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'Queering Inside out':
insights from youth &
community work
teaching and practice

BERA SEXUALITIES & YOUTH STUDIES SIG

Friday 11th November
Frankie Williams, Jean Hatton
and Ann Chapman

Life stories and identity

- Narratives
 - Contextual v truth (Bourdieu, 1992)
 - Feminism and personal transparency (Oakley, 85)
 - Only one person's experience
and then their chosen story
(Bruner, 2004, Buchroth and Parkin, 2010)
 - Reflexivity (Harding, 1991) and Conscious partiality is
opposite to impartiality (Bourdieu in Miles, 1993)
- Individual Identity
 - Reflection
 - Influences (Buchroth and Parkin 2010, Sangeeta, 2011)
- Collective Accounts and change (Foucault in Rainbow, 1984)
 - Shared experience
 - Power of groups accounts
 - Dualism: if your 'in' then there is an 'out'

Queer theory

- From Essentialism and Social construction to Queer Theory
- Butler: Theory of Performativity
- 'Queering of the public discourse' (Shildrick, 1997):
- Challenging of the binary division (Stein and Plummer, 1994)
- 'deliberately disruptive term' (Marinucci citing Halperin, 2003)

Personal experiences: Ann

- Young, Gay and Scared - Love not Labels
- Hetero/Bi-sexual lapse-emotional withdrawal, sexual fluidity or conformity?
- Gay to Lesbian Feminism - Identity & Activism Class, Race, Gender & Sexuality
- Out and Proud: But not as a CW on Estates!
- Lesbian Rebel & Y&CW Manager - dilemmas
- Embedding LGBT issues in mainstream - radical transformation or normalisation?

Personal experiences: Jean

- Why be 'proud to be gay'? Essentialism
- A straight practitioner?
- Rubbing shoulders with feminists in the 1980s. - Social constructionism
- Developing a gay identity
- Working as a gay practitioner:
 Queer theory to the rescue!

Personal experiences: Frankie

1980's Youth and Community
Worker

- Personal is political, is professional identity
- Feminist Youth Movement
- Coming out
- Queering Feminism

Queering Feminism

Born middle class, middle child, in the middle.

My political journey begins patriarchy, polarised gender,
men the enemy within and without.

Oppositional tensions and pulling dilemmas.

My personal is political, professional but whose and how?

Feminism, Working with Girls a woman's journey of identity

Influenced by women, incidents, chances

Changing colours, unions and outings.

Gender bending, blurring boundaries, smudging spaces,

Only spaces, lonely constricted spaces.

Deconstructing gender, class, cultured concepts;

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender

Does identity restricts, labels, leaves outsiders?

'In' or 'out', hokey kokey

Queer shakes it all about.

Puts sex in sexuality and unpicking masculinity;

Politics of pleasure -too personally political?

Are lesbians still showing ? Is identity 'invisible'?

He thought: Foucault, Weeks and Kirsch

She feels: Kitzinger, hooks and me.

Queer debating, asking questions, thinning lived experiences,

queering the way we do things round here.

So has Feminism already Queeried?

Then is Queer already feminist? Mmm?

In or out: HE lecturer in youth and community work?

- Why I 'out' myself to all youth work students
- The power relationship tutor/student
- Am I being boxed in by stereo-types of lesbians?
- Should we be queering the discourse' in a more thoughtful way?

Y&C women students who have same sex relationships

- Why/if they 'out' themselves to all youth work students?
- Do they make links with other LGBTQ students?
- Do they queer their discourse' in any way?
- How do they name themselves?
- Do they have any experiences of 'only' spaces?
- Do they feel boxed in by stereo-types of being lesbians, bisexuals?
- Do other students take them less seriously academically or professional due to their sexuality?

Out as a Y&CW Manager

Why & Risks

- True to self - part of my "multiple identities"
- Challenge "normalisation" of heterosexuality
- Role Model: Out Lesbian & Senior Manager
- Theory to Practice: Sexuality a public matter
- Risk marginalisation: always on about it
- Some organisations reluctant to engage
- LGBT issues all passed to me, what if Queer?
- Identity not enough - Act & get others to act

So what? - Over to you.

- Are they the same issues for a worker or a lecturer or student?
- Is it different to name yourself queer rather than LGBT (or something else)?
- Are we letting our hetero colleagues off the hook?
- Has the climate changed such that in 21st century queer cultural makes it irrelevant to be in or out ?

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