

ABSTRACT

LGBTQ research in music education has become more available and accepted in the past ten years. LGBTQ studies in music education have focused on how gay and lesbian music educators negotiate their identities, the role of music education in the lives of transgender students, and the inclusion of LGBTQ issues in music teacher education programs. Studies have been limited to a singular content experience, such as gay vocal music educators or lesbian band directors. Additionally, studies have not explored multiple generations of LGBTQ music educators. The purpose of this study was to explore the lives as lived of six K-12 music teachers. Six individuals, from various career points, various generations, and various career paths shared their stories with me. To guide my analysis, I considered the following questions:

- How do lesbian and gay music educators describe their sexual identity and professional identity?
- How do gay and lesbian music educators negotiate the tensions between these identities?
- What internal and external factors influence these negotiations?
- What are the similarities and differences among the participants of different generations?

Two large emerged from the analysis that provided a better understanding of the participants' lives: finding sexual identity and finding professional identity. Within those themes, smaller sub-themes helped to better understand how the participants came to understand their sexuality and professional identity. External factors such as social and family support, religion, and cultural and generational movements influenced the ways in which the participants came to understand their sexual identity. Participants desired to be seen first as a competent music teacher, but also understood that they could have an impact on a student as a gay or lesbian role model or

mentor. Sexual identity and professional identity did not function as separate constructs; rather they were interwoven throughout these lesbian and gay music educator's self-identities.

In order to connect the reader with the participants, I engaged in a creative non-fiction writing process to (re)tell participant's stories. Each story is unique and crafted in a way that the participant's voice is privileged over my own. The stories come from the conversations and journal entries that the participants shared with me. The purpose of the stories is to provide the reader with a contextual understanding of each participant's life, and to offer some considerations for ways in which we can engage with and support our lesbian and gay music educator colleagues.

This paper does not end with a tidy conclusion, but rather more questions and provocations that will continue the conversations. I hope this document will encourage thoughtful and critical conversations in the music education profession to help us move us forward to a place that is more empathetic, socially-just, and equitable.