement (“It didn’t make me uncomfortable this time or anything like that”) we note the evidence of the same underlying frame that he would *expect* himself to have felt uncomfortable. And yet, to the extent that Eli’s self-awareness and his self-report are accurate, he indicates that in this instance he was actually not uncomfortable. I argue that, while Eli’s guarded frame of reference is still intact and operational, this discrepancy between his actual experience of feeling “not uncomfortable” (resulting in a more cohesive narration) and the lingering frame is an indication of Eli’s exploration and provisional trying on of new roles, relationships, and actions. With regard to his guardedness around gay men, there is starting to be a shift in Eli’s “structure of assumptions and expectations through which [he] filter[s] sense impressions” (Mezirow, 2000, p.16).

In the final paragraph (Line 453), Eli orients to this shift in himself, first (in a ‘half-joking’ manner) by suggesting that “this group has made an impression on me” and then talking about how he sees himself as less biased and judgmental now and tries to treat gay people as individuals. To most scholars of human development, it would seem unlikely that Eli (or anyone) would experience a full and complete transformation in his frame of reference over the short duration of these dialogues, especially given the sociocultural roots of prejudicial attitudes surrounding sexual orientation. Nonetheless the evidence suggests that, while he is still connected to his expectations of being uncomfortable in a situation where a gay man might be attracted to him, he is actively engaged in self-reflection about his own assumptions, as well as a process of stretching his comfort zone to experiment with a new layer of identity as someone who views “these folks with their own individual personality and feelings also.”

By examining Yolanda’s and Eli’s narratives through the lenses of Ochs and Capps’ (2001) dimensions, and Tannen’s (1993) types of evidence, I have shown various contrasts between their earlier and later frames of reference as they were revealed in the dialogue. Through the former lens, we have seen how early storytelling by both Yolanda and Eli reflected the characteristics of emergent storytelling across numerous dimensions and became relatively more coherent and intentional throughout the course of the sessions. Through the latter lens, we have seen the nature of their underlying expectations and assumptions about gay people and homosexuality in general move from relative struggle and rejection to increased acceptance and depersonalization as the dialogues progressed. In both of the above accounts, these individuals seem to have repositioned themselves relative to the issue of homosexuality such that their stories on this topic had moved from perspectives that held them subject to negative cultural portrayals, to perspectives that allowed for growing introspection and objectivity. Though

neither of these participants, by the end of the dialogues, had settled into what Mezirow would have deemed a fully transformed frame of reference, both Yolanda and Eli were en route to finding a more authentic way of understanding this topic for themselves, and themselves within this topic.

Chapter Seven: Quantitative Results

Dependent Variables

Two constructs were operationalized for the quantitative portion of this study. The first, feelings toward gay men and lesbians, were measured by the Feeling Thermometer on a scale of 0-100. Both feelings scores were highly correlated with each other, with only two participants giving a slightly lower (less positive) feeling toward gay men than toward lesbians on the pre-test, and only one doing so on the post-test. Therefore, these items were collapsed into one Overall Feelings about Gay/Lesbian People variable. The second and primary construct of interest, attitudes toward gay men and lesbians, was assessed using selected items from two established scales. The first established scale utilized was the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale for Heterosexuals (LGB-KASH) (Worthington, Dillon & Becker-Schutte, 2005). Of the five subscales that comprise this instrument, this study employed all but the knowledge subscale since the dialogue intervention was not theorized to affect knowledge directly. The four subscales that were measured indicate attitudes toward gay/lesbian/bisexual people as related to Civil Rights, Hate, Internalized Affirmativeness, and Religious Conflict. These subscales were developed to be interpreted separately, and therefore were not combined into one score (Worthington, Dillon & Becker-Schutte, 2005). A second set of attitude measures were borrowed from the Herek's (1998) Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gays Revised (ATLG-R) scale. A total of six items from this scale were asked, three questions regarding gay men and the same three questions regarding lesbian women. Responses on these items were summed to arrive at an Overall Attitude toward Gay/Lesbian People variable.

Participant Sample

The eligibility criteria for inclusion in this study were for the participant to be heterosexual and over the age of thirty. All participants in the sample (Table 4) identified themselves as heterosexual (n=15, 100%). The sample ranged in age from 32 to 73 years old, with an average age of 50 and included only white/Caucasian participants (93%) with one exception (7%) who was Latino/Hispanic/Chicano. The sample was two-thirds (n=10) female and one-third male (n=5). Educationally, the sample contained a full range of levels including two participants (13%) with a high school diploma or GED, three (20%) with some college experience, four (27%) with a college degree, five (33%) with a masters degree, and one (7%) with a postgraduate law degree. In terms of religious affiliation, three reported none (20%), four indicated Catholic (27%), one Jewish (7%), one Protestant (7%), and six (40%) selected “other” with write-in responses including “Christian,” “Agnostic,” “Spiritualist,” “Unitarian Universalist,” “Pagan,” and “not practicing.” Political affiliation was reported as Democrat (n=11, 73%), Republican (n=1, 7%) and Independent (n=3, 20%). All participants in the sample (100%) indicated knowing someone who is lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Twelve (80%) of participants reported having a friend or family member who is openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Table 4

Demographic characteristics of participants

Variable	Dialogue	Comparison	Total
	n = 8	n = 7	N = 15
	n	n	
Sex			
Women	5	5	10
Men	3	2	5
Total	8	7	15
Age			
30-39 years	1	2	3

40-49 years	1	2	3
50-59 years	4	2	6
60-69 years	2	0	2
70-79 years	0	1	1
Total	8	7	15
Race			
African Amer./Black	0	0	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0
Caucasian	8	6	14
Latino/Hispanic/Chicano	0	1	1
Mixed/other	0	0	0
Native American	0	0	0
Total	8	7	15
Sexual Orientation			
Bisexual	0	0	0
Heterosexual	8	7	15
Lesbian/Gay	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Total	8	7	15
Level of Education (highest completed)			
Did not graduate H.S.	0	0	0
Diploma or GED	0	2	2
Bachelors Degree	3	1	4
Masters Degree	3	2	5
Other (write in)	2	2	4
Total	8	7	15
Religious Affiliation			
Baptist	0	0	0
Buddhist	0	0	0
Catholic	3	1	4
Hindu	0	0	0
Jewish	1	0	1
Muslim	0	0	0
Protestant	0	1	1
Other (write in)	3	3	6
None	1	2	3
Total	8	7	15
Political Affiliation			
Republican	0	1	1
Democrat	8	3	11
Independent	0	3	3
Other (write in)	0	0	0
Total	8	7	15
Know someone LGB			
Yes	8	7	15

	No	0	0	0
	Total	8	7	15
<hr/>				
Have LGB family member or friend				
	Yes	6	6	12
	No	2	1	3
	Total	8	7	15

Two additional demographic questions were asked in the demographic section of the survey which did not end up being used in the analysis. One item asked participants if they considered themselves a religious person. Responses to this question ranged from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 6 (“strongly agree”) with a mean response of 3.2. The next item asked participants if they considered themselves a spiritual person. Responses to this question ranged from 3 to 6 with the same response options, and a mean response of 5.3.

Dialogue Intervention Group. Each volunteering participant was randomly assigned to either the dialogue intervention group or the comparison (“survey only”) condition. After random assignment, the dialogue group consisted of 8 people (3 males; 5 females) and the survey-only group consisted of 7 people (2 males; 5 females). All members of the dialogue group were white/Caucasian and ranged in age from 38-61 years old.

Means

Table 5 below displays scale range, pretest and posttest means for all the dependent variables for the dialogue and comparison groups, and results of the paired t-test. Examination of mean scores reveals that pre-test means were high for Civil Rights (range of 1-6 where 1 is opposing, 6 is favoring; means range from 5.14-5.75), and for Overall Attitudes towards Gays and Lesbians (range from 6-36 where 6 is positive, 36 is negative; means range from 9.63-14.43). Pre-test means were moderately high for Internalized Affirmativeness (range of 1-6 where 1 is little affirmativeness, 6 is great affirmativeness; means range from 3.91-4.18), and for

both Feelings toward Gay men (range of 0-100 where 0 is negative feeling, 100 is positive feeling; means range from 74.38-78.57), and Feelings toward Lesbians (range of 0-100 where 0 is negative feeling, 100 is positive feeling; means range from 74.38-81.43). Pretest means were low for Hate (range of 1-6 where 1 is low hate, 6 is strong hate; means range from 1.04-1.12) and for Religious Conflict (range of 1-6 where 1 is low conflict, 6 is high conflict; means range from 1.47-1.85). These numbers indicate that all participants, both dialogue and comparison groups, started off with relatively positive and affirming feelings and attitudes regarding homosexuality and gay/lesbian persons. The paired sample t-test indicates that there were no statistically significant ($p < .05$) changes between pre-test and post-test on any of the dependent variables.

Table 5

Paired Sample t-test: Pretest/Posttest Mean Differences

Measure	Scale Range	Group	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Change in predicted direction?
Civil Rights 5 items	1-6	Dialogue	5.75(.55)	5.88(.15)	.45	yes
		Comparison	5.14(.86)	5.40(.77)	.21	---
Hate 6 items	1-6	Dialogue	1.04(.08)	1.08(.18)	.35	no
		Comparison	1.12(.31)	1.02(.06)	.36	---
Religious Conflict 7 items	1-6	Dialogue	1.47(.23)	1.54(.52)	.75	no
		Comparison	1.85(1.15)	1.46(.66)	.30	---
Internalized Affirmativeness 5 items	1-6	Dialogue	4.18(1.31)	3.98(1.31)	.48	no
		Comparison	3.91(1.10)	4.14(1.14)	.23	---
FeelingsGays 1 item	0-100	Dialogue	74.38(22.27)	85.63(15.45)	.13	yes
		Comparison	78.57(9.00)	80.00(16.33)	.83	---
FeelingsLesbians 1 item	0-100	Dialogue	74.38(22.27)	84.38(15.45)	.13	yes
		Comparison	81.43(10.69)	80.00(16.33)	.85	---
OverallAttitudes 6 items	6-36	Dialogue	9.63(3.58)	10.00(3.89)	.76	no
		Comparison	14.43(4.35)	10.57(5.09)	.05	---

NOTE. Dialogue n=8, Comparison n=7 *p<.05

Two-Factor Mixed ANOVA

The two-factor mixed design analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to compare independent groups across a repeated measure (Hinton, 2004), and was selected for this analysis to compare the dialogue and comparison groups across their pretest/posttest scores on the survey. ANOVA tests were run for each dependent variable to determine if any significant interactions existed, or in other words to determine if the pretest-posttest differences were significantly different between the dialogue and comparison groups. Results of the analyses of variance are found in Tables 6-19. Hypotheses are reviewed here in light of these results.

Hypothesis #1. Subjects who participate in the dialogue intervention, compared to subjects in the survey-only comparison condition, will report more positive attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. LGB-KASH subscale scores for variables of Civil Rights, Internalized Affirmativeness, Hate, and Religious Conflict measured attitude changes. In addition, Overall Attitude toward Gay Men and Lesbians was a composite variable derived from 6 items on Herek's ATLG-R (1998) used to assess the construct of attitudes. The hypothesis was not supported. No statistically significant interaction or main effects were found between dialogue and comparison groups in posttest mean scores on the four LGB-KASH sub-scales, nor on the ATLG-R variable.

Civil Rights. A mixed ANOVA was conducted to assess whether there were time or group assignment differences in responses on the civil rights items. Result indicated no

significant main effect for time, $F(1, 13) = 2.56$, $p = .13$, nor for group assignment, $F(1,13) = 3.7$, $p = .10$. The interaction was also not significant with $F(1, 13) = .31$, $p = .59$ (Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and n for Civil Rights as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Intervention	Pre-Intervention			Post-Intervention		
	<i>n</i>	M	SD	<i>n</i>	M	SD
Dialogue Group	8	5.75	.55	8	5.88	.15
Comparison Group	7	5.14	.86	7	5.40	.77
Total	15	5.47	.75	15	5.65	.57

Table 7

Two-Factor Mixed Analysis of Variance for Civil Rights as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Variable and source	<i>df</i>	MS	F	η^2
Time	1	.27	2.56 (n.s.)	.164
Intervention	1	2.19	3.17 (n.s.)	.196
Time*Intervention	1	.03	.31 (n.s.)	.023
Error	13	.11		

* $p < .05$; n.s.=nonsignificant

Internalized affirmativeness. A mixed ANOVA was conducted to assess whether there were time or group assignment differences in responses on the internalized affirmativeness items. Result indicated no significant main effect for time, $F(1, 13) = .01$, $p = .93$, nor for group

assignment, $F(1,13) = .01$, $p = .94$. The interaction was also not significant with $F(1, 13) = 1.70$, $p = .22$ (Tables 8 and 9).

Table 8

Means, Standard Deviations, and n for Internalized Affirmativeness as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Intervention	Pre-Intervention			Post-Intervention		
	<i>n</i>	M	SD	<i>n</i>	M	SD
Dialogue Group	8	4.18	1.31	8	3.98	1.31
Comparison Group	7	3.91	1.10	7	4.14	1.14
Total	15	4.05	1.18	15	4.05	1.19

Table 9

Two-Factor Mixed Analysis of Variance for Internalized Affirmativeness as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Variable and source	<i>df</i>	MS	F	η^2
Time	1	.002	.01 (n.s.)	.001
Intervention	1	.02	.01 (n.s.)	.000
Time*Intervention	1	.34	1.70 (n.s.)	.116
Error	13	.20		

* $p < .05$; n.s.=nonsignificant

Hate. A mixed ANOVA was conducted to assess whether there were time or group assignment differences in responses on the hate items. Result indicated no significant main effect for time, $F(1, 13) = .29$, $p = .60$, nor for group assignment, $F(1,13) = .01$, $p = .91$. The interaction was also not significant with $F(1, 13) = 1.90$, $p = .19$ (Tables 10 and 11).

Table 10

Means, Standard Deviations, and n for Hate as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Intervention	Pre-Intervention			Post-Intervention		
	<i>n</i>	M	SD	<i>n</i>	M	SD
Dialogue Group	8	1.04	.08	8	1.08	.18
Comparison Group	7	1.12	.31	7	1.02	.06
Total	15	1.08	.22	15	1.06	.14

Table 11

Two-Factor Mixed Analysis of Variance for Hate as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Variable and source	<i>df</i>	MS	F	η^2
Time	1	.005	.291 (n.s.)	.022
Intervention	1	.001	.012 (n.s.)	.001
Time*Intervention	1	.035	1.90 (n.s.)	.128
Error	13	.018		

* $p < .05$; n.s.=nonsignificant

Religious conflict. A mixed ANOVA was conducted to assess whether there were time or group assignment differences in responses on the religious conflict items. Result indicated no significant main effect for time, $F(1, 13) = .69$, $p = .42$, nor for group assignment, $F(1,13) = .22$, $p = .65$. The interaction was also not significant with $F(1, 13) = 1.39$, $p = .26$ (Tables 12 and 13).

Table 12

Means, Standard Deviations, and n for Religious Conflict as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Intervention	Pre-Intervention			Post-Intervention		
	<i>n</i>	M	SD	<i>n</i>	M	SD
Dialogue Group	8	1.47	.23	8	1.54	.52
Comparison Group	7	1.84	1.15	7	1.46	.66
Total	15	1.64	.79	15	1.50	.57

Table 13

Two-Factor Mixed Analysis of Variance for Religious Conflict as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Variable and source	<i>df</i>	MS	F	η^2
Time	1	.18	.69 (n.s.)	.050
Intervention	1	.16	.22 (n.s.)	.017
Time*Intervention	1	.36	1.39 (n.s.)	.097
Error	13	.26		

* $p < .05$; n.s.=nonsignificant

Overall attitude toward gay men and lesbians. A mixed ANOVA was conducted to assess whether there were time or group assignment differences in response to the ATLG-R Attitude items. Result indicated no significant main effect for time, $F(1, 13) = 3.26$, $p = .09$, nor for group assignment, $F(1,13) = 1.87$, $p = .20$. The interaction was also not significant with $F(1, 13) = 4.81$, $p = .05$ (Tables 14 and 15).

Table 14

Means, Standard Deviations, and n for Overall Attitudes toward Gay Men and Lesbians as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Intervention	Pre-Intervention			Post-Intervention		
	<i>n</i>	M	SD	<i>n</i>	M	SD
Dialogue Group	8	9.63	3.58	8	10.00	3.89
Comparison Group	7	14.43	4.35	7	10.57	5.09
Total	15	11.87	4.55	15	10.27	4.33

Table 15

Two-Factor Mixed Analysis of Variance for Overall Attitude toward Gay Men and Lesbians as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Variable and source	<i>df</i>	MS	F	η^2
Time	1	22.63	3.26 (n.s.)	.200
Intervention	1	53.93	1.87 (n.s.)	.126
Time*Intervention	1	33.43	1.90 (n.s.)	.270
Error	13	6.95		

* $p < .05$; n.s.=nonsignificant

Hypothesis #2. Subjects who participate in the dialogue intervention, compared to subjects in the survey-only comparison condition, will report more positive feelings toward lesbians and gay men. The hypothesis was not supported. As measured by the two Feeling Thermometers, there were no significant differences in posttest feelings scores between the dialogue group and the comparison group.

Feelings toward gay men. A mixed ANOVA was conducted to assess whether there were time or group assignment differences in responses on the Attitude items. Result indicated no significant main effect for time, $F(1, 13) = 1.94, p = .19$, nor for group assignment, $F(1,13) = .01, p = .92$. The interaction was also not significant with $F(1, 13) = 1.16, p = .30$ (Tables 16 and 17).

Table 16

Means, Standard Deviations, and n for Feelings toward Gay Men as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

	Pre-Intervention			Post-Intervention		
	<i>n</i>	M	SD	<i>n</i>	M	SD
Dialogue Group	8	74.38	9.00	8	85.63	15.45
Comparison Group	7	78.57	22.27	7	80.00	16.33
Total	15	76.33	16.95	15	83.00	15.56

Table 17

Two-Factor Mixed Analysis of Variance for Feelings toward Gay Men as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Variable and source	<i>df</i>	MS	F	η^2
Time	1	300.06	1.94 (n.s.)	.130
Intervention	1	3.81	.01 (n.s.)	.001
Time*Intervention	1	180.06	1.16 (n.s.)	.082
Error	13	154.74		

* $p < .05$; n.s.=nonsignificant

Feelings toward lesbians. A mixed ANOVA was conducted to assess whether there were time or group assignment differences in responses on the Attitude items. Result indicated

no significant main effect for time, $F(1, 13) = .86, p = .37$, nor for group assignment, $F(1,13) = .03, p = .86$. The interaction was also not significant with $F(1, 13) = 1.53, p = .24$ (Tables 18 and 19).

Table 18

Means, Standard Deviations, and n for Feelings toward Lesbians as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Intervention	Pre-Intervention			Post-Intervention		
	<i>n</i>	M	SD	<i>n</i>	M	SD
Dialogue Group	8	74.38	22.27	8	84.38	15.45
Comparison Group	7	81.43	10.69	7	80.00	16.33
Total	15	77.67	17.61	15	82.33	15.45

Table 19

Two-Factor Mixed Analysis of Variance for Feelings toward Lesbians as a Function of Time and Group Assignment

Variable and source	<i>df</i>	MS	F	η^2
Time	1	137.14	.86 (n.s.)	.062
Intervention	1	13.39	.03 (n.s.)	.002
Time*Intervention	1	243.81	1.53 (n.s.)	.105
Error	13	159.07		

* $p < .05$; n.s.=nonsignificant

Pre/Post Changes at the Individual Case Level

Individual cases of only the dialogue participants were examined in order to take a closer look at whether and to what degree participants' scores may have changed from pretest to

posttest. Cases were examined for Attitudes (Civil Rights, Internalized Affirmativeness, Hate, Religious Conflict, and Overall Attitude toward Lesbians and Gay Men), as well as Feelings toward Gay Men and Feelings toward Lesbians (Tables 20-26). For the LGB KASH items, the mean of an individual's ratings on each item serves as the point of comparison for each of these scales. The Overall Attitude variable is derived from a summation of the six ATLG-R items on the survey. Finally, the Feelings Thermometer pre/post comparisons are the actual raw score responses from participants.

The range for mean scores on the Civil Rights subscale is 1-6, with higher scores indicating greater affirmation of lesbian/gay civil rights. With only two exceptions, there was zero change from pre-test to post-test for the participants, perhaps indicating the stability of this belief. Walter's mean rating on Civil Rights actually decreased by a very small amount (.20 of one point), whereas Eli's mean rating increased by 1.20 (Table 20). The actual items that comprise this subscale are as follows:

- I think marriage should be legal for same sex couples
- Hospitals should acknowledge same sex partners equally to any other next of kin.
- It is important to teach children positive attitudes toward LGB people.
- Health benefits should be available equally to same sex partners as to any other couple.
- It is wrong for courts to make child custody decisions based on a parent's sexual orientation.

Table 20

Individual scores on Civil Rights

Participant (Pseudonym)	Pre-Dialogue	Post-Dialogue	Change (Predicted Direction?)
Genevieve	6.0	6.0	0
June	6.0	6.0	0
Bernard	5.8	5.8	0
Walter	6.0	5.8	-0.2 (no)
Sally	5.8	5.8	0
Lily	6.0	6.0	0
Eli	4.4	5.6	+1.2 (yes)
Yolanda	6.0	6.0	0

The range for mean scores on the Internalized Affirmativeness subscale is 1-6, with higher scores indicating greater personalized affirmation and willingness to engage in activism on behalf of gay men and lesbians (Table 21). The actual items that comprise this subscale are as follows:

- I have close friends who are LGB.
- Feeling attracted to another person of the same sex would not make me uncomfortable.
- I would display a symbol of gay pride (pink triangle, rainbow, etc.) to show my support of the LBG community.
- I have had sexual fantasies about members of my same sex.
- I would attend a demonstration to promote LGB civil rights.

Table 21

Individual scores on Internalized Affirmativeness

Participant (Pseudonym)	Pre-Dialogue	Post-Dialogue	Change (Predicted Direction?)
Genevieve	4.0	4.4	+0.4 (yes)
June	5.8	5.8	0
Bernard	4.8	4.2	-0.6 (no)
Walter	4.8	5.2	+0.4 (yes)
Sally	4.8	3.4	-1.4 (no)
Lily	4.6	4.4	-0.2 (no)
Eli	3.0	2.0	-1.0 (no)
Yolanda	1.6	2.4	+0.8 (yes)

In general, scores on this subscale were lower than on the items dealing with civil rights, indicating more ambivalence or discomfort with these items. Scores did not change greatly from pre-test to post-test for anyone, while about half increased and half decreased. Consistent with her strident and personal affirmation expressed in the dialogue sessions, June's ratings on this subscale were notably above everyone else's and did not change.

The range for mean scores on the Hate subscale is 1-6, with higher scores indicating more hatred toward gay men and lesbians (Table 22). The actual items that comprise this subscale are as follows:

- It is important to me to avoid LGB individuals.
- I would be unsure what to do or say if I met someone who is openly lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- Hearing about a hate crime against a LGB person would not bother me.
- I sometimes think about being violent toward LGB people.
- I would feel self-conscious greeting a known LGB person in a public place.
- LGB people deserve the hatred they receive

Table 22

Individual scores on Hate

Participant (Pseudonym)	Pre-Dialogue	Post-Dialogue	Change (Predicted Direction?)
Genevieve	1.0	1.0	0
June	1.0	1.0	0
Bernard	1.0	1.0	0
Walter	1.0	1.0	0
Sally	1.0	1.0	0
Lily	1.0	1.0	0
Eli	1.17	1.5	+0.33 (no)
Yolanda	1.17	1.17	0

The range for mean scores on the Religious Conflict subscale is 1-6, with higher scores indicating more religious conflict regarding gay men and lesbians (Table 23). The actual items that comprise this subscale are as follows:

- I have conflicting attitudes or beliefs about LGB people
- I can accept LGB people even though I condemn their behavior.
- I have difficulty reconciling my religious views with my interest in being accepting of LGB people.
- I keep my religious views to myself in order to accept LGB people.
- I conceal my negative views toward LGB people when I am with someone who doesn't share my views.
- I try not to let my negative beliefs about LGB people harm my relationships with the lesbian, gay, or bisexual individuals I know.
- I conceal my positive attitudes toward LGB people when I am with someone who is homophobic.

Table 23

Individual scores on Religious Conflict

Participant (Pseudonym)	Pre-Dialogue	Post-Dialogue	Change (Predicted Direction?)
Genevieve	1.57	1.0	-0.57 (yes)
June	1.33	1.0	-0.33 (yes)
Bernard	1.14	1.71	+0.57 (no)
Walter	1.57	1.86	+0.29 (no)
Sally	1.14	1.43	+0.29 (no)
Lily	1.71	1.0	-0.71 (yes)
Eli	1.57	2.43	+0.86 (no)
Yolanda	1.71	1.86	+0.15 (no)

The range for mean scores on the Overall Attitudes toward Gay Men and Lesbians is 6-36, with higher scores indicating more negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians (Table 24). The actual items that comprise this subscale are as follows:

- I think lesbians are disgusting.
- Sex between two women is just plain wrong.
- Female homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in women. (reverse scored)
- I think male homosexuals are disgusting.
- Sex between two men is just plain wrong
- Male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men. (reverse scored)

This composite variable was obtained using a sum of each of the six individual items on the survey related to this construct. Thus, any missing data dramatically impacts the summed

composite. For unknown reasons, Eli left blank answers for pre-test questions 51, 52, and 60 resulting in a distortedly low overall pre-test score on this measure. In addition, Bernard left item 60 blank on his pre-test, also giving him a distortedly low overall pre-test score.

Table 24

Individual scores on Overall Attitude toward Gay Men and Lesbians

Participant (Pseudonym)	Pre-Dialogue	Post-Dialogue	Change (Predicted Direction?)
Genevieve	6.0	6.0	0
June	8.0	7.0	-1.0 (yes)
Bernard	7.0 (falsely low due to missing data)	8.0	+1.0 (no)
Walter	6.0	8.0	+2.0 (no)
Sally	12.0	9.0	-3.0 (yes)
Lily	14.0	10.0	-4.0 (yes)
Eli	9.0 (falsely low due to missing data)	16.0	+7.0 (no)
Yolanda	15.0	16.0	+1.0 (no)

The Feelings thermometer range is 0-100, with above 50 as feeling positive about a particular group, 50 as neither positive nor negative, and below 50 as feeling negative (Tables 25 and 26). These two items simply asked respondents to choose a number between 0 (extremely negative) and 100 (extremely positive) that indicated their feelings toward gay men, and separately toward lesbians.

Table 25

Individual scores on Feelings toward Gay Men

Participant (Pseudonym)	Pre-Dialogue	Post-Dialogue	Change (Predicted Direction?)
Genevieve	50	50	0
June	85	90	+5 (yes)
Bernard	50	90	+40 (yes)
Walter	100	95	-5 (no)
Sally	90	90	0
Lily	100	100	0
Eli	70	80	+10 (yes)
Yolanda	50	90	+40 (yes)

Table 26

Individual scores on Feelings toward Lesbians

Participant (Pseudonym)	Pre-Dialogue	Post-Dialogue	Change (Predicted Direction?)
Genevieve	50	50	0
June	85	90	+5 (yes)
Bernard	50	80	+30 (yes)
Walter	100	95	-5 (no)
Sally	90	90	0
Lily	100	100	0
Eli	70	80	+10 (yes)
Yolanda	50	90	+40 (yes)

Limitations and Discussion

Given the notable increases in the scores of Bernard, Eli, and Yolanda on the Feeling variables (Tables 25 and 26) it is somewhat surprising that no significant difference was found between this group and the comparison group. However, scores on these indicators also went up for several respondents in the comparison group as well. In considering why both groups may have seen increases on these variables, I was drawn to consider the design threat of history for the particular time period in which the study was conducted. From beginning to end, this study coincidentally took place during the last several weeks of President Obama's first presidential campaign. Specifically, the last dialogue session was held on the evening before Election Day.

Readers may recall the rising visibility of the same-sex marriage rights movement in the media also during this time, as well as the brand new President's unprecedented affirmation of same-sex couples' rights during his acceptance speech and beyond into his presidency. It is plausible that, given these sociocultural events witnessed by both dialogue and comparison group during the period of this study, both groups may have been influenced in an overall positive direction. Since both groups were exposed to these events with equal likelihood, the historical impact does not represent a threat to validity. Nonetheless, any increased positive change in the comparison group due to this outside influence would mask changes in the intervention group, making significance even more difficult to detect than it would have been without these particular historical effects.

Several limitations existed that influenced quantitative outcomes. The first limitation is the small sample size, which reduced the statistical power necessary for quantitative measures to detect any significant change. In future research, this limitation can be remedied by utilizing a larger sample size, possibly through obtaining funding to pay for the recruitment, coordination, and facilitation of additional dialogue and comparison groups, and perhaps by conducting the study on a college campus or among an established professional or community organization that could provide a more readily available sample.

The second limitation is that a selection bias existed. Pre-test means were positively biased for all outcome variables, indicating that everyone who volunteered to participate was already relatively affirming of gay men and lesbians. These positive pretest means created a ceiling effect for outcomes. For future research efforts, it will be important to make additional efforts to recruit a sample with more diverse perspectives surrounding homosexuality, including some participants with more negative viewpoints. Another way to address this, assuming a large

and varied enough sample, would be to obtain pre-test scores before random assignment, and select out those with lower means to participate in the study. Alternatively, offering the intervention in a college or professional setting would insure more of a range of participant perspectives.

The third limitation is that this was a convenience and not a random sample, so results are applicable only to this specific sample and cannot be generalized to others. A fourth limitation is there may have been a potential social desirability bias, with participants reporting more positive scores than may have honestly represented their beliefs and attitudes, for the purpose of appearing more acceptable to the facilitators, researchers, or fellow participants (in the case of the dialogue group). Steps taken to control for this were the insurance of confidentiality, and the use of a measure (LGB-KASH) that evidenced previous low correlation with a social desirability scale. Additionally, in the qualitative analysis of the final comments, several dialogue participants self-reported that they did not believe their attitudes had been changed through participation, thus having apparently not been influenced by social desirability bias. One way to tap into participants' latent or implicit beliefs is through the use of implicit attitude tests which were discussed in the literature review chapter of this thesis.

In summary, this study failed to reject the null hypothesis of no statistically significant differences in post-test scores between the dialogue and comparison group for all the dependent variables. Low power prevents any conclusions about the non-significant results. Caution must be made in interpreting these results, as it is not possible to accept the null hypothesis, but only to fail to reject it (Pagano, 1998). Still, some interesting observations are worth noting about the quantitative results. It is particularly unexpected and curious that, for all the dependent variables except the two Feelings measures and the Civil Rights subscale, dialogue participants' responses

actually became more negative, or moved in the disaffirming direction (though again, not significantly so) while their counterparts in the survey-only comparison group became more positively affirming on all measures but one (Feelings toward Lesbians) (Table 5). One possible explanation for such decreases could be statistical regression toward the mean, since pretest scores were so high to begin with. However, especially in a larger sample, we would expect to see similar changes in the comparison group, which we did not. Admittedly, such movement may seem at first consideration to be contradictory of a theory promoting dialogue as a prejudice reduction intervention. However, in future research, I would aspire to explore a different argument, one that hypothesizes that the kinds of de-contextualized perspectives captured by attitudinal scales such as these may in fact become more complicated and perhaps even more negative, as a natural progression through the process of transformation in a frame of reference.

Along these lines, while items from the Civil Rights subscale seem to appeal to a sense of justice and fairness, in a legal sense, for people living in the U.S., the other LGB KASH subscales ask about layers of a person's experience which could conceivably become more ambiguous in the process of a profound perspective transformation. Items such as "I would feel self-conscious greeting a known LGB person in a public place" (Hate subscale), or "I would attend a demonstration to promote LGB civil rights" (Internalized Affirmativeness subscale), and "I keep my religious views to myself in order to accept LGB people," (Religious Conflict subscale), all point to aspects of sexual orientation prejudice that, I contend, may become more convoluted and confusing before becoming clear and stable, for a heterosexual person who is exploring and sorting out their beliefs and perceptions on this topic. In the stories of Yolanda and Eli, from Chapter Six, we saw several instances of underlying expectations that did not

match what was being said on the surface and of moral stances that appeared one way in one story and differently in the next.

Another plausible, yet different explanation of the negative movement in scores from pre-test to post-test for dialogue participants is that they become more honestly self-reflective and self-aware as a result of their participation, which for some, may result in more negative scores at post-test. For example, both Bernard's and Lily's scores on Internalized Affirmativeness went in the negative direction, opposite from the predicted increase for this subscale. While these two entered the dialogues with some of the most avidly affirming attitudes toward gay people and related issues, they both had experiences during the dialogues in which they openly acknowledged encountering a deepened awareness about their own "blind spots" or aspects of their behavior that was not consistent with their stated beliefs. It may be that participant scores go in unpredicted directions because participants become more trusting, more honest, and less affected by social desirability, as a result of participation in the dialogues. I argue not in diminishment of the value of such 'snapshot' assessments such as the quantitative measures used here, but rather against the use of them alone, without the accompanying qualitative lens, when the aim is a nuanced understanding of how and for whom heterosexist attitudes undergo transformation.

Chapter Eight: Discussion and Implications

Discussion

In one of the earliest texts that explicitly examined sexual orientation prejudice through the lenses of psychology and education, authors asserted that in order to eradicate this prejudice, people need a vision of their relationships and societies without the cloud of homophobia and heterosexism (Livingston, Cogan, in Rothblum & Bond, 1996). Though the societal norm of stigmatization of non-heterosexuality is a massive social and cultural power, “it is not the will of God,” Livingston argues (p.255). It has been the will of human beings, but that is changing. More and more we are witnessing people’s unwillingness to accept a frame of reference that labels homosexuality as abnormal and inferior. Instead people are, in ever greater numbers, searching and struggling to find a way of understanding the lives and experiences of gay men and lesbians that is both consistent with their experiences and authentic to their values. The results of this study help to demonstrate one way, through dialogue opportunities, in which educators can support this transformational process in adults thus helping forge such a changed vision of society, one frame of reference at a time.

Because an understanding of context and types of interaction is essential to my socially-situated perspective on how learning occurs, I first examined the Straight Talk Dialogues in terms of their participant structures, the actual facilitated activities that occurred. This examination clarified which of the interactive structures employed by the facilitator occasioned conversational discourse and thus the emergence of storytelling, and which ones achieved other interactional goals such as reducing social anxiety or including less dominant voices. Another finding I arrived at through examination of the overall context of interactions was the importance

of certain relational qualities set up by the facilitator and cooperatively taken up by participants. These qualities of safety, structure, solicitation, and authenticity were characteristic of all the participant structures from which storytelling emerged and seemed important to the occasioning of open, trusting disclosure on the part of participants. I discuss these qualities of interaction further below in terms of the ways in which they contributed to answering each of my research questions.

How are frames of reference on topics related to sexual orientation and lesbian/gay people revealed and asserted by participants through interactive talk? In seeking to answer my first research question, I employed two different but complementary lenses for examining the discourse. Tannen's "surface evidence for underlying expectations" enabled me to identify numerous characteristics on the surface of participants' speech that revealed the content of their underlying frame. As such I was able to gain a vantage point for witnessing in my data how instances of repetition, false starts, hedges, negatives, contrastive connections, modals, inferences, evaluative language, and moral judgment exposed the speaker's unspoken set of expectations surrounding whatever they were talking about at that moment. Examining participants' narratives in terms of what this surface evidence could tell me about their underlying expectations regarding homosexuality allowed me to gain access to aspects of their perspectives and viewpoints which they may not have been saying or even self-aware of at times. For example, when a participant chose to comment about a recent encounter with a gay couple that "it was a good experience," this told me that the speaker carried some level of expectation that such an encounter would *not* have been a 'good experience,' because otherwise they would not have focused their comment in that way. These linguistic 'detectors,' if you will, allowed me

to get even closer to my data and brought a more finely-tuned mode of investigation to my examination of those same stories through Ochs and Capps' lens of the narrative dimensions.

Among Ochs and Capps' five dimensions of narrative, tellership, tellability, embeddedness, linearity, and moral stance, it was the dimension of moral stance that most clearly and directly pointed me toward a participant's frames of reference regarding homosexuality. This was so because the moral dimension of narrative is the only dimension defined by the content of a teller's story, as opposed to the process of their telling it as with the other dimensions. As such, in examining the dimension of moral stance in the stories told by participants, I was observing not only the degree of certainty in their stance but the contents of the stance as well. Thus whereas the other four narrative dimensions would reveal something more indirect about the speakers underlying expectations on the topic (for example, high tellability would reveal that the speaker viewed what they were speaking about to be rhetorically worthy), the dimension of moral stance pointed me directly to their frame of reference by expressing the speaker's judgment on the topic, albeit with variable degrees of certainty or uncertainty across the continuum. Ochs and Capps' dimension of moral stance is, by my assessment, a reflection of the same frame, or set of underlying expectations, that is seen through Tannen's 'moral judgment.' I will elaborate further on the revelatory nature of the moral stance dimension in responding to my third research question below.

If transformation in frames of reference is evident over the course of the dialogue series, how are these transformations achieved in the interactive talk? In responding to my second research question, I found Ochs and Capps' (2001) characterization of emergent stories, in contrast to performative ones, to be most useful in revealing a way to identify a shifting frame of reference, as opposed to a static, unchanging one. According to these authors, the messier,

rougher stories told at the emergent end of their continua “realize an essential function of narrative: a vernacular, interactional forum for ordering, explaining, and otherwise taking a position on experience” (p.57). Inspired by this profound claim from Ochs and Capps that a particular kind of storytelling, storytelling with particular dimensional characteristics, has the function of what I viewed as transforming a frame of reference, I ventured down the path of articulating this conceptual bridge. Used initially as a thinking device for me to more deeply conceive of how the five narrative dimensions lend insight into the process of transformational learning as defined by Mezirow, I began to develop the chart on page 167. Through an iterative alternation of multiple careful reviews of the storytelling excerpts in my data, and returning to the writings of Ochs and Capps and Mezirow, I identified key parallels showing up in these two disciplines (anthropological linguistics and adult learning, respectively) to account for the change and growth that both disciplines argue is taking place. This overlay of Mezirow’s changing frame of reference atop Ochs and Capp’s dimensional continua of narrative gave me a way to operationalize the transformation in this research question. Specifically, I began to see the co-occurrence of the more emergent dimensions of participants’ stories along with Mezirow’s reflective process which, as he theorized, takes place when a frame of reference undergoes transformation.

For a summary of my findings in this phase, the reader is referred to the parallels I have drawn in Table 3 (p.167). If, as Ochs and Capps (2001) propose, “the essential function of personal narrative [is] to air, probe, and otherwise attempt to reconstruct and make sense of actual and possible life experiences” (p.7), then they were describing on their terms the same process, I argue, that Mezirow was describing on his. Through the bridging of these theories I added Mezirow’s explicit notion of movement along a trajectory to Ochs and Capps point-in-

time capturing of the dimensional characteristics of a given narrative telling. This convergence gave me a way to look for ‘phases’ of transformation in my data, and specifically to identify, by looking at dimensions of narrative, frames of reference which seemed to be “pre-“, “post-, or “mid-transformation” on the topic being discussed. Accordingly, I was then able to draw inferences based upon the dimensional state of a given narrative as to the degree of transformation the underlying frame of reference had undergone previously and the extent to which it was actively in fluctuation during these dialogues.

What I discovered in the stories told by participants was, as might be expected, a range of different phases of transformation depending upon which participant and which frame of reference I looked at. I may have characterized one participant as post-transformational with regard to her frame surrounding same-sex marriage based on the complexity of her discussion, the apparent self-awareness of her assumptions surrounding the topic, as well as a high degree of tellability and singular tellership in the stories she told around this subject. Whereas I may have characterized a different participant as either pre-transformational in her frame on this topic if her language suggested that she had never examined the premises of her own assumptions surrounding it, or perhaps as mid-transformational if she seemed to be actively questioning such assumptions through the stories that she told. The fact that participants were all in slightly different phases of transformation from one another with regard to any given frame of reference surrounding homosexuality made sense to me in light of my basic understanding that each of us, depending on the experiences in our lives, is compelled to explore and examine our particular perspectives with uniquely individual timing.

My systematic reading and categorizing of stories according to the dimensions of narrative uncovered a method for seeing transformation in progress, a necessary first step toward

the end goal of answering my research question about how such transformations are achieved. Consistent with Ochs and Capps theory about the functions of emergent narrative, I observed the transformational process to manifest on the ‘emergent’ end of the continua of narrative dimensions, with multiple, active co-tellers, moderately tellable accounts, relative embeddedness in surrounding talk, nonlinear organization, and uncertain or fluid moral stance. It is critical to note and understand however, that I did not expect nor did I see a “complete” transformational process unfold from beginning to end, a narrative that began with performative characteristics, metamorphosed into displaying emergent characteristics, and culminated again in a performative telling. Said differently, I did not witness a frame of reference that showed up in the dialogues as unexamined and underwent such a profound shift as to be, by the end of the dialogues, solidly grounded in a different set of underlying expectations about the topic. Reasonably, one would not have anticipated such a deep change to have occurred within the short six-week duration of these sessions. Many transformational theorists have affirmed that this type of learning most often takes months to many years to resolve (Mezirow, 2000a; Edward W. Taylor, 2007; Tennant, 2005) Nonetheless, as exemplified in Chapter Six, I witnessed a number of different partial segments of the transformative process take place with regard to participants’ perspectives surrounding homosexuality.

Having employed the lens of the narrative dimensions to identify and select the narrative tellings where I believed transformation was being displayed, I then surveyed these interactions in search of common characteristics surrounding the narratives. I identified several conditions of the interactive dialogue which were present at least to some degree in all of the tellings. These conditions are, by my assessment, congruent with evolving descriptions of transformational

learning in the literature (Baumgartner, 2001; Edward W. Taylor, 2007) and very likely necessary for the transformational process to be moved forward through interaction.

Conditions for transformation.

1. Disorienting dilemma. In every instance of a transforming frame of reference, I could point to a single event or cumulative series of events that had served as, to use Mezirow's phrase, a disorienting dilemma for the participant. This triggering event or events may have occurred during the dialogues themselves, such as the case with Bernard coming to recognize a "blind spot" he held regarding the potential reality of his son being gay, and with June realizing that her parents actually had been more gay-affirming than she gave them credit for up to that point. Or in other cases, the triggering event(s) had already occurred prior to the dialogues commencing, such as was the case for both Eli and Yolanda's in the stories reviewed earlier. For Yolanda, the catalyst of her daughter's coming out as lesbian seemed to be the single event that propelled Yolanda into conflict with her existing frame of reference about gay people and homosexuality. For Eli, the disorienting dilemma seemed to be, rather than a single dramatic event as Mezirow had originally conceptualized, more of a "long cumulative process" (Taylor, 2000b, p.300). This disorienting 'process' for Eli centered around the unresolved conflict he was carrying between his earlier negative experiences with his piano teacher and feeling violated by men coming on to him as an adult, to his most recent experiences of having friendships with two different gay couples.

The disorienting dilemma serves a critical function in the transformative process, that of disrupting the individual's status quo, the current structure of their expectations about the subject

at hand. This disruption creates a dissatisfaction with their current frame(s) of reference and the need for a different way of understanding the subject in order to bring the knower back into equilibrium with their experiences. Having experienced some version of a disorienting dilemma which had not yet found new equilibrium, some though not all participants in the Straight Talk Dialogues seemed to engage the dialogue forum in service of their own quest to resolve the dilemma with a new or revised frame of reference.

2. *Questioning the existing and openly seeking new frames of reference.* This orientation toward seeking new frames of reference represented a distinct difference among the group members I deemed to be undergoing a transformative process and those who were not. Yolanda, Eli, and a few of the others to lesser degrees actively sought and either implicitly or explicitly requested ideas from fellow group members. As Ochs and Capps (2001) explain it, “narrators contending with life experiences struggle to formulate an account that both provides an interpretive frame and does justice to life’s complexities” (p.24). We saw this solicitation in Yolanda’s highly embedded narrative with multiple co-tellers, in which she repeatedly stated that she grew up believing that “being gay was just not normal,” while searching her past for the origin of this belief and deferring to her co-tellers for help in filling in the blanks of the new way of thinking that she was seeking. Eli, in a more direct manner, overtly stated his solicitation at one point in asking the whole group how they would feel about being “hit on” by a person of the same sex. In these and other cases of transforming frames of reference, the participant seemed to be aware of their own need to find a fuller, more complete way of understanding their experience and basis for choosing their reactions and behavior. Acting on this awareness, in an effort to

formulate a revised, more dependable account, they would either directly or indirectly turn to their co-participants for assistance in the reconstruction of the frame of reference.

Versions of this same seeking behavior have been noted in other discourse studies of transformational learning in higher education classrooms. For example, Lange (2004) viewed the moments when “students were consciously engaging their personal dilemma as a potentially transformative experience” (as cited in Taylor, 2007, p.183) as ‘pedagogical entry points’ which are important for an educator to learn to recognize. Similarly, Berger (2004) concluded that students in a graduate education program would gravitate to a transitional zone called the ‘edge of meaning’ in which they were “having difficulty articulating ideas and coherent thoughts, particularly when discussing ontological issues about their personal lives – the way they make sense of the world” (as cited in Taylor, 2007, p.183). This description of student discourse sounds remarkably aligned, and I argue is referring to the same process that occurred at the emergent pole of Ochs and Capps’ continua of narrative dimensions for participants in The Straight Talk Dialogues. Results of this study have shown that, for participants who have arrived at a dissatisfaction and questioning of their current frame of reference, the dialogue setting can provide a rich forum for this seeking and supporting exchange to take place among interlocutors.

Throughout the Straight Talk Dialogue sessions those instances of narratives that I’ve previously discussed as being either pre-transformational or post-transformational did not take on this seeking quality. For example nearly all the stories told by both Genevieve and Sally were absent this questioning, searching element. These two women consistently came across as satisfied and stable in their existing viewpoints, thus rarely leaving an opening or any ambiguity to which others may have responded in turn. There seemed to be an unspoken communication that took place among the group such that those in need of support for constructing new frames

of reference received that support. Those who expressed no need were left alone, discursively speaking, to continue on with their existing frames of reference.

Certainly these observations about a participant's openness to seeking and self-questioning raise an important issue about the potential scenario of a dialogue participant who is *not* open to questioning their own perspectives. Particularly in the context of an educational program to 'reduce prejudice,' it would seem that likely target audiences would include individuals who have either never yet experienced a disorienting dilemma surrounding homosexuality thus being content with their current frames of reference, and/or are not yet willing or ready to engage in the self-reflection and questioning necessary to transform a frame of reference which is no longer working for them. I address this aspect of the Straight Talk Dialogues below in terms of the limiting factor of the relatively narrow range of perspectives of those who were recruited. However, it has been asserted by the earliest and most respected of dialogue scholars (Bohm, 1996; B. A. Nagda et al., 2009) and adult learning theorists (Mezirow, 2003) that a certain suspension of judgment and seeking to identify common ground must be present. Dialogue as a mode for transforming frames of reference can only be effective with participants who share at least a basic commitment to understanding others' perspectives on an issue more fully.

3. An environment of safety, structure, solicitation and authenticity. My findings strongly suggest, consistent with many previous studies of group interventions across disciplines, that certain qualities of social interaction are critical if transformation of frames of reference is to take place. In order for the above two conditions to come to fruition, the emergence or acknowledgement of the disorienting dilemma and the openness to seeking and self-questioning, the social environment must be conducive. Based on my results, I dubbed these necessary

qualities safety, structure, solicitation, and authenticity. Safety refers to an established group norm of acceptance and respect regardless of the opinions, feelings, or attitudes expressed. In this dialogue series Leilani set the foundation of this element on the first evening with the listing and discussion of “agreements” (including confidentiality, I-statements, etc.) and then reinforced it with her attitude of non-judging exploration throughout. Dialogue participants seemed to easily follow Leilani’s lead in this regard. Not only were group members accepting of all opinions and emotions expressed, but they seemed to actively offer up additional safety in the form of reassurance for fellow group members who appeared to be struggling at particular times. This phenomena was most evident in the group’s rallying to support both Yolanda and Eli as they navigated their respective transformations.

The qualities of structure and solicitation are related as I saw them emerge in the participants’ dialogue. Structure refers primarily to the facilitated nature of the activities as delivered by Leilani, such that she created a container that gave participants a clear instruction for engaging in the dialogue. As opposed to leaving the interaction entirely unstructured, Leilani guided group members through activities such as the continuum exercise, the paired share drawings, and the inquiry circle. In some cases, beyond providing a mode of engagement, these structured activities also directly facilitated the critical reflection and critical discourse of the transformational learning process because they inherently involved features that sparked introspection about one’s own perspective such as the bi-polar comparison of the continuum exercise or the seeking out someone ‘most different from you’ in the hand-on-shoulder activity. Solicitation was a function of all the activities facilitated by Leilani, but also was generated by group members themselves, and refers to the explicit and repetitive invitation for participants to share their perspectives. Solicitation occurred by virtue of the structure of the activities

themselves but also the direct prompting and questioning from Leilani and group members of each other.

Authenticity, while interrelated with the qualities of safety, structure, and solicitation, was important enough to the interactions in The Straight Talk Dialogues to highlight on its own. This quality refers to the genuine presentation of self and one's actual perspective in life, as opposed to someone altering, distorting, or withholding their true perspective. Though I observed instances during the dialogues, primarily during the enactment activity, when participants were invited to take on a role separate from their authentic self, this particular mode of engaging seemed to stifle rather than promote the introspection and reflection needed for critical discourse. Only when participants were sharing opinions or stories grounded in their actual experience or their own hypothetical perspective were they engaged in self-reflection and collaborative co-construction of meaning that, in some cases, may have been contributing to transformation.

4. Presence of challenging, alternative frames of reference. The final, but no less essential, condition for transformation emergent from my analysis was that the social milieu of the group contain a broad and contrasting enough diversity of perspectives so as to offer alternative elements for the shifting frames of reference. In Yolanda's case she was offered a number of elements of frame that contrasted from her existing one in which she could see no path to accept her daughter as a lesbian and continue to have the same close relationship with her. In Eli's case, he was surprised to discover the existence of frames among his peers such that several expressed no threat and even flattery around the idea of a person of the same sex being attracted to them, even though they themselves were straight. While I will discuss the specific

transformations of Yolanda and Eli in the next section, my point here is that without the presence of alternative frames of reference to challenge their own, participants likely would not have progressed along the transformational trajectory. We saw an example of such an absence when Walter shared his frame of reference regarding the difference he perceived between talking with a female employee versus a gay male employee in his private office, and no one in the group challenged this by offering an alternative frame.

Another important factor in the introduction of alternative frames of reference was the manner in which they were offered. In keeping with the condition of interpersonal safety discussed above, it was critical that such alternative frames were in fact “offered,” as opposed to being exerted or insisted upon. For example, in Sally’s offering to Yolanda she stated “But my point of view is, if you’re happy and you love each other then do what you need to do. You know, live your life.” In this way, she owned this perspective as belonging to herself but offered it gently to Yolanda as if to say ‘thinking about it this way might help you.’ Similarly, when June and Bernard both offered alternative perspectives to Eli about their views on being ‘hit on’ by a gay person, both did so in a light-hearted, laughing manner and again, claimed their perspective as their own but offered it up for Eli’s consideration.

If transformation in frames of reference is evident over the course of the dialogue series, what appear to be the nature of such transformations? In order to respond to my third research question, I shifted my focus from how a transforming frame appears in interaction, and began looking at the actual content of those shifting frames. It is important to acknowledge, in addressing this research question, that every dialogue group will produce idiosyncratic shifts in frames of reference, the nature of which will be entirely dependent upon numerous particularities, not the least of which would be the particular frames of reference with which

people enter the dialogues. I witnessed the particular shifting frames I did as a function of the particular combination of participants, their current trajectories on the issues that arose, and their particular discursive influence and achievements with one another. Had this group been composed of different people with different locations along their developmental paths surrounding the topic of homosexuality, or who achieved greater or lesser degrees of safety, structure, solicitation, and authenticity, then my answers to this research question would look quite different.

Though the data revealed transformations for five of the eight participants, I elected to focus this investigation, as described in Chapters Four and Six, on the two cases of Yolanda and Eli because their struggling was most oriented to and engaged by the group throughout the dialogues. Thus it was Yolanda's and Eli's stories that provide the most extended examples of the talk-in-interaction which promoted, as I have argued, a shift in frame of reference. The shifts in their underlying expectations were neither comprehensive nor fully internalized by the end of the dialogues. The shifts were not global or grandiose changes of heart in terms of what was challenging them in their lives regarding homosexuality. Rather, the shifts were partial segments of progress toward a more complex self-authored structure of expectations regarding particular issues around homosexuality. Certainly, such transformations would continue beyond the dialogues, through other opportunities Eli and Yolanda may encounter to continue the introspection, conversation, and reflection. Nonetheless, the traction gained by these two participants along their journey to a more dependable way of knowing on this topic is significant.

Yolanda came to the dialogue program having recently experienced the disorienting dilemma of her adult daughter coming out as lesbian. On the one hand Yolanda felt a strong pride in the close friendships she had with both her adult daughters, and yet on the other hand

she was struggling to even be able to talk with this daughter about the recent disclosure because of Yolanda's lingering frame of reference that homosexuality "is not normal" and only acceptable for other people but not for her own daughter. From early on, Yolanda expressed dissatisfaction with this existing frame of reference and a struggle to embrace a new perspective. She spoke of her own father's prejudice against Black people and her own inability to be honest about her daughter with her own parents, all the while questioning herself and the origins of this struggle. Over the course of Yolanda's interactions in the group, we see her express increasing degrees of trust and vulnerability with the stories she shares in response to explicit expressions of empathy, encouragement, and support from group members.

Fellow participants also shared a variety of alternative frames of reference related to Yolanda's situation, which were then available for her consideration. For instance, Bernard responded to Yolanda's initial story by admitting the fact that he "still feels funny" when he sees expressions of homosexuality, but he attributed that to the degree of cultural secrecy that surrounded the topic during his younger years. Later in the sessions, Walter responded to a direct question from Yolanda with a proposed frame of reference that "what matters most," if one of his children turned out to be gay, would be his love for them. Several additional frames were shared among the group that countered, with various angles of emotion or intellect, Yolanda's expressed frame that being gay was not normal, or acceptable for her daughter. While it would be impossible to know which or what combination of the many alternative frames of reference presented actually were most influential for Yolanda, the evidence in her subsequent talk suggested that her focus had shifted away from an emphasis on homosexuality as the problem (abnormal and unacceptable), to society's stigmatization of homosexuality as the problem. Furthermore, Yolanda's storytelling had moved noticeably more toward the

performative end of the continua of narrative dimensions, having become less embedded, more tellable, and displaying a greater certainty in her moral stance.

Eli introduced himself in the first dialogue session as having previously held some “prejudicial” views about gay people based on an early negative experience with a gay male piano teacher and also having lived in a ‘gay neighborhood’ in Denver where he felt he had to guard against men coming on to him. The frame of reference that appeared most predominant for Eli was one of viewing gay men as a threat to his own identity as a straight man. At the same time Eli was struggling to make sense of two sets of friendships he and his parents had developed with one gay male couple and another lesbian couple. Eli’s storytelling around this topic was characterized on the extreme ‘emergent’ pole of Ochs and Capps’ dimensions, having low tellability, very open logic and causality, and a high degree of uncertainty in his moral stance.

Indicative of his active search to broaden his own perspective, Eli asked a direct question of the group during the second dialogue session, a question about how people would feel if they were ‘hit on’ by a gay person. In asking this question, Eli demonstrated his own interest in relinquishing his former frame of reference, and his seeking of potential alternative ways of thinking and reacting to the scenario of encountering gay men. The responses he received from June and Bernard were so unexpected to him that they served as another disorienting dilemma in Eli’s transformational trajectory and presented alternative frames of reference that were so extremely foreign to Eli. Yet, in a subsequent session when telling of a recent encounter with one of his family’s gay male friends, Eli recounted a more coherent, performative account in which it was evident he had been ‘trying on’ the possibility of relinquishing his threatened stance. Though not of great magnitude, the shift that had taken place for Eli was critical. The set

of possible ways of knowing about gay/straight relating had expanded for him to include options for maintaining identity and not feeling threatened around gay men. Time would tell whether, after the dialogues, Eli would continue to deepen and stabilize this frame of reference.

I argue that these seemingly small shifts in Yolanda's and Eli's structures of expectation were transformational learning in action. They were instances of both epistemological and ontological change, consistent with the insistence of Packer and Goiccochea (2000), in that the emergent new ways of knowing about homosexuality and homosexual people cannot be separated from simultaneous new ways of relating to the self. I further contend, they are examples of how purposeful conversation among straight people can lead to the alleviation of prejudice against gay and lesbian people.

Is there a difference in pre-dialogue and post-dialogue attitudes or beliefs of heterosexuals about homosexuals and homosexuality? In responding to my fourth and final research question, I compared pre-test and post-test scores of both the dialogue and comparison groups on a compilation of established survey items measuring attitudes and feelings toward gay men and lesbians. Statistical results did allow rejection of the null hypothesis. As previously discussed, there are several design limitations that may have prevented detection of such differences if they had been present. The first of these was the positive skew among the participants who volunteered for the study such that a ceiling effect was created leaving little room for movement among participants because their perspectives started out relatively affirming of gay/lesbian people and issues. Coupled with the inadequate statistical power that resulted from such a small sample size, such circumstances make it very unlikely to detect any shifts in perspective when measured in this way. Furthermore, both quantitative and qualitative results may have been impacted by a history effect on both groups given the overlap in time of

this study with Barack Obama's presidential campaign and victory, in which he was openly supportive of gay rights, occurring on the evening following the final dialogue session, and prior to most participants completing the post-survey.

Although not significant, the quantitative changes that did occur for the dialogue group are worthy of consideration in some interesting and unexpected ways. According to their mean scores, the dialogue participants actually moved in the opposite direction from that which was hypothesized on all but three of the variables assessed. The three areas in which scores tended in the expected direction, toward more positive attitudes about gays/lesbians, were Civil Rights, Feelings toward Gay Men, and Feelings toward Lesbians. Whereas, on the variables of Hate, Religious Conflict, Internalized Affirmativeness, and Overall Attitude, the dialogue participants' average scores became very slightly more negative.

Many researchers of prejudice, including sexual orientation prejudice (Worthington, Dillon & Becker-Schutte, 2005; Herek, 1987) have assumed a multi-faceted nature to this social phenomena, such that they have sought to isolate various components of one group's negativity toward another group. This is exemplified in Worthington et al's (2005) delineation of the five dimensions of their LGB KASH instrument as utilized in this study. I raise this aspect of the research base to offer the point that certain interventions, such as a dialogue forum in this case, may be more or less suited to influencing certain dimensions of sexual orientation prejudice. Similarly, a given intervention may intervene on different dimensions of a frame of reference in different ways. For instance, in this study, it is conceivable that frames of reference regarding the civil rights of gay and lesbian people are transformed by different dialogic pathways or at different rates than perhaps religious conflict or internal affirmativeness. By extension then,

what would this mean for the design of the intervention as well as for the instrumentation we use to measure such changes?

Limitations and Recommendations

As with any study, I have realized along the way several limitations to the design or analysis which I will aim to improve upon in future research. One primary way in which my qualitative analysis is limited is my reliance on the video and transcripts of the dialogue sessions without supplementation of additional ethnographic data or respondent validation with which to triangulate my evidence (Maxwell, 2005). I would address this weakness in future studies by conducting semi-structured interviews with the dialogue participants before and after the intervention if possible, and by including an opportunity for dialogue participants to review and provide feedback on my interpretations of their storytelling. Unfortunately I was even more limited than anticipated in my ability to do any meaningful triangulation between the qualitative and quantitative results due to both a smaller sample than planned, and a more positively biased sample than was sought.

In addition, now recognizing the value of a narrative analysis to the exploration of transformation in frames of reference, as well as the challenges inherent in defining what qualifies as “narrative” (Johnstone, 2003), I would want to consider shaping the dialogue intervention itself to incorporate a more directed solicitation of storytelling related to the topic. In a similar vein, I have come to recognize that future studies will be strengthened by identifying and adhering to a pre-established dialogue protocol to allow for ease of replication and comparison (Tucker & Tripodi, 2006).

There are several limitations to be noted with regard to the quantitative portion of the design as well. The first limitation is the small sample size, which reduced the statistical power necessary for quantitative measures to detect a significant change. A second limitation is that a selection bias was present. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis indicated a positive bias for all participants, meaning that those who chose to volunteer for the study were already relatively affirming of gay and lesbian people, or at the very least willing to consider and grapple with the social issues. In the quantitative results, this created a ceiling effect for outcomes. Despite our recruitment efforts to attract a more diverse range of opinion, this factor limited my operationalization of the construct of “prejudice,” in the sense that any negative attitudes about homosexuality or homosexuals present among this sample of straight people would be likely quite subtle, and something that they themselves wished to hide. A third limitation is that this sample was drawn by convenience, not randomly, thus generalizability of results is limited to only this specific sample.

A fourth limitation is there may have been a potential response or social desirability bias, with participants reporting more positive attitudes at either or both pre-test and post-test, and during the dialogues themselves, than were actually true for them. Measures to control for this were the insurance of confidentiality, the guidelines of nonjudgment and encouraged honesty during the sessions, and the use of a measure (LGB-KASH) that evidenced previous low correlation with a social desirability scale. Additionally, in the qualitative analysis, two participants were clear that they did not significantly change their attitudes or beliefs, and thus appeared not to have been influenced by social desirability bias.

Contributions and Implications

For research. This study offers several important contributions to interdisciplinary scholarship addressing sexual orientation prejudice. Perhaps the greatest of these contributions lies in the linkages drawn herein among and between areas of study that have not previously been linked. First, educational psychology as a field is long overdue to take up its potential in this arena. Those of us who study learning, and who teach young educators to shape even younger minds, must acknowledge our part in the effort to turn the tides on prejudice in all its forms. Whether we look to social psychology's immensely rich knowledge of prejudice, the scholarship in the field of adult learning on transformational theory, social work's applications of dialogue as a tool for change, or ideally all of the above, this study provides one of very few models for educational psychologists to do so. Existing literature from any field so far includes but a few studies with heterosexual adults in real-world settings where dialogue interventions have been employed to examine attitude or perspective transformation surrounding topics related to homosexuality. The staff at the Institute on the Common Good knew of no precedent, prior to this dialogue series. This study has forged new and promising directions in this critical area of research.

In a recent compendium entitled *The Handbook on Transformative Learning: Theory, research, and practice* (Taylor & Cranton, 2012), authors Merriam and Kim selected narrative analysis as one of four particularly appropriate methodological strategies for advancing the knowledge base of transformative learning. The reasoning behind this claim, consistent with my approach to this study, credits the lens of story-telling with being well-suited for reflecting a teller's perspectives and developmental journey. Dessell (2008), in her ground-breaking study of

dialogue among school teachers regarding lesbian/gay issues in K12 education, suggests that a discourse approach to further research “would provide an important window” (p. 159) into the processes of dialogue. This study takes up these scholars’ suggestions through the application of one particular approach to narrative analysis which, as with any given design, simultaneously facilitated certain viewpoints on participants’ experiences and occluded others. Many intriguing directions exist for scholars of adult learning and teacher education, especially those with a discursive lens, to deepen and expand our grasp of how perspective transformation about gay and lesbian lives occurs through interaction.

For next steps in researching this domain, I propose the following. Replication of this experimental random assignment design using a larger sample size would provide the power necessary to observe small effect sizes, as well as additional information on dialogue outcomes. Future samples should include a more culturally diverse group of participants in multiple regards including racially/ethnically and socioeconomically as well as a broader range of attitudes toward homosexuality in order to explore differential impacts of dialogue on these subgroups. In addition, quantitatively-oriented investigators may do well to go beyond this study’s focus on attitudes as outcome, to include indicators of transformation in progress such as reflective thinking or perspective taking measures. In so doing it may be possible to see further connections reflected among the quantitative and discursive data.

Future researchers, when possible, should engage participants in more than four dialogue sessions over a longer period of time which would allow the possibility for greater stability of changes in perspectives and the ability to assess participants’ actual as well as intended behaviors. Furthermore, given that heterosexual attitudes regarding homosexuality and related social issues have been shown to vary dramatically depending upon the particular context under

discussion (i.e., workplace vs. relationship recognition in Herek, 2006), future studies should experiment with focusing individual dialogue sessions, or even whole studies, on attitudes toward particular subtopics such as these and others. Lastly, while investigation of intragroup dialogue among heterosexuals is an under-examined, critical element in prejudice reduction education, we must continue the investigations of intergroup dialogue that includes both straight and gay participants (Nagda & Derr, 2004; B. A. Nagda et al., 2009) and strive to understand the ways in which these different combinations achieve differential outcomes.

For practice. In recent decades, adult educators and dialogue practitioners alike have been challenged in their efforts to pinpoint and measure that which is actually transforming when learning is believed to be transformational (Taylor, 2007; Taylor and Cranton, 2012). Many studies to date have, with mild success, aimed to understand these processes largely through either an experimental, positivistic lens on attitudes or a qualitative self-report or observational approach. Much less attention has been given to the ways in which a discourse analytic perspective can inform our practice efforts. For those who view prejudice reduction as learning that occurs through situated social interaction, it is high time we deepened our examination of how people talk to one another regarding the topic of homosexuality and related social challenges.

In Chapter Two I aligned my aims of this study with Willig's (1999) discourse analysis as guide to reform which seeks to use the results of discourse analytic studies to promote positive change in social and institutional practices. Results of this study can accomplish this by informing practitioners across a variety of learning settings about the importance of frames of reference in talk surrounding homosexuality and the discursive manner in which these frames of reference can become more expansive and flexible when allowed the social space and conditions

for transformation. As educators ourselves, and educators of preservice educators, we have a profound positioning to facilitate elements of all four of the conditions for transformation discussed above.

First and foremost, we must become skilled at facilitating the qualities of safety, structure, solicitation, and authenticity in our classrooms or other learning settings. Especially on a culturally and emotionally charged topic such as homosexuality, these qualities were completely necessary for the transformations that took place in this study, as we would expect whether in the context of teaching, research or both. We must not underestimate the value and necessity of establishing and supporting guidelines for interaction that promote these qualities as well as teaching some basic interpersonal tools for suspension of judgment, asking questions, honest introspection, and honoring disagreement and conflict. With the expectation of these conditions in place, our participants will be far more likely to take risks in exposing their frames of reference.

These findings suggest to educators and facilitators, that the kind of emergent, conversational narrative at the less coherent pole of dimensions is a pedagogical ideal to be viewed as fertile ground for growth rather than unconsidered or incomplete ideas. We should view these less tellable, nonlinear, disorderly co-tellings as the junctures where expectations are shifting, and may be helped along by the participation of ourselves and other learners. Furthermore, when narratives are told in the performative vein, as tightly wrapped packages of logical and moral certainty, we might view these instances as opportunities for a question, or prompt, or exercise that disrupts that coherency. We do so knowing that, for the aims of learning, untying and exploring that narrative package is likely to behoove all participants present. As practitioners, a well-honed ability to listen for underlying frames of reference and to

recognize the emergent versus performative nature of narratives among our students is a foundational skill set.

Just as Yolanda, Eli and others in the Straight Talk Dialogues did, students will provide surface evidence in their talk about the structure of their underlying expectations. As educators and educators of educators, we can develop a keen ear and strategic creativity for responding to this evidence. Specific to an aim of reducing heterosexism and sexual orientation prejudice, we must start to notice and pose challenges to biased or stigmatizing frames of reference in settings where sexuality is *and is not* the content focus. In addition we can explicitly consider how our facilitative prompts and activities draw out and highlight frames of reference undergirding different facets of misunderstanding or discomfort with the topics, and we can seek out teaching approaches to introduce and inspire alternative frames.

In speaking of the co-constructed nature of emergent narrative, and thus the transformational process as witnessed in this study, I would argue that interaction among the participants themselves held greater impact for shifting frames of reference than that between the facilitator and any given participant or the group as a whole. In that light, it is essential not to overestimate our role as educators and thus underestimate that of the social interaction among our students. That is not to diminish our role, but rather to use it to maximize the potential for transformative dialogue among the group. While some will be already naturally inclined toward this than others, we should consider how we can support students' learning to recognize and question their own underlying frames of reference and those of their peers.

As was true in the present study, a critical factor of the dialogue's transformative potential was the presence of a diversity of frames of reference surrounding homosexuality. Although we had hoped to attract a wider range of perspectives, some less accepting of

homosexuality, than we did, there were nonetheless still a contrasting mix of attitudes, familiarity and comfort level with the topic. Had this not been the case, had the participants' views been even more homogeneous than they were, I doubt we would have seen even as much transformational progress as we did. The presence of alternative frames of reference is, once again, necessary. As educators and those who train educators, we have a professional opportunity (even obligation, some have argued) to ensure that such alternative frames are introduced, if not by students themselves, then through carefully selected readings, guest speakers, and other narrative formats.

The results of this study have affirmed my speculation about the value of all-heterosexual dialogue about homosexuality. Certainly there is a purpose and place for mixed gay/straight dialogue, however in the realm of prejudice reduction I would argue that by far the most important mixture is that of alternative frames of reference on the topic, and that the presence of gay and lesbian participants is likely to inhibit disclosure. In the Straight Talk Dialogues, participants' frames of reference ranged from Eli who was guarded and felt threatened even in the presence of a gay man, to June who claimed that most of her friends actually were gay or lesbian. Without this range of perspectives and experience, I believe the frames of reference already undergoing transformation and those that entered into a transformative process during the dialogues, would have lacked enough contrast to counter their assumptions and to spark their reflection. To achieve prejudice reduction through dialogue among all heterosexuals, it is critical to have the "ally" perspective present, to have interlocutors who have developmentally advanced beyond the cultural status quo of heteronormativity and heterosexism – whose frames of reference have already transformed.

Final Thoughts

It is my hope that this study lends ideas and inspiration in the following ways to learning scholars across disciplines, but especially from within my own primary fields of educational psychology and adult learning. First, I hope this study encourages the continued expansion of the view that both reduction of sexual orientation prejudice and dialogue as an educative intervention for doing so, are areas for research and practice we cannot afford to overlook.

Methodologically, I further hope to have shed light on the complementary utility that exists among the two paradigms for understanding psychological change, what Gergen's (2002) call to action dubbed as "the empiricist/constructionist divide in social psychology." I see nothing but gain to be had from growing the conversation among social psychologists studying prejudice, both discursively and experimentally, and those of us in educational psychology and adult learning whose work is to help reduce it. As Gergen asserts, "There is no justification for our making claims to ultimate truth, nor should we wait for philosophers to solve the intractable problem of epistemology for us to proceed with our work. In short, let us be content with 'practices that work'" (p.189).

For those of us with a passion for teaching and learning, and in particular for teaching and learning that strives to expand freedom and fairness in our society, I believe the news of this project is that dialogue may be a promising practice in adult learning environments to facilitate perspective transformation. Specifically, this study demonstrates how such focused talk-in-interaction serves as a laboratory for the co-construction of new frames of reference, for trying these on, and for revising identities through social practice. Where do such dialogue forums happen? In not nearly enough communities and institutions of learning, I contend. As educators,

let us not be content with the cultural tendency toward “performative” debate and one-sided speech-giving on the topic of homosexuality. We can instead seek to make space for forums where the exploration of emergent, unpolished dialogue can take place.

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Appendix A
Letter of Support from ICG



Institute on the Common Good

Mail Code D-8
3533 Regis Boulevard
Denver, Colorado 80221-1095
303.499-4807
303.984-8502 FAX

July 1, 2008

To Whom It May Concern,

ICG was created in 1998 to provide opportunities for people in the community with diverse perspectives to engage one another around civic and social issues. Our mission is to promote the common good through the use of dialogue, discernment, and democratic deliberation. At ICG, we know and are dedicated to dialogue's potential for helping people suspend assumptions, set down defenses, do the work of open-hearted listening, and achieve the possibility of perspective change.

The Institute on the Common Good is supporting The Straight Talk Dialogues, an initial series of community dialogues among heterosexual adults about gay/lesbian issues. The series will consist of four separate evening sessions, two weeks apart, attended by the same 20 adult participants and facilitated by trained and experienced dialogue facilitators on contract with ICG. In addition to at least \$9,050 of in-kind contributions, the ICG has committed \$2000 from our organizational budget toward paying the facilitators.

In addition to valuing dialogue, discernment and democratic deliberation, the Institute's values of human dignity, common good and community, subsidiarity and participation, and rights and responsibilities all apply to our support of "The Straight Talk Dialogues" series and subsequent series that include gay/lesbian intra-group caucuses and then inter-group dialogues that mix the group demographics based on sexual orientation.

Based on our mission, vision and values, the Institute on the Common Good is in full support of opening more space for dialogue on contentious community issues. At the core of Catholic Social Teaching is the inherent belief in the dignity of the human person. Each person is recognized as being sacred and made in the image of God. The Institute fully subscribes to this principle and looks forward to supporting The Straight Talk Dialogues.

Sincerely,

Paul Alexander
Director, Institute on the Common Good

Appendix B
Call for Participants

PLEASE FORWARD WIDELY

INVITATION FOR PARTICIPANTS – "The Straight Talk Dialogues"

Are you tired of the same old 'Right-Wrong' debate about homosexuality and the social challenges it presents?

Come be part of a different kind of conversation.

The Institute on the Common Good at Regis University is pleased to invite participants for our Fall community dialogue, the "Straight Talk Dialogues". This will be a professionally facilitated open and respectful conversation aimed at deepening understandings and envisioning new possibilities. These dialogues are also the subject of a confidential research study by researchers at CU-Boulder, and participants will be paid \$80 for their participation. A light dinner will also be provided.

Please note: because this is also a research study, participants will be randomly assigned to either the dialogue group or the survey-only group. If you get assigned to the survey-only group, you will be placed first on the waiting list for the next round of dialogues. Survey-only participants will be paid \$20 for their participation. Whichever group you are selected for, your participation is welcome and important!

Participants must be at least 30 years old, identify as heterosexual ("straight"), and able to attend all four dialogue sessions. The dialogues will take place on Thursday evenings (10/9, 10/16, 10/30, and 11/6) at Regis University from 6:30 – 9:00 pm.

ALL VIEWPOINTS ARE INVITED, WELCOME & VALUED!

CALL 303-458-4967

EMAIL: dialogue2008@gmail.com

www.dialogue2008.wordpress.com

PLEASE FORWARD THIS ANNOUNCEMENT WIDELY

Appendix D

Participation Registration Phone Checklist

Pre – Dialogue PHONE CHECKLIST for DIALOGUE PARTICIPANTS

Name: (just first is okay for now) _____

Today's Date: _____ Time of Call: _____

THANK YOU FOR CALLING!!!

-How did you hear about the Straight Talk dialogue series?

-Are you interested in participating in the actual dialogues or participating by survey only?
(*SWITCH TO OTHER FORM IF INTERESTED IN SURVEY ONLY*)

-Summarize the purpose & process:

PURPOSE - This research study is about how straight (heterosexual) people think about and talk about the topic of homosexuality. We want to understand better, how people with very different opinions on issues of homosexuality understand one another – *across all perspectives* - when discussing these subjects. We are not interested in changing people's minds or opinions in any way.

PROCESS - a) you confirm your registration & complete the pre-survey packet
b) you attend all four dialogues (9/25, 10/9, 10/16, 10/30) + **BACK UP:**
11/13
c) we give you a check for \$80 at final dialogue session

-Consent form

-go over IN DEPTH

-Highlight these:

-confidentiality

-video & audiotaped

- you will have the option of choosing a pseudonym to use during the dialogues if you do not wish to participate using your real name, and you are assured that faces on video will be "blue-dotted" if the video is presented anywhere outside the immediate research team.

-risks & benefits

-Pre-Survey completion

- do you have internet access? could you complete our pre-survey online sometime in the next week? (it takes 30 minutes or less)

- give website (www.dialogue2008.wordpress.com)
- right side, under “links” – click on “Straight Talks Pre-Survey”
- give ACCESS CODE to pre-survey

(don't forget the BACK →)

-Light dinners of sandwiches will be provided each night

-What interests you about this dialogue series? WHY do you think you might want to participate?

-Could you commit to attending all four sessions on the dates we've discussed?

****IF NOT – ASK THEM IF THEY WILL DO SURVEY-ONLY???**

-May we have your PHONE NUMBER & EMAIL ADDRESS to contact you as needed for this project? (*At least phone REQUIRED; email is optional)

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

-Call or email with questions: 303-458-4967 or dialogue2008@gmail.com

NOTES:

Appendix E

The Straight Talk Dialogues

Principal Investigator: **Julie Graves, M.S., LPC, Doctoral Candidate**

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

August 15, 2008

Please read the following material that explains this research study. Signing this form will indicate that you have been informed about the study and that you want to participate. We want you to understand what you are being asked to do and what risks and benefits—if any—are associated with the study. This should help you decide whether or not you want to participate in the study.

You are being asked to take part in a research project conducted by Julie Graves, a Ph.D. student in the University of Colorado at Boulder's Department of Educational Psychology, 249 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309-249. This project is being done under the direction of Professor Susan Jurow, Department of Educational Psychology, 249 UCB. Julie Graves can be reached at 303-946-5241, or julie.graves@colorado.edu Professor Jurow can be reached at 303-492-6557 or susan.jurow@colorado.edu.

Project Description:

This research study is about how straight (heterosexual) people think about and talk about the topic of homosexuality. We want to understand better, how people with very different opinions on issues of homosexuality understand one another – *across all perspectives* - when discussing these subjects. We are not interested in changing people's minds or opinions in any way. Scholars, policy-makers, and society in general can benefit significantly from a better understanding of how citizens on all sides of these issues think and feel about them.

We are asking you to be in this study because you responded to a public announcement about the project, and expressed interest in participating. It is entirely your choice whether or not to participate in this study. We are inviting approximately 24 people to participate in this research study; some people will be attending the Dialogues while others are participating by completing surveys only.

Procedures:

You will be assigned either to the Dialogue group or to a survey-only "comparison" group. This assignment will be determined according to a number of factors including:

- your interest in participating in the actual dialogues versus survey-only participation
- your ability to commit to the dates of the dialogue sessions
- your responses on the online pre-dialogue survey, complete and submitted online
- and in some cases, your willingness to be placed on a waiting list for participation in a later dialogue series on the same/similar topics.

These group assignments will happen after we have spoken with you by phone about your interests and after we have received and reviewed all pre-survey responses from interested participants.

DIALOGUE Group

If you agree to take part in this study, and if selected for the Dialogue Group, you will be asked to make a commitment to attend 4 (four) Dialogues, on the dates below. Each Dialogue will take place from 6:00 – 8:30pm at the Adult Learning Center building (3333 Regis Blvd.), Room (TBD) on the following dates:

Thursday, Sept. 25, 6:00 – 8:30 (Dialogue #1)

Thursday, Oct. 9, 6:00 – 8:30 (Dialogue #2)

Thursday, Oct. 16, 6:00 – 8:30 (Dialogue #3)

Thursday, Oct. 30, 6:00 – 8:30 (Dialogue #4)

A light dinner will be provided by Institute on the Common Good at 6:00 before the Dialogue begins each evening. You will need to provide your own transportation to and from these events.

For those who are selected to participate in the Dialogues themselves, specific guidelines for conversation will be decided largely by the participants themselves, within the larger topic of “homosexuality and the social challenges it presents.” A skilled and experienced facilitator will be present to offer structure to the discussion as needed, as well as to maintain standards for respectful dialogue. All dialogue participants will be asked to commit to specific agreements about how they will communicate with one another.

In addition to your attendance and participation in the four dialogue sessions, you will be asked to rate your level of agreement on written survey items about your opinions, feelings, and beliefs about homosexuality and people who are homosexual, as well as about laws and policies that restrict or support the homosexual population. Examples of such survey items are: “I sometimes think about being violent toward LGB people,” “Feeling attracted to another person of the same sex would make me uncomfortable,” and “I think marriage should be legal for same-sex couples.”

You will also be asked to complete written survey items which ask you about your own perceptions of yourself and what things are important to you. Examples of such items you could be asked to rate the importance of might include: My physical appearance, my social behavior—such as the way I act when meeting people, and my occupational choice and career plans. Other items could ask you to rate your level of agreement with items dealing with your thinking style and preferences, such as: “I think that having clear rules and order at work is essential for success” or “I usually make important decisions quickly and confidently.”

SURVEY-ONLY PARTICIPANTS (“Comparison” group)

If you are asked and elect to participate in the survey-only portion of this study, you will receive an Access Code where you can go to our website and read our Welcome Letter, the Consent Form, and complete an extensive series of survey questions about the topics of the Straight Talk Dialogues.

In these surveys, you will be asked to rate your level of agreement on items about your opinions, feelings, and beliefs about homosexuality and people who are homosexual, as well as about laws and policies that restrict or support the homosexual population. Examples of such survey items are: “I sometimes think about being violent toward LGB people,” “Feeling attracted to another person of the same sex would make me uncomfortable,” and “I think marriage should be legal for same-sex couples.”

Additional survey items will ask you about your own perceptions of yourself and what things are important to you. Examples of these items would ask you to rate the importance of such statements as: My physical appearance, my social behavior-such as the way I act when meeting people, and my occupational choice and career plans. Other items could ask you to rate your level of agreement with items dealing with your thinking style and preferences, such as: “I think that having clear rules and order at work is essential for success” or “I usually make important decisions quickly and confidently.”

Approximately 6 weeks later, you will receive a phone call or email message asking you to complete the very same surveys once again, and you will be given a new online access code.

Risks and Discomforts:

Any potential risks of participation in this study are minimal and unlikely, but may include personal upset surrounding issues of homosexuality or homosexual people stemming from emotional reactions to participation in the dialogue and/or the process of completing the pre/post surveys described above.

You will not be asked about any illegal activities, but if you should discuss such activities, the information could legally be subpoenaed by authorities such as the police or court system.

There are some things that you might tell us that we CANNOT promise to keep confidential, as we are legally required to report information including:

- Child abuse or neglect.
- A crime you or others plan to commit.
- Harm that may come to you or others.

Benefits:

The benefits of being in this study are the opportunities to: 1) learn the principles and practice of productive group Dialogue (in contrast to the right/wrong debate usually heard about issues of

homosexuality and homosexuals), 2) clarify and refine your own perspectives on this highly controversial topic, and 3) gain insight into the perspectives of others on these topics.

Subject Payment:

Dialogue participants will be paid \$80 for participation in this study in the form of a check on the final evening of the Dialogues.

Survey-only participants will be paid \$20 for their participation in the form of a check to be mailed upon receipt of the post-survey.

Dialogue participants must complete the entire series of 4 sessions in order to receive payment. Survey-only participants must complete and return both the pre- and post-surveys in order to receive payment.

If you experience injury that requires medical attention, please contact the investigator Julie Graves, 303-946-5241 and your personal physician immediately (if it is a medical emergency, first call 911).

Ending Your Participation:

You have the right to withdraw your consent or stop participating at any time. You have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) or refuse to participate in any procedure for any reason. Refusing to participate in this study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Confidentiality:

If selected for the Dialogue Group, participation in this research will include video- and audio-taping. These tapes will be later transcribed to paper, analyzed for research purposes, and will be strictly and confidentially retained under lock and key by only the Primary Researcher, Julie Graves. The tapes may also be used for educational purposes following the study, in which case faces on video will be blurred and/or blue-dotted to protect confidentiality. Furthermore, you will have the option to participate in the dialogues under a pseudonym (false name) which you select on initial paperwork. If you elect to use a pseudonym, this will be the only name known to your fellow dialogue participants and your group facilitator. Only the researcher and ICG Director will have access to paperwork containing your real name.

Under no circumstances will names, faces, or any other identifying information ever be associated with your participation or anything you say during this project. Only the following individuals (who are bound by this same Confidentiality policy) will have access to these tapes, and only during the analysis phase of the research: Julie Graves (Researcher), Paul Alexander (Director of ICG), the ICG Dialogue Facilitator, Susan Jurow (Research Committee Co-Chairperson). Other than the researchers, only regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections and the University of Colorado Human Research Committee may see your individual data as part of routine audits. We take the confidentiality of our research with the utmost of seriousness, and intend to make every effort to protect your privacy.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding your participation in this research, you should ask the investigator before signing this form. If you should have questions or concerns during or after your participation, please contact Julie Graves at 303-946-5241.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant, any concerns regarding this project or any dissatisfaction with any aspect of this study, you may report them -- confidentially, if you wish -- to the Executive Secretary, Human Research Committee, 26 UCB, Regent Administrative Center 308, University of Colorado at Boulder, Boulder, CO 80309-0026, (303) 735-3702.

Authorization:

I have read this paper about the study or it was read to me. I know the possible risks and benefits. I know that being in this study is voluntary. I choose to be in this study. I know that I can withdraw at any time. I have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 5 pages.

Name of Participant (printed) _____

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____.
(Also initial all previous pages of the consent form.)

For HRC Use Only

This consent form is approved for use from _____ through _____.

(Signature) Panel Coordinator, Human Research
Committee

Appendix F

Survey Instrument

LGB-KASH

Instructions: Please use the scale below to respond to the following items. Circle the number that indicates the extent to which each statement is characteristic or uncharacteristic of you or your views. Please try to respond to every item.

	1	2	3	4	5	6		
	Very uncharacteristic of me or my views				Very characteristic of me or my views			

NOTE: LGB = Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual.

Please consider the ENTIRE statement when making your rating, as some statements contain two parts.

1. I have conflicting attitudes or beliefs about LGB people.
2. I can accept LGB people even though I condemn their behavior.
3. It is important to me to avoid LGB individuals.
4. I have close friends who are LGB.
5. I have difficulty reconciling my religious views with my interest in being accepting of LGB people.
6. I would be unsure what to do or say if I met someone who is openly lesbian, gay or bisexual.
7. Hearing about a hate crime against a LGB person would not bother me.
8. I think marriage should be legal for same sex couples.
9. I keep my religious views to myself in order to accept LGB people.
10. I conceal my negative views toward LGB people when I am with someone who doesn't share my views.
11. I sometimes think about being violent toward LGB people.
12. Feeling attracted to another person of the same sex would not make me uncomfortable.

13. I would display a symbol of gay pride (pink triangle, rainbow, etc.) to show my support of the LBG community.
14. I would feel self-conscious greeting a known LGB person in a public place.
15. I have had sexual fantasies about members of my same sex.
16. I would attend a demonstration to promote LGB civil rights.
17. I try not to let my negative beliefs about LGB people harm my relationships with the lesbian, gay, or bisexual individuals I know.
18. Hospitals should acknowledge same sex partners equally to any other next of kin.
19. LGB people deserve the hatred they receive.
20. It is important to teach children positive attitudes toward LGB people.
21. I conceal my positive attitudes toward LGB people when I am with someone who is homophobic.
22. Health benefits should be available equally to same sex partners as to any other couple.
23. It is wrong for courts to make child custody decisions based on a parent's sexual orientation.

ATLG-R

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Moderately Disagree
- 3 – Slightly Disagree
- 4 – Slightly Agree
- 5 – Moderately Agree
- 6 – Strongly Agree

24. I think lesbians are disgusting.
25. Sex between two women is just plain wrong.
26. Female homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in women. (reverse scored)
27. I think male homosexuals are disgusting.
28. Sex between two men is just plain wrong
29. Male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men. (reverse scored)

Feeling Thermometer:

Below you'll see something that looks like a thermometer. You'll be using it to indicate your "feeling temperature" toward people who are gay or lesbian.

If you have positive feelings toward this group, you would give them a score somewhere between 50 and 100, depending on how favorable your evaluation of that group is.

On the other hand, if you have negative feelings toward this group, you would give them a score somewhere between 0 and 50, depending on how unfavorable your evaluation of that group is.

The degree labels will help you locate each group on the thermometer. You can use any number between 0 and 100.

Please answer honestly according to how you personally feel about this group.

(Positive)

- 100°.....extremely positive
- 90°.....very positive
- 80°.....quite positive
- 70°.....fairly positive
- 60°.....slightly positive
- 50°.....neither positive nor negative
- 40°.....slightly negative
- 30°.....fairly negative
- 20°.....quite negative
- 10°.....very negative
- 0°.....extremely negative

(Negative)

30. My 'feeling temperature' toward gay men

31. My 'feeling temperature' toward lesbians