XM<\LGBT/>: QUEER WRITING AND QUEER WRITING CENTER PRACTICES

Thesis Presented

by

Abbie Levesque

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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This thesis analyzes three case studies of LGBTAQ identifying writing center tutors. The methodology focuses on using a “queer” XML encoding language for analysis, called XM<LGBT/>. This project focuses on where and how LGBTAQ tutors write, and disclose their identity within the writing center. As Harry Denny notes in “Queering the Writing Center, “Foundational scholarship on writing centers pursues a similar agenda [to LGBTAQ activism] of challenging hegemonic practices and championing pedagogies of empowerment” (44), making them an ideal way to study queer-identifying students and build new pedagogies to benefit them.

By researching how and why queer students choose (or don’t choose) to construct a queer discoursal self, teachers and tutors can explore better avenues to help make more “possibilities of self-hood” available to students who may previously not have been comfortable constructing themselves as queer in their writing.

This thesis also explores the possibilities and implications of using queered digital methodologies in queer rhetoric and composition research. XM<LGBT/> seeks both to be a queer tool and interrogate how a queer research tool and methodology might affect the information it is observing.
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Introduction and Overview

Research Questions

This research has a few goals in mind. The first goal is to explore the ways LGBTQ identities are talked and thought about in the writing center. For instance, when do LGBTQ tutors disclose their identity to students or other tutors? In what ways are LGBTQ identities part of the trainings and pedagogies in the writing center?

The second goal was to make a set of recommendations based on what was learned in order to help move writing centers towards practices that accept and advocate for more diverse views of gender and sexuality. As Ellen Cushman stated in her 1996 article “The Rhetorician as Agent of Social Change,”

I believe that in doing our scholarly work, we should take social responsibility for the people from and with whom we come to understand a topic. I'm echoing Freire who shows that when we theorize about the oppressed, we must do "authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication" (64). Once we leave the classroom, we're again in ivory tower isolation, unless we actively seek our students in other contexts-particularly the community context.

What Cushman elucidates here is an important tenet of the project: that rhetoricians must enact social change in the community. In this case, the community is that of the writing center and the LGBTQ students and tutors, thought that is still part of the ivory tower of academia. She also highlights the importance of community - this will become a recurring theme in this research, which seeks to highlight that community cannot be ignored, because it exists in reality.

Cushman also notes the importance of communication. This is why the project tries to pull forward the voices of the LGBTQ tutors themselves as strongly as possible without
compromising their privacy. One can only make authentic social change by listening, first and foremost.

The third goal was to integrate in writing studies research a queered methodology for analysis. This was done using a custom XML language: XM<LGBT/>. This language has allowed for an early foray into the queering of tools in digital humanities, as well as an explorative example of a queer digital literacy.

Initially, this research intended to focus on LGBTAQ students that come into the writing center for tutoring. However, its focus quickly turned to the LGBTAQ tutors in the writing center, who are in this case also students. This had to do with the populations that were willing to be part of the study. However, this turned out to be useful to the research, as opposed to a stumbling block. Tutors are the group most affected by practices in the writing center, and the ones who do the most affecting. When the writing center chooses to make LGBTAQ issues a priority, these student-tutors immediately benefit, and pass those benefits onto the students they tutor, especially if staff education on LGBTAQ issues has been a part of the queering of a writing center. These tutors were able to give an inside look into what writing center sessions look like on the ground, like dealing with homophobia from a tutee or a student coming out during a session. They were able to reflect meaningfully on what practices were and were not working for the LGBTAQ members of the center, a set of practices that might not always be visible to the students that come in for tutoring. Since there is little discussion on how administrative decisions and general writing center practices affect the tutors, it also offered an opportunity to speak with and for a population that often doesn’t get much voice in queer writing center research.
Aims and Central Tenets

This project in many ways aims to try and amplify voices and experiences that might otherwise be homogenized, made more heteronormative or outright ignored. The XM<LGBT/> methodology was part of this attempt. XM<LGBT/> acts as a queered digital literacy. It gives language to a set of queered concerns, allowing their current literacy practices to be heard and analyzed on their own terms, instead of being heard through the tools and logic systems that might overwrite the queerness of the interviews. I discuss more in “Queer Tools, Queer Work” the ways in which the methodology itself embodies queerness and the ways in which it is a queer digital literacy. What is important to remember is that recognition of language and literacy practices as valid is empowering to communities, as it allows for their existence on their own terms.

This project has several tenets I want to make very explicit, that are important to the ideology of this research. First, to do any worthwhile social justice work as rhetoricians, we must be sure to listen to the people we want to work with. To put listening as secondary is, as Cushman notes, putting ourselves in our ivory tower. Second, that our methodologies should be invested in the same politics as the project itself. Using methodologies that don’t account for the non-binary, the queer, the marginalized at the end of the day silence and erase those identities and concerns. Third, that if writing centers really want to be considered places of radical, progressive pedagogical work, they must not rest of the laurels of their marginal placement in the academy. Writing centers must actively work for marginalized groups to truly be radical.

As Roz Ivanic discusses in *Writing and Identity*, the process of creating autobiographical
and discoursal identities can allow students to construct themselves as writers and offer them and others new avenues of self-hood, stating that “Every time a writer constructs a discoursal self which draws on less privileged possibilities for self-hood they are, like a drop in the ocean, infinitesimally redefining the possibilities for self-hood which will, in turn, be available to future writers” (28). By researching how and why queer students and tutors choose (or don’t choose) to construct a queer discoursal self, teachers and tutors can explore better avenues to help make more “possibilities of self-hood” available to students who may previously not have been comfortable constructing themselves as queer in their writing.

Queer students and tutors as a focus for research is essential, as they are a vulnerable population that is often marginalized or silenced, and it is only by listening to them directly that we can best benefit this population. Writing, both in courses and writing centers, can be vital to these students forming their queer identities in healthy ways. Assisting in this process can help alleviate some of the immense pressures these students face and the consequences therein. For instance, transgender students of color commit suicide at a rate of 50%. Students who identify as queer are more likely to be homeless, abuse drugs, and drop out of school. By creating an environment that validates and respects the student’s voices and needs, those in positions of power (those who lead classrooms, create writing centers and writing program policies, etc) can enact solutions that can make real and significant improvements to each student’s process of identity formation through writing.

Writing Centers, especially Northeastern’s Writing Center, focus on one-on-one tutoring and a more equal balance of power between tutor and tutee than might be possible between teacher and student. At Northeastern, tutors are, for instance, peers, coming from undergraduate
and graduate programs, with no distinction on the user end what “level” of tutor is being worked with. The Writing Center also focuses on serving marginalized populations, with mandatory training that includes sessions on dealing with homophobic or harmful writing. As Harry Denny notes in “Queering the Writing Center,” “Foundational scholarship on writing centers pursues a similar agenda [to LGBTQ activism] of challenging hegemonic practices and championing pedagogies of empowerment” (44), making them an ideal way to study queer-identifying students and build new pedagogies to benefit them.

**Literature Review**

**Writing Center Research**

Writing center research has long celebrated that the marginal space of the center within most institutions, both physically and metaphorically, allows for disruptive and subversive kinds of research to be done.

Lil Brannon and Stephen North, for instance, call out the radical nature of writing centers in their article “The Uses of the Margins.” Writing centers upset balances of power, and of how we view learning and classroom dynamics. It calls for continued claiming of the margins as the space of writing centers and pushes also for us to remain nimble, but to still carve a viable, well-funded and stable space for ourselves, even if we are “underground.” One could easily see an extension of their argument that writing centers are inherently queer spaces, as they look to empower and assist those in the margins and disrupt traditional forms of teaching.

Elizabeth Boquet’s *Noise From the Writing Center* extolls the virtues of the noisy disruptions of traditional learning that erupt from writing center spaces. She articulates the use of
noise and excess in successful tutoring, and on what the possibilities of a “loud” set of writing center practice may be, ones that integrate play and possibility. She describes the need for noise and disruption to exist in writing centers, and for the field to reconsider the purpose of writing centers to include a place of inscribing discoursal identity, not “just tutoring.” Essentially, she champions for a messier, more personal, more playful approach to learning to be applied to tutoring.

While writing centers are often spaces of radical practices, with work focusing on the margins and the marginalized, several scholars also ask us to be wary of our own assumptions about writing centers. Our work must be grounded in evidence-based research, or else we risk perpetuating harmful ideas and practices.

Nancy Grimm, for instance, discusses this in *Good Intentions*. Grimm calls on writing centers to shed their ideas about writing centers as inherently liberational. That is, the literacy they impart is both helpful and harmful, that we at once free and oppress those who enter centers. Workers should be helping students interrogate cultural differences instead of just helping to negotiate them. To do any true social justice work, we must restructure the conversations at hand - instead of forcing assimilation between student and institution, writing centers and their tutors must to mold how the institution thinks about students who are marginalized, who have literacy practices that deviate from the norm.

In “After ‘The Idea of a Writing Center,’” Elizabeth Boquet and Neal Lerner trace the history of perhaps the most famous article in writing center studies, Stephen North’s “The Idea of a Writing Center.” They observe without making any particular value judgements, instead presenting research and allowing, to a certain extent, readers to draw their own conclusion. It
traces the ways in which writing centers frame the conversations around their work. Most importantly, it ends by reinforcing that we must do research to back our pedagogical practices, lest we reinforce harmful practices that have become “lore,” which they remind us that Stephen North has warned us specifically against leaning on as practices.

It is not only the students who come for tutoring that should be considered in the conversations on writing center research. In many cases, including within this research, the line between students and tutors is thin. In fact, the tutors at Northeastern are always students, whether undergraduate or graduate, and they both teach and are taught - running their one-on-one sessions, but also being trained within the curriculum and pedagogy set forth by the writing center administrators. Sarah Blazer, in her article “Twenty-First Century Writing Center Staff Education: Teaching and Learning Towards Inclusive and Productive Everyday Practice” champions for taking advantage of staff education as a way to complete the transformative change that allows marginalized students, students marked by their difference, to thrive in the writing center. For Blazer, this includes a staff blog, readings, and questions guided by a framework focused on diversity, but acknowledges centers may have very different structures, including courses, practicums, and workshops, that they may work within. This research hopes to put that idea into motion, to demonstrate how staff education can be a part of the move towards a queer writing center, and the ways in which this benefits both students and tutors, especially those tutors who are students themselves.

Queer Pedagogy

Queer pedagogy has been gaining steam in the past half a decade. The NCTE/CCCC
established the Lavender Award for works in queer rhetoric and composition in 2014. Jonathan Alexander, who writes frequently on a pedagogy of sexuality in the writing classroom, has won a slew of awards for his work. In his book *Literacy, Sexuality, Pedagogy*, he grounds a sexuality-based pedagogy as valid and useful to all students, giving them the literacy to negotiate their identity, whether or not it is LGBTAQ. He also talks about what that pedagogy might look like in a writing classroom. To accomplish this pedagogy of sexuality, he also describes a literacy of sexuality, which this research hopes to expand into the digital sphere.

Alexander has also written on his efforts to put this pedagogy into practice in “straightboyz4nsync.” Alexander performs an experiment in his classroom in an attempt to try and force his students into questioning the performativity of heterosexuality. Alexander believes in disruption of norms as a queer theory, and features his students’ voices heavily throughout the piece. While technologically it begins to look a little dated, Alexander brings up excellent points about ways to further the experiment, particularly his disclosure of the experience he had in “performing” heterosexuality while building the article’s namesake website. His points about the pedagogical efficacy of utilizing queer theory in the classroom are easily extended to writing center practices as well as tutor training curriculums.

Goncalves, in *Sexuality and the Politics of Ethos in the Writing Classroom*, takes a similar approach, giving grounded and practical advice for how one can integrate discussions on sexuality and a pedagogy of sexuality literacy into the writing classroom. Her work focuses on the different ways in which one crafts identities in writing, similarly to Alexander’s later work. However, she also focuses on the ways in which integrating sexuality into writing classrooms can allow for social justice work to be done. In this research I hope to apply that same principle -
that is, I hope that by encouraging conversations on sexuality and how it is dealt with in writing centers, it will push for social change for the benefit of LGBTAQ students and tutors.

While writings specifically on sexuality in the writing center are much rarer than discussion of it in the writing classroom, there are still a few well-known voices making themselves heard. Harry Denny, for instance, published the seminal article on queer writing center work, “Queering the Writing Center.” Denny’s work applies queer theory to tutoring techniques in writing centers - that is, he says we should give students the ability to “pass” in the academic world, or at least navigate their choice to pass, and to “come out” which requires them to feel safe, so that they can tell the writing center their needs. The concrete approach to changing writing center practices acts as a call for writing centers themselves to “come out” and do things like hold queer-centered writing events and produce academic research focused around queerness. This can be done to create an active safe space for queer students where they can feel validated in that queerness and able to come out if they’d like to. Denny continues these ideas later in his book *Facing the Center*, expanding to the idea of identity as a whole as part of the writing center. He searches for “teachable moments” embedded in the contact zones between different kinds of identities in the writing center.

Jay D. Sloan and Andrew Rihn comment in “Rainbows in the Past Were Gay: LGBTQAI in the WC” that there is indeed too much silence in writing center studies on the LGBTAQ matters. They note that the three common pedagogical moves talked about currently are the need to confront homophobia, the need to dismantle binary understandings of gender and sexuality, and a desire for inclusivity. Those three metrics, and especially the need to confront homophobia, all appear within this study, but in varying amounts. In particular, I want to push
beyond the binary understand of gender and sexuality and recognize the need for each center to reflect on itself and its culture to build queered practices, in an acknowledgement that gender and sexuality play out in different ways in each center. The queerest pedagogy of all is one in which we listen to and prioritize the needs of the LGBTQ individuals being affected.

Queer Digital Humanities

The conversation on queer practices is not just occurring in writing centers and classrooms. The digital humanities are also interrogating what it means to have queer practices. In particular, the field is moving towards an inquiry of the ways in which tools and methodologies can be queered, and the ways heteronormative tools and methodologies may erase queerness from data and projects.

Tara McPherson, in “Why Are the Digital Humanities So White?: or Thinking the Histories of Race and Computation” called for more attention to code, tools, and operating systems as enforcers of hegemonic systems of thinking. McPherson explains that all operating systems, if built by systems of logic reliant on hegemonic norms, reflect those norms. In her case, this means UNIX and race, though for John Unsworth before her it was UNIX and capitalism. What is the most important takeaway is the revelation of the politics of the tool stack: all tool stacks reflect their builders. Thus, systems built by marginalized groups around marginalized concerns, like queer groups coding with a queer mindset, can be seen as an act of resistance, a kind of queer OS.

McPherson writes as a contemporary to Kara Keeling, and Keeling mentions McPherson had a heavy influence in her article *Queer OS*. Keeling calls for a Queer OS not as a true
operating system for a computer, but as a system of thinking. This article acts as a solid bridge between new media/rhetoric and composition and DH proper, since it cites from both fields, is cited by several DH authors, and is published in a new media journal. She reads McPherson’s work as revealing that systems, not just movements, are racialized, and as such other systems, and all systems can be similarly affected. Society and logic systems, then, as a system and social construct, can be queered. She calls for more thinking with this operating system focused around queerness.

In “QueerOS: A User’s Manual,” Barnet et al., highlight the mechanical/software workings of a queer system, based off of Kara Keeling’s call for a thinking framework of a Queer OS. While some of the ideas aren’t feasible (since all current programs are binary at their core and queer systems call for non-binary systems, there is tension there) it does highlight that we need to focus specifically on building systems and tools invested in being queer, and acting as a simulacra of queerness. If all tools and systems have politics, one needs to explicitly build counter-hegemonic systems to work within if they want to resist first re-inscribing hegemony through tool and system choices, and if we want to be able to fully express non-hegemonic identities not recognized by the hegemonic systems.

**Methodologies**

There are two portions to the methods used in this project. The first is a series of interviews used to collect information. The second is the encoding of these interviews to turn this information into data to be analyzed.
Interview Methodologies

The interviews are utilized to gain a qualitative view into the experiences of student-tutors in the writing center. These interviews were semi-structured, modeled after the approach described by Rosalind Edwards and Janet Holland. The questions were concerned with the tutor’s writing habits, their LGBTAQ identity, and their writing center work. This approach was taken in order to combat the “lore” of writing centers, and of activist work done via curriculum reform and community building. This concept of lore is the one discussed by Stephen North, who urges research be done to assess whether teaching methods in writing centers are actually effective, as opposed to using the “lore” that a practice is effective to justify it. Especially in regards to issues of social justice, where the groups being worked with as part of a project are already marginalized and silenced in society, it is the duty of the research to utilize and amplify those voices, instead of talking over them. As a result, these case studies focus on the words and suggestions of the LGBTAQ student-tutors themselves, in order to bring them into focus and find out what their actual experiences and needs are, as opposed to assuming them.

Student-tutors volunteered to take part in the study, often because they were interested in assisting their coworker. That is to say, these participants already knew the researcher. Students who had been tutored at the center had also been solicited to participate through several groups on campus, but were unresponsive. There will be further discussion after the case studies about why this may have occurred. Participants ranged in age from 23-35, and ranged from undergraduate to graduate levels of education. All are currently in coursework and attend Northeastern. As will be addressed further in the limitations section, the small sample size (a
mere 3) means that this is not a representative sample of LGBTQ tutors at the writing center. However, the study was never intended to address the needs of LGBTQ students as a cohesive group. Robert Yin notes that one of the benefits of case studies as a research method is their ability to explore the “what” and “why” research questions particularly well, especially when behavioral controls are necessary for the study. (8-9) As this is the case here, I have applied the case study method using the semi-structured interviews to explore these questions, without wanting to make these assertions necessarily generalizable. In fact, to pretend that LGBTQ students somehow have a coherent set of writing practices and needs as a group would be dishonest. It would also ignore the intersectionality of the group, and the effects of race, disability, class, and other identities on their experiences as part of the LGBTQ community. While those in this study identify as gay or bisexual, there are also lesbian, asexual, transgender, non-binary, and many other members of the group, and within that may identify strongly or weakly with the LGBTQ community.

The data was collected over the course of three interviews per participant, totaling nine interviews. The first and second interviews averaged 20-25 minutes. The third interview averaged about 15 minutes. The first interview consisted of questions about the writing practices of the participant, and how writing practices interacted with their LGBTQ identity. It also asked about their experiences as an LGBTQ member of the writing center community, and in what areas of their life they disclose their LGBTQ identity in. The second set of interviews was less structured. Each was designed based on information the participant had told the interviewer during the first session. This included questions about creative writing pursuits, interactions with homophobic writing in the writing center, and interactions with other members of the LGBTQ
community in the writing centers. The third interview asked mostly about the administration of
the center and the effectiveness of the center’s practices. This included getting feedback on
current practices and soliciting their suggestions for improvements within the center. A full set of
questions asked is available in the appendix.

Encoding Methodologies

Following the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed in order to do an analysis
of the text. I will discuss the novel method used for analysis and its implications. After
transcription, the interviews were encoded with a custom XML schema. This schema is meant to
descriptively encode the text for certain kinds of speech acts within the speech event of the
interview, as explained in the introduction. A descriptive pseudoschema is available in the
appendix, as well as the full-scale schema, written in RELAX NG. I will give a brief prose
explanation of the schema here.

There are four tags concerned with the structure of the interviews. <set> contains the full
set of interviews from a single participant. <interview> each contains a single interview, which
has a number as an ID. <speaker> indicates one units of a person speaking, before the other
person speaks. This may contain multiple sentences or subjects. Each <speaker> tag contains an
ID identifying who is speaking. <redacted> is used to indicate where information has been
removed in order to protect the identity of the participants.

The remaining five tags seek to mark speech acts within speech events, as defined by
Dell Hymes. In this case, each seeks to capture a different theme being spoken during the speech
event of the interview. These tags include <writing> which seeks to capture when tutors are
talking about their writing practices, <practice> which seeks to capture descriptions of or suggestions for practices used in writing centers, <attitude> which seeks to convey the emotions of the speaker, <disclosure> which seeks to capture when a speaker is giving information about themselves, their experiences, and their sexuality, and <marking>. Marking as a concept needs slightly more explanation than the relatively straightforward nature of the other tags, which, while nuanced, mostly speak for themselves. Stephanie Kerschbaum, in her 2014 book *Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference*, brought forward a theory of the ways in which student mark difference in conversation. She states that “close attention to their interaction reveals how they [the students] orient to one another, and considered over time, patterns in the markers of difference they display could productively inform understanding of how broad identity categories matter to interaction” (148). I have marked where student indicate they are different from another group, when they are part of a community, when they have knowledge on a subject, and when they indicate they are an authority on a subject. This was done by close reading the text in a manner similar to Kerschbaum’s own methodology, though adapted for XML. By marking these interactions and orientations of difference and belonging, I gained significant insight into the ways tutors view the writing center and its communities, and the importance of the interactions that happen there.

This encoding was done entirely by the researcher, for consistency and privacy purposes. For those unfamiliar with XML, these elements contain different kinds of speech acts (for instance, a speech act where difference is marked, or a speech act where an emotion is portrayed). Once the kind of speech act has been identified, an attribute is used to give more exact information.
This encoding is done as a kind of qualitative coding. However, this kind of custom XML encoding was chosen over traditional qualitative coding for a number of reasons. First and foremost, there is a flexibility and nuance to XML that was appealing for the project. XML makes building chains of controlled vocabularies simple. For instance, if a researcher were to decide that that certain codes should only appear within another code, or never within another code, that can be built into the schema, allowing for validation that the coding is correct before moving forward with the research. XML data is also reusable. In this particular project, the data can be transformed using XSLT in order to do a number of things, including display information about the mark-up and pull forward certain kinds of data, like snippets of text. However, if I were to keep the encoded transcripts for other research, I could use the encoded data for other purposes, to pull forward other kinds of information, or to create modifications of the data. For instance, if I wanted to change all of one tag to another kind of tag, that is relatively simple to do with basic knowledge of XSLT.

It is worth, at this point in the methodology, making an authorial intervention. These methodologies are mixed, and not simply in the collision of the qualitative interview and the quantitative encoding process. These methods stem from different disciplines. Qualitative coding is common to those who do rhetoric and composition based work. This is sometimes done by hand and sometimes done with software. However, coding by hand does not allow for computers to be able to assist in reading and analyzing the data, and this research required intense guarding of the privacy of the individuals being interviewed. Since many popular softwares used the cloud and ownership and viewing rights on those platforms were unclear or unsuitable for a sensitive project, those softwares couldn’t be used. The transcripts, as words belonging to other people,
and including sensitive data about LGBTQAQ identities, was better suited for coding like XML, which allowed for it to live on one computer, in password-protected files.

XML is not all that different from qualitative coding. It is still assigning text into data points, helping to make sense of a qualitative transcript in a scientific way. However, it is rarely used in rhetoric and composition. XML encoding is wildly popular in the digital humanities, however. Wildly popular is no exaggeration: there are projects, like the Women Writers Project, that are 30 years old and utilize a flavor of XML called the TEI in order to create digital manuscripts that also contain immense amounts of data. There has been little crossover between digital humanities and rhetoric and composition, despite the fact that they share many parallel concerns and methodologies, particularly in Rhetoric and Composition’s subfield, Computers and Composition. While recently some work has been done to try and bridge the gap between two fields that could significantly benefit each other, such as in the edited volume *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities* by Ridolfo and Hart-Davidson, the fields still feel some tension - in a review of the book, Kevin Smith notes that “At times, though, there seem to be assumptions or misunderstandings about the digital humanities within the chapters.” Part of the purpose of using XML is reparative, an attempt to bridge the fields together and demonstrate the ways they can contribute to each other.

In addition to flexibility, manipulability, privacy, and an attempt to bridge two fields, XML allows the queer community to use their own code, breaking away from the heteronormative constraints of tools. As mentioned earlier, the call for this work from the field of digital humanities has been growing stronger, and finally building a tools that is queered within the code itself was vital to the project. Not only in the project about queering the writing center,
and about queer tutors, but also about queering the data and information unearthed during the research process, and using queer processes to turn interviews into data.

Once the interviews have been encoded, the underlying data can be manipulated in order to both distantly and closely read the data. With such a small sample of interviews to work from, distance reading can be used to make any definitive statements. However, it can generate interesting insights and avenues of exploration. The data can also be close read, as will be done significantly in the case studies. This is done in this study by using XSLT, which can produce both numbered data and excerpts without having to view an entire transcript, allowing for protection of the research subjects. The XSLT transformations used are included in the appendix. The results of these transformations will be showcased in the case studies for further close-reading and rhetorical analysis.

**Limitations**

This project is not without its flaws, which I lay out here in detail in an effort to be transparent about the validity of the research.

As noted, this is a small sample size for a study, and is exploratory as opposed to explanatory. This is not necessarily a flaw, but is worth keeping in mind. There are only three interviewees, all tutors at the writing center. Northeastern’s LGBTAQ community is, as far as can be discerned, relatively inactive. This is especially surprising considering the activity of other social movements on campus, include divestment efforts and unionizing efforts. There are still communities of LGBTAQ people on campus, however, they appear to be mostly insular - this is noted in contrast to other universities in the second case study, where a student attends two different area schools. Information was distributed through various channels to student group,
but no avail. It is unclear what about Northeastern causes this behavior, this lack of participation from the LGBTAQ population. It may be that the product-oriented, vocational focus of the school pushes groups focused on identity politics into the margins, but there is no evidence to substantiate what factors at Northeastern are at play.

In addition, the students involved were limited in their intersectional identities. Only one identified as female, and all three were caucasian, with English as their first language. Intersectionality is vital to movements hoping to achieve social justice, and it is a major flaw of the study to lack more varying backgrounds. The participants were bisexual and gay, and an additional notable lack was that there were no other LGBTAQ identities represented. This, even more than a small sample size, is what makes the results of this study impossible to generalize. However, despite the lack of diversity, it was striking how similar some of the answers were. I leave it to the reader to interpret those results as they see fit.

The other set of limitations are within the analysis method itself. XML is not perfect as a way of encoding data. For instance, there isn’t a simple way to have overlap in XML - elements must be nested, and the solutions for this limitations are often considered ugly, clunky, or inefficient. For simplicity’s sake, I made sure all of the elements didn’t overlaps instead of using the other solutions, but this sometimes means encoding a speech event slightly beyond the act itself.

Also, while XML is “queerable” and can be made to specifically express the aspects of language pertaining to queerness that this research was interested in, it is still contained within systems that are explicitly not queer, binary systems created within heteronormative societal standards. As McPherson notes, these systems are products of the environment they are in, and
they think in heteronormative ways. Barnett et al.,’s vision of a QueerOS is attempted, then, but not achieved. The system I myself built is queer in nature, engaging with queerness and queer words, but the systems is works with are not. XML also requires a system of information management. This requires a set of hard-and-fast rules, which interferes with the liminality associated with queer scholarship. A sentence cannot be both within and without an element tag - this, again, is the binary nature of computers systems that have been built. While we can nuance the data significantly, allow for more depth and texture to how we describe what these participants have said, encoding still pushes back on queer theory, and it is unclear what steps can be taken to reconcile the nature of queer theory and the nature of computer systems, like XML, which call for order and normativity of data and experience.

Queer Tools, Queer Work

XML was used in this project to answer a call from the field of digital humanities. In the Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016, Barnett et al. laid out the groundwork for a software version of Kara Keeling’s “Queer OS.” As mentioned in the literature review, the digital humanities have recently been inquiring into the ways tools and systems think, and how those ways of thinking are affected by the cultures that created those tools and systems. If tools and systems are created to think like hegemonic groups do, then they re-inscribe the values of the hegemony onto their data. When Kara Keeling called for the initial “Queer OS,” she was using OS as a way to refer to a framework of thinking, not necessarily an actualized software. And notably, Barnett et al. did not actually build a QueerOS. They note that “this is a speculative proposition for a technical project that does not yet exist and may never come to exist, a project
that does not yet function and may never function. It is a response to the requirement that the
digital humanities create working technologies. In lieu of tools, we offer up theoretical
vaporware, speculative potentialware, ephemeral praxis.” When one builds software, there is
often first a “spec,” a document supplying a client’s desired specifications for a software. Thus,
being supplied with Barnett et al.’s spec, I set to work.

There have been many conversations in the world of DH about the tribulations of whether
or not one actually codes, from Stephen Ramsay’s controversial remarks at MLA 11 that all
digital humanists must code (later revised to be that we all must build) to Miriam Posner’s
“Some Things to Think About Before You Exhort Everyone to Code.” Coding, from encoding to
schema building to working with R and Python, is more readily available to a certain subset -
notably, the people who most often had the opportunity to learn to code are those belonging to
hegemonic groups. Thus, the tools available for most DH projects are hegemonic in the way they
think, in the ways they make or process data.

All this to say, XML was not chosen by accident for this project. XML is commonly used
in the DH world, making it legible as a legitimate system through which to intervene in the
digital humanities. XML allowed me to do the kind of things with my data that I was looking for
- it allowed for tagging, processing, and as mentioned in the beginning of this paper, close
reading. But most importantly, XML is the language I know how to build in. I can not only
encode with XML languages, but I can write schemas for them. In this case, I wrote in RELAX
NG, and the full schema is available in the appendix.

Why, then, is it important that I (and specifically I) build a custom schema for use in this
project? In the words of Audre Lorde:

Those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference—those of us who are
poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older—know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. (95)

This applies even when those tools are digital. One cannot deconstruct the white, patriarchal, heteronormative world of DH without building tools which allows for other systems of thought and existence to flourish and be put at the forefront. A custom schema allows for those differences - it also allows me to build a system when those can instead be strengths. Instead of constraining the voices of the queer tutors I interviewed within systems not built to recognize the queer experience, I built a system that could recognize, highlight, and celebrate those experiences. From a personal standpoint, it had to be me - only I knew the idiosyncrasies of the data. But in addition, these systems should be built, when possible, by those who identify as part of those outside structures. And I, as a queer-identifying woman, am in a place to understand how the queer experience thinks, and how to build a system that could think like me.

Not to say in any way that my schema is perfect. In fact, there were often times I felt constrained by it - especially in capturing certain essences of identity expressed by those I interviewed. I could not capture the ways they thought about themselves. Perhaps that is another project for another day. In addition, the schema only captures certain kinds of experiences - it still does not work to recognize class or race, both failings on my part. A future for this project would ideally be a collaboration, much like Barnett et al.’s, where a group can work together to create a system that recognizes more kinds of experience. Or perhaps, instead, we build multitudes of idiosyncratic systems, each built to recognize the individual experience. After all,
this schema was never necessarily intended for the interchange of information, just for the encoding, decoding, and processing of it.

The schema created for this project intends to work towards a queer tool. However, it’s worth being transparent about the ways it both is and is not queer as a final product. The schema itself only has one component dedicated explicitly to sexuality - the type=”sexuality” under the element <disclosure>. Other components were meant to capture more about experiences, practices, and emotions of the queer experience, and the ways in which the queer community differentiates from or absorbs into the other communities surrounding it, and the ways those communities affect and are affected by the practices of the writing center. In some ways, I wonder if this schema wasn’t idiosyncratic enough - if by turning this text into data it wasn’t homogenizing and making easily consumable the lived experiences of LGBTAQ people. I have not yet wrestled completely with whether turning the queer experience into data can ever truly do it justice, or if it is always an act of modification, of straightening, of consumption. I’m inclined to say when done with queer tools and a careful eye towards amplifying the queer voice, then perhaps it can. Even when it perhaps can’t do full justice, especially in situations where trauma may be at play, it at least can amplify the experience, and allow careful attention to the voices themselves.

What does allow for queerness in the tool is its customizability, it’s penchant for different kinds of experience. A schema, at its core, is a way of using controlled vocabulary and set of actions to allow a computer to be able to manipulate text. If that vocabulary and those actions are focused on queerness, XML’s flexibility feels naturally queer. As Julia Flanders and Matthew Jockers note in “A Matter of Scale,” encoding is a duality in and of itself. The process of
encoding forces an incredibly close reading - one must read and process all parts of a document, thinking deeply about each portion, sometimes down to the word, to accurately tag a document. That is, building in itself is a knowledge-making process. When creating custom XML, the methodology of encoding must take certain steps. First, one must decide what the “elements” they will tag with are, if they have attributes like “type,” and what the vocabulary of those attributes contains. Then, one must code the schema which allows the XML to be validated, acting as a kind of grammar for the system. Then, one encodes the texts they are interested in, and check that they are correctly encoded against the schema. After that, one can use other languages to manipulate the information in this case, XSLT. Under the technical guise of these steps of building is a set of decisions that help the knowledge-making process. When one decided on elements, attributes, and controlled vocabularies, what they are doing is providing generic conventions about the text and content, as well as scoping the project and determining their research interests. In building the schema, users must consider deeply the structures of the encoding they want, and therefore must become deeply familiar with how and where their features of interest may occur within the text. In encoding the documents themselves, users must read closely and be able to identify the multiple valences of the different strings, deciding exactly how much of the text should be marked as a feature, and whether a string should be marked with one tag or many, and whether within that string it contains even more tags. One can see this kind of reading in Jerome McGann’s “Marking Texts of Many Dimensions.” Though the close reading in his article is never necessarily identified as close reading, the iterative process of reading through, noticing different textual features, and marking them as important to some future audience closely resembles it. The series of readings in this text can be imitated as a kind
of methodology for using markup for close reading.

Nick Montfort, in his textbook “Exploratory Programming for the Arts and Humanities” summarizes the idea of close, iterative reading through coding as “programming as inquiry.” He notes that “This is the use of programming to probe data and come up with new ideas” (7). At its core, the close reading of encoding allows for “programming as inquiry,” where the constant contact with the data at hand allows for a process of knowing and learning about that data, rather than just processing it.

However, encoding also allows for mass processing of data - one can pull numbers from XML just like one can with processing languages like R. One of the most enticing features of XML is it’s ability to simultaneously do both, however - when the processing mechanisms used for math and counting can assist in a close reading of the text.

Once that data is inputted, a scholar can now easily call forth instances of features they are interested in for close reading. Not only does it save time, but it means no passages get left behind once they have been marked. Indeed, in this case every passage has been marked in some form. For instance, in the case studies, I will be using XSLT to call forward specific instances where, for instance, a student talks about practices used by the Writing Center, in order to read closely the words of the tutors themselves. Using this “distant reading” practices to leverage close readings helps to make liminal practices often seen in binary.

XML serves a plurality of purposes for this project. A queer schema is a tool for completing this research in a queer way, with queer concerns and experiences at the forefront of the mind of the tool. The schema itself, in both concept and execution, is queer in its practices. The space it leaves open for liminality, idiosyncratic, and nuance, for addition and subtraction,
and for highlighting marginalized voices make it a tool that can be manipulated to the queer cause, both in theory and in activism. And perhaps most intriguingly, this encoding can act as a kind of queer digital literacy practice.

Perhaps the most notable example of a queer digital literacy practice was the CCCC’s Lavender Award winning *Techne: Queer Meditations on Writing the Self*. The novel form, spanning text, videos, and audio across a website, not only emphasizes the body, but the ways space and place interact with our literacy practices, and forces one to more deeply examine the multiplicity of web literacies. This begins the movement from “digital literacy” to a truer “digital literacies.” That is, there isn’t one digital literacy, but much like traditional literacy it is multiple, based on communities and self-identity. Up to this point, little about queer digital literacy has been explored. “QueerOS” articulated a theory around what queer operating systems might look like, but *Techne* adapts that theory into not only a practice, but an art form, using the heuristics of this operating system as a tool for their literacy community. The authors make a truly novel call when they state in the introduction that

> The call for greater data literacy intersects powerfully with identity construction, with the forming and orienting of particular kinds of selves and subjects. Before we go too much further down the path, we insist on an intervention, a space and time for reflection. We insist on a queering of our technologies, and of ourselves through them. To do so requires that we hit pause, that we reconceive and reimagine our spatial and temporal relationships to our technologies.

Here one can see the beginnings of theories that are only starting to simmer to the top of conversations around digital tools and practices: that they cannot ever be “just digital.” The digital is not separate from the identity. Queer literacies and digital literacies are by nature intersectional, or as the authors put it, “rhizomatic.”

This XML, then, acts as another queer digital literacy - data literacy is inherent in XML,
and highlighting the identity construction of queerness allows for a reflection on where the queer experience is visible in data and the digital. The most intriguing bonus to using XML is that it is human readable. That is, XML is almost always, by design, able to be parsed easily by people who are alphanumerically literate in the language it is written in. It consists, usually (though not necessarily) of controlled vocabularies, written by the researcher. There are possibilities for community built controlled vocabularies - the TEI is community built and maintained. These controlled vocabularies can then be leveraged as a microcosm of literacy practices for a community, highlighting the ways they are interested in communicating. It also lends the queer community a vocabulary in the code sphere that was not accessible before - code and encoding was previously silent about what might be queer about a text, or about what queer people had to say, because code lacked the vocabulary. By creating that vocabulary and injecting it into the system, queer digital literacy can blossom among the hardware and software of the computer.

**Case Studies**

A Brief Introduction to the Case Studies

These case studies, as mentioned, were conducted with Northeastern writing center tutors, who ranged in age from their early 20s to their mid-30s. It was through the process of these interviews that I realized a few things that will eventually lead to a large overhaul of my encoding schema. I had prepared for trauma, for tutors to recount upsetting or hostile experiences. After all, so much of the queer experience is traumatic - whether it’s the trauma of the closet or the trauma inflicted by the social structures that condemn the LGBTQ population. However, I forgot that so much of the LGBTQ experience is joy, exuberance, resilience, and
humor. Allow for a moment of waxing poetic: from our community traumas have grown an immense sense of play, of fun. After all, the Stonewall Riots were the first Pride event.

This joy, of course, is not captured perfectly, or perhaps even very well, in these case studies. I had prepared tags for attitudes of hostility, discomfort, and trauma, but not for laughter or celebration. I also couldn’t capture what I later realized was the sense of personal identity formation within these interviews. This instead is often captured at the intersection between marking difference and marking community. As Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes note in *Techne*, the queer self is rhizomatic, and nearly unknowable, though we work of attempting to know the queer self is vitally important and iterative. I had predicted this - the importance of writing the queer self was the impetus behind this entire project. What I did not expect, and what is another future for this project, is an observation of the ways LGBTAQ students identify their queer self, and the different manifestations of what that means.

Overall, these interviews and my participants surprised me in many ways, both from their convergences and divergences. At their final transcription before being encoded in XML, these interviews were over 15,000 words and spanned 40 pages. I hope here to do justice to the things I learned from them, and the spirit they all imbued into this project, which only exists because of their willingness to participate.

These participants include a gay man in their early 20s who highlighted queer writing practices, a bisexual woman in her early 20s who highlighted the role of community and difference in the ways her LGBTAQ identity affected her writing center experiences, and a bisexual man in his mid-30s who highlighted the ways tutors and tutees are affected by the ways LGBTAQ issues are handled in writing centers. I’ve included a table here comparing the results
showcased below for easy comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cade</th>
<th>Sophie</th>
<th>Liam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marking (total)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marking (difference, alone)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marking (community, alone)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marking (both community and difference)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marking (knowledge and/or authority)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure (total)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure (sexuality, or experience and sexuality)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure (experiences, non-sexuality)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing center practices</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cade Interviews: Queer Writing Practices

Cade is a mid-20s male working on a PhD in English at Northeastern. They, like all English PhD’s at Northeastern, work in the Writing Center in order to fulfill the terms of their contract with the university. They, like all the participants, are white, and prefers they/them pronouns. Self-described as a “campy” gay man, Cade was perhaps the most nonchalant of all of the tutors in regards to the questions at hand. That fact, of course, isn’t meant to be a judgement - rather, in contrast to the two other interviews, Cade just seemed to be more willing to go with the flow. This is reflected even with a very simple analysis of the <attitude> element, which contains an attribute to mark indifference on the part of the speaker. This is done with a quick count via
XSLT:

```xml
<p>There are <xsl:value-of select="count( //attitude [@type='indifferent'] )"/> indications of indifference.</p>
```

This stylesheet is actually so simple that I haven’t included it on its own in the appendix, though a general analysis stylesheet will be included that returns similar information. This, in particular, returned the following XHTML document:

![XHTML Document](image)

There are 3 indications of indifference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>XHTML</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Cade had this attribute 3 times in their set of interviews, while none of the other interviews included it. It’s worth noting it’s not that the other tutors weren’t indecisive or unsure during their interviews, but Cade’s generally laid-back attitude (they mentioned at one point they generally a very “chill” person in general.)

This counting of elements is illustrative of a larger principle at hand - the encoding of these interviews has allowed certain things, like the general demeanor of an interview, to be expressed through numerical values. These aren’t generalizable, but they are useful, especially as ways into close reading these interviews in order to gain a nuanced view of what is said.

There are a few general numbers I’ve pulled using an XSLT stylesheet (Item 3 in the appendix) applied to each of the sets of interviews - these sets being grouped by interviewee. This is one of the benefits mentioned earlier of using XML. I can extract both this numerical data, and later the quotes from the tutors themselves, by utilizing XSLT on a set of XML-encoded documents, which can be customized to gather a very wide variety of data based
Cade, it is worth noting, had the shortest interview by length and by word count. They talked about their sexuality often in the context of writing. They talked significantly more about other experiences outside of disclosing their sexuality. They also talked about their writing proportionally more, and more in depth than the other interviewees. This discussion on writing practices revealed what Cade, as a student who is queer and who frequently engages in writing practices, feels about integrating queer identity into the academic sphere. I have pulled all of the excerpts using a basic XSLT script in order to close read a few examples. (Item 4 in the appendix). I have presented the first quote of the four in its original XML format, as well as the simpler to read XHTML in order to showcase the transformation and extraction via XSLT. This hopefully highlights the utility of XML in this kind of research, and the ways in which it can
make data both manipulatable and presentable, as well as highlight the voices of the queer community members.

Yeah, I did… There’s two ways. It helped me, I don’t know, like, process things. I knew I wanted to do creative writing before I knew I was gay, so it sort of helped me work things out, like oh how does this work on paper. I guess they’re both kind of the same thing. Toy with ideas in fiction instead of real life, or for real life.

Yeah, I uh… yeah, so the first people that I voluntarily came out to, I wrote them letters, because I didn’t want to do it face to face because I was too scared. So I wrote them letters.

I usually don’t share my academic writing with people except for professors, although I’ve had professors who have been very helpful with that. I don’t know… I don’t know why I do that.

I think it’s easier to write about being queer in creative writing, you can be more experiential. And queer theory is hard to understand at first, so you have to read a lot before you can really write about it. Whereas with creative writing, even if it’s not very good, you can just write whatever you’re feeling. And I think, I don’t want to say that’s the only way to write about queerness, but it’s one of the few acceptable ways to write about queerness in an academic setting, is through the lens of queer theory.

These quotes reveal a few things, and notably intersect with Cade’s few mentions of disclosing
his sexuality. First, that it is “easier to write about being queer in creative writing.” This sentiment was echoed across the interviews - queerness is easy to write about in the personal or creative sphere, but shunned within the academic world except within a few rigid structures. The personal is not made visible in the academic sphere. This sentiment will be repeated very strongly in Liam’s interviews, as well. However, writing as a whole seems to play a role in Cade’s exploration of their sexuality - making it easy for them to “figure things out” and construct a discoursal identity of queerness. It was also part of their coming out process, which is often an experience fraught with fear. Here, writing seemed to allow Cade to engage with the queer self while maintaining a sense of both control and engagement - one can write the queer self but also write the reaction to the queer self.

So what do Cade’s interactions with writing reveal to us about queer tutors and students in writing centers?

First and foremost, Cade shows us that to some queer students, writing and self expression is important to the formation of their queer identity. They also show that personal writing feels like it doesn’t quite belong in the writing center when they discuss their process for writing creatively:
While they were comfortable sharing with others in their creative writing program during their undergraduate years, they never shared more academic writing with anyone besides professors. Cade also mentions that no student has ever come in with creative writing during his time at Northeastern’s writing center.

This is not to conflate different writing centers and different institutions. However what seems to bubble up from Cade’s remarks on their writing experience is that writing about queerness is an important part of their queer identity formation, that queer writing is welcome in the creative sphere and is only welcome under very limited conditions in the academic sphere, and that while queer writing about the self is a very community-based, shared writing process for Cade, they did not ever feel that that writing should be brought to the writing center. The lack of students bringing in creative pieces seems to additionally reflect that attitude at Northeastern.

Sophie Interviews: Community and Difference

Sophie is a young woman in her early 20’s, who uses she/her pronouns. She is
completing a Bachelor’s degree in art at Northeastern, and has worked at the writing center for the longest of any of the interviewees. She is particularly supportive of the writing center, leveling less criticisms than the other interviews. She also talked the most about writing, which is surprising because she is not in an English degree program like both Cade and Liam are. She also marked knowledge or authority least out of all the interviews, which seems to fit her personality - she seems mostly uninterested in being seen as an authority figure and is much more invested in the idea of community. Like with Cade, I have pulled some information:

There are 34 indications of marking.
Of those, 13 are marking difference, 10 are marking community, and 8 have both community and difference. The student also marked authority or knowledge 3 times.
This student disclosed something 14 times during their interview.
They disclosed their sexuality, or an experience with their sexuality 7 times.
They had 5 experiences they disclosed that didn’t relate to their sexuality.
The student talked about their writing practices 17 times, and about writing center practices 19 times.

Sophie marks community, difference, and combinations of both more than the other interviewees (though Liam marks difference the same amount, he marks community and both much less.) Her investments lie more in the constructions of the social world of writing than Cade’s did. She mentions multiple times that she is a private or solitary person, both in her academic and creative
writing - from process to final product, she prefers to be alone and prefers not to have her work read by others, though she is beginning to change her views on that, when asked about the conflicting desire to maintain privacy and solitude while simultaneously wanting her private writing to be read by others:

```
I don't know, and that's kind of what I'm trying to work out. I'm writing this very personal stuff, in a very personal and solitary way, I don't know what that looks like, to write for others. Whether or not it's for a public forum, or it's just me saying "hey, can you read this?" just so I know someone else read it. I don't know.

Oh no, yeah, I'm a very solitary person. I'm the person that goes to the fourth floor of Snell, where it's supposed to be silent, and I will text them, like you know how they have the...? I snipe everybody. I'm like, if you want to whisper, go on the third floor, that's for whispering. I like, I need to, if I can't have literal solitude, I like to feign it as much as possible. Wow, such a loner.
```

This, she reflects, has to do with the power of the writing something down, stating that:

```
Well, I think that there's something to be said for writing something down. Once you've written something down, it's there, and it's outside of you. So writing down the phrase 'I am bisexual' 'I am gay' 'I am an LGBT demographic' you know, having those phrases exist outside of you is very different and very declarative. And that could be why I've been reluctant to include it in the past.
```

However, this very power is what makes Sophie so unsure of how to share her work. She notes that the power of writing is a large marker of community and difference, which is why those two tags seem to coincide so often within her interview. When asked about why she was more out at her other college (name redacted in this transcript), she responded that
She is very aware of the ways in which she is both within and without certain communities. For instance, at her other college, she feels that openly identifying as LGBTAQ does not mark her as different from the general community - there, the LGBTAQ self is not a community that is seen as “different.” However, at Northeastern, even in some very well meaning ways the LGBTAQ body is pronounced as an anomaly, a token - the need to hold someone up as being “accepted” instead of that acceptance being seen as obvious or the norm still marks them as different from the typical community member. This sense of being simultaneously within and without communities, the seeking of solitude and of growing to seek outside readership, are why Sophie has so many overlaps between community and difference - for her, community often comes with the marking of difference, especially when it comes to being out. For someone who prefers their privacy, the obvious marking of difference can be a barrier to expressing one’s queer self identity - what someone like Sophie would prefer would be more like her other college, where accepting her queer self and experiences into a group doesn’t include her being marked as a token minority. Despite her troubles reconciling all this, her first quote makes it clear she is seeking others to engage with her, to form a community she can share her writing about her identity with.

The importance of a community doesn’t just appear in Sophie’s writing. While all those
interviewed engaged with both personal and academic writing in different ways, some form of community support was present in all. And while all admit they write their academic work alone, all three also expressed that they either shared or wish to share creative and personal writing on their identity with others. The exact implications on the expressions of community importance will be discussed later, but it is worth noting that it seemed to matter quite a bit to the students that they had some sort of support for their identity, and that communities affected them during the writing process. What this means for the writing center is that the role of community cannot be ignored - and that one must think deeply and carefully about the ways in which pedagogy can mark difference and form communities, and the ways that may affect LGBTAQ groups.

Liam Interviews: Tutors, Tutees, and Sexuality

Liam is a male in his mid-30s who uses he/him pronouns. He identifies as bisexual, and is the oldest of the participants. He also had by far the longest interview, both in time recorded and in words. He is, like Cade, getting a PhD in English. Though he has not been working in the Northeastern writing center as long as Sophie, he has worked in other centers before, and had been in higher education the longest, both working and as a student. Liam was much more open about experiences he has gone through compared to the other participants, both about their experiences with disclosing their sexuality and with other, more general experiences.
He also talked the most about writing center practices, and the most critically. (And while it’s not shown on this sheet, he also had the most uses of the <attitude> attribute “frustrated” and the only use of the attribute “hostile.”) While critical, he wasn’t disparaging of the center - rather, as evidence by having marked knowledge or authority more than the other tutors interviews, Liam believes he knows enough about writing centers and sexuality to make valid criticisms and helpful suggestions. These suggestions will be discussed further as part of the recommendations to centers. What is most interesting about Liam’s interviews is that since he is so willing to disclose his experiences, one can get a close view of what sorts of interactions occur in the writing center in regards to the LGBTQA identity.

While Sophie had never had a student come in with a paper about their sexuality, both Cade and Liam had. Liam discussed how this situation came about, with the student coming out
to a tutor during a session.

When asked whether he had revealed that he, too, was LGBT, Liam said he hadn’t, saying that:

Liam says most strongly something each of the tutors expressed - that self identity isn’t something a tutor is allowed to express during a session. (Cade, notably, also didn’t reveal his own sexuality when students came out via papers during sessions.) This “generic” tutor stance happens in both situations where the student has writing about their own LGBT identity and in situations where a student has brought in homophobic writing. Liam notes that when put in a situation where a student has expressed homophobic ideas, he reverted into a consumer model:
Liam expressed significant frustration when recounting the experiences with homophobia in the center. What his willingness to disclose then, gives us a glimpse into how homophobia in the writing center can be detrimental to the tutors, inflicting discomfort, anxiety, and frustration.

With the generic tutor model, there is both a sense of safety, since one doesn’t have to out themselves, and an element of frustration, in that there is a sense of helplessness associated with not being able to do anything about the homophobic statements. How students are equipped to deal with homophobia and other encounters with sexuality in the writing center is important to consider when training tutors. While tutors may find comfort or ease in the “generic” identity-less tutor model, writing centers and their administrators should also consider and weigh what harms it may also be doing to the tutor, especially if the homophobia in the papers is recurring over multiple assignments or sessions. Put most simply, Liam’s interviews reveal that the interactions between LGBTQ+ tutors and their students must be taken into account when attempting to build queer writing center practices.
Analysis and Suggestions

When I began this project, my intent was to end with a set of concrete recommendations for writing centers - pedagogy practices and curriculum suggestions, which could be implemented without much thought. I realize now, however, that this was a naive way to look at how writing centers work. It was also a naive way to think of how writing centers should deal with queer tutors and students.

Each of the students I interviewed had different views on how the writing center was handling LGBTAQ issues. Some thought the writing center was already doing very well - others had concerns about priorities and practices used. What is important to note here is that I only learned about the variations, the differences of opinion, by actually listening to the people I wanted to write about. Writing centers must not rely on lore or assumptions when crafting pedagogies or training curriculums.

In total, writing center practices were discussed 56 times by the three participants. Some of these were discussions of current practices, whether it was a technique used in a session or a training they attended. Others were recommendations from the tutors for how to improve the center. First, I want to highlight the suggestions and discussions from the tutors themselves. Then, I will briefly discuss what I make of these when they are viewed together.

The current practices that work are not the same across the interviews. Sophie, for instance, loved the training session on LGBTAQ issues:
Cade, however, seemed to how found that session less helpful:

Notably, Cade’s concerns were with the audience and with impact. If the trainings aren’t having meaningful impact for the communities they are meant to help, writing centers must rethink how they are being held. Sophie being pleased with the training seems to have a lot to do with the honesty present in the session:
Cade does mention when asked whether they feel supported by the writing center administration that at least they are generally friendly in the center and not bigoted.

Liam seemed less interested in the sessions, and more interested in fellow tutors as a support systems:

He also echoed Cade’s critique that the sessions were doing too much. Even Sophie, who had very few critiques of the center, also believed that LGBTAQ issues shouldn’t just be part of one session, and should be viewed as a larger part of the curriculum.

Liam also had the only significant practice suggestion that wasn’t brought up in any other
interviews. He mentioned on multiple occasions wanting to engage the public as part of the writing center being more accommodating to LGBTAQ students and tutors:

The suggestions and themes that occurred across all of the interviews included better thought-out trainings, remodeling of trainings to be more curriculum-like, and the importance of community building for tutors as well as students. This, for some centers, may look like implementing follow up sessions. For others, it may mean having multiple, more focused LGBTAQ sessions. It may also be useful for centers to consider making certain kinds of sessions, like ones that deal with marginalized populations, mandatory for tutors to attend, or integrating them into existing mandatory meetings where possible. Single sessions can lead to students feeling tokenized and may only be widely attended by LGBTAQ students if others aren’t encouraged to come as well - and it is those populations who most need the training in order to benefit and protect LGBTAQ tutors and students. In addition, as mentioned by Cade in the case studies, if centers claim they would like suggestions on how to make the center more LGBTAQ friendly, they should make a point of actually implementing those suggestions to the best of their abilities. Impact is very important for that aspect, otherwise harmful practices are
willingly being left in place by the administration and LGBTAQ tutors feels their concerns aren’t being taken seriously or prioritized,

The practice that seemed to be the most harmful was the “generic tutor” model that arose whenever student were confronted with homophobic writing. In these situations, tutors felt that had little recourse but to retreat inside themselves. This caused them each frustration, discomfort, and anxiety, in varying amounts. At this point in the research, it is unclear what the recourse for that model is. Sophie did suggest that allow this practice could be constructive:

```
I feel, I want to say I would definitely frame it that “this is what you’re saying, this is how you’ll be perceived.” It’s my obligation to make that note to you. And if that’s okay, alright, I can’t tell you what to write, but this is offensive, this is considered offensive language. I don’t know if I would get personally, I don’t know if I would continue the conversation in a personal manner. If I felt threatened, that would be a different story, but I would just try to keep it as systematic as possible, and I think maybe that’s also a good thing to have in place for LGBT tutors, so that they don’t feel that they need to personally deal with the situation, they kind of have a script that they can go off of, so they can speak as a tutor and not as a person and still feel safe.
```

This seems to imply that perhaps the generic tutor model can be helpful instead of harmful if it is done with intent and is systematic in nature. That is, tutors should be able to make that choice actively when they feel they want to, instead of doing it out of fear or lack of other recourse. When I say systematic, I mean it in the sense Sophie seems to be implying, which is a scripting and training around these situations, so that tutors can easily fall into a script instead of having to invest emotional energy in figuring out how to distance themselves from very personal and hurtful situations on the fly during a session. I do believe that tutors would benefit from having sessions on how to deal with these kinds of situation integrated into their training curriculums, even if it is separated out from the LGBTAQ issue of homophobic writing specifically. Since it
is often the most marginalized tutors that suffer from seeing their identities dehumanized on paper, it is important that we give those tutors the tools to reduce any emotional damage where possible.

Community was perhaps the most important theme, across practices and writing experiences, and it was an idea shared strongly by each of the tutors as a beneficial part of writing center practices. In Boquet’s *Noise From the Writing Center*, she argues against community, even deconstructs the idea of what a community is. She’s not wrong in her premise - communities are difficult to build and they require significant emotional labor. However, to simply throw in the towel on community building, or to try and turn the idea inside out or on its head, ignore the people who most benefit from a strong community - marginalized groups like LGBTQ tutors. Their writing practices yearn for and seek an audience when they write on their identity - it was only in the sterile world of academia, where they felt identity was not a welcome subject, that they had no want for an audience, or a workshop, or a second set of eyes on their paper. Boquet makes strong points, but so do the tutors - and I believe we must listen to those being affected before believing the voices of theory for the field.

So how to build this community? Boquet is right - it is not about bringing refreshments or organizing holiday parties. Instead, one should look to the space of the center, and not just the decorations. Do tutors have a separate area to congregate, talk over sessions? Are they given free time away from the public eye where they can be honest about sessions, share experiences, or recoup together? Labor and space are both expensive, yes. But even in small increments, giving tutors the opportunity to bond can be beneficial. After all, as Liam points out on the benefits of community in the writing center:
Conclusion

This project concludes with some meditations on future work. The points brought up here are exploratory but important, and deserve further inquiry. Queer students write and express their identities in unique ways and situations. The field must observe more closely the ways and places queer students inscribe their identity in writing in order to make better pedagogical practices that address LGBTQAQ concerns. This holds true for both writing centers and writing classrooms. It is through observing and listening that we learn more, and can truly come to understand the discoursal identities that students construct.

Queer students also seek support in dealing with homophobic writing. While the meditations thus far have been useful in helping illustrate experiences, it is time we as a field took solid steps forward in combating harmful student writing. This includes, perhaps, integrating sessions on how to deal with it into staff education, as well as other administrative
practices. The end goal should be to empower tutors to do what they think is right and what does the least harm to them when they are confronted with writing that may make them feel dehumanized or threatened.

Queer students also seek community. Cushman was correct about her observations on community being a vital aspect to social change. Finding and listening to the LGBTAQ community is one portion of what the field should be working towards. In addition, writing centers (and again, classrooms, programs, and universities) should enact practices that help build and empower the queer community. They do exist, sometimes separately from the general community and sometimes not. But facilitating community and safety, making it so tutors don’t feel marked as different, creates a space where queer tutors feel safe. This safety allows for practices like coming out and discussion of sexuality, practices that in turn makes students feel safe. This is how one can engender queer discoursal identities - by making it safe and acceptable to write or enact that discoursal identity.

To truly be centers of radical and progressive research on the margins, writing centers must begin to think deeply about who is marginalized, and the ways in which they feel they can construct themselves in writing and in writing centers. Through researching what the communities feel and need, we can make steps to truly make room in the margins for the marginalized, and allow them to write and exist more authentically in our centers.

There are also many futures for XM<LGBT/> that have been revealed by this project. Some of these will hopefully manifest within XM<LGBT/> 2.0, though others may not be easily reconciled within this project. First, I hope in its next iteration to capture the joy, resilience, humor, and self-inscription that takes place in the queer community. I feel I perhaps didn’t do
justice to the many wonderful and enjoyable parts of queer community and queer becoming, and would want to pay greater attention to these in the next version. Secondly, I hope to inquire more deeply into what a queer schema may mean. In this case, a queer schema was used to highlight and learn more about queer experiences. However, other queer schemas, or a QueerOS, may be able to queer heteronormative narratives in a way this project does not. This project was not focused on queering the heteronormative and instead listening to and honoring the voices and experiences of queer people, but a schema or OS that did queer the heteronormative is a possible area of research for the future. The third future research area that XML<LGBT/> revealed is the problem of binary. Under every OS, under every system, including this one, is a binary system. This is all the computing known to the world, and even if we did stumble upon computing with more factors - built on systems with 3 or 4 or more factors, they all still seem to need some system of classification. It seems almost unimaginable for a system with true liminality, unknowability and blurring of boundaries to exist. How does one reconcile the need for organization and compartmentalization, of labelling and ordering, with queerness and the principles of queer theory? This is perhaps the most difficult question raised by XM<LGBT/>. How does one program gender troubles?

Appendix

Item 1: Pseudoschema table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Controlled vocabulary for type attributes</th>
<th>Attribute or vocabulary meaning</th>
<th>Contains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>set</td>
<td>Contains a full set of interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;interview, &lt;speaker&gt;, &lt;marking&gt;, &lt;disclos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview</strong></td>
<td>Marks 1 full interview session</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>allows numbering of the interviews for purposes of keeping them in order.</td>
<td>&lt;speaker&gt;,&lt;marking&gt;,&lt;disclosure&gt;,&lt;attitude&gt;,&lt;writing&gt;,&lt;practice&gt;,&lt;redacted&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>speaker</strong></td>
<td>Marks a unit of 1 person's speech</td>
<td>id</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>allows the assignment of an ID, usually a pseudonym, to each speaker, to be able to associate each given unit of speech to a person.</td>
<td>&lt;marking&gt;,&lt;disclosure&gt;,&lt;attitude&gt;,&lt;writing&gt;,&lt;practice&gt;,&lt;redacted&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marking</strong></td>
<td>Taken from Stephanie Kerschbaum's &quot;Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference.&quot; Students mark difference and belonging in various ways.</td>
<td>type</td>
<td>difference</td>
<td>Interviewee is marking themselves as different from another person or group.</td>
<td>&lt;disclosure&gt;,&lt;attitude&gt;,&lt;writing&gt;,&lt;practice&gt;,&lt;redacted&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>authority</td>
<td>Interviewee is marking themselves as an authority on a subject or group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td>Interviewee is marking themselves as having knowledge on a subject or group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>community</td>
<td>Interviewee is marking themselves as part of a community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>disclosure</strong></td>
<td>Marks a</td>
<td>type</td>
<td>personal</td>
<td>Interviewee is</td>
<td>&lt;marking&gt;,&lt;attitude&gt;,&lt;writing&gt;,&lt;practice&gt;,&lt;redacted&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attitude</td>
<td>type</td>
<td>interviewee reaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disclosure of</td>
<td>sexuality</td>
<td>revealing personal details about themselves.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certain kinds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of information,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usually</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>considered to be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;sensitive.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disclosure</td>
<td>trauma</td>
<td>interviewee discloses some form of trauma.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experience</td>
<td>interviewee discloses a personal experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks a distinct</td>
<td>type</td>
<td>interviewee appears ambivalent about or disinterested in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attitude from</td>
<td>ambivalent</td>
<td>the subject.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the speaker.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>frustrated</td>
<td>interviewee appears frustrated about the subject.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>upset</td>
<td>interviewee appears upset or angry about the subject.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hostile</td>
<td>interviewee appears hostile towards subject.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>friendly</td>
<td>interviewee appears friendly towards subject</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>safe</td>
<td>interviewee indicates they feel safe about a subject.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agreement</td>
<td>interviewee expresses agreement with a subject.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disagreement</td>
<td>interviewee expresses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like</td>
<td>Interviewee expresses that they like something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dislike</td>
<td>Interviewee expresses that they dislike something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comfortable</td>
<td>Student appears to be or expresses that they are comfortable with a subject.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncomfortable</td>
<td>Student appears to be or expresses that they are uncomfortable with a subject.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>funny</td>
<td>Student is making a joke or using a humorous intonation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 2: Full Schema</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;grammar</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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    </oneOrMore>
  </choice>
</element>
</define>

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        <ref name="element.disclosure"/>
        <ref name="element.attitude"/>
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        <ref name="element.practice"/>
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  </element>
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      </choice>
    </zeroOrMore>
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      <ref name="element.attitude"/>
      <ref name="element.disclosure"/>
      <ref name="element.redacted"/>
      <ref name="element.writing"/>
      <ref name="element.practice"/>
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  </element>
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      <ref name="element.disclosure"/>
      <ref name="element.redacted"/>
      <ref name="element.writing"/>
      <ref name="element.practice"/>
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  </element>
</define>

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    <ref name="element.marking"/>
    <ref name="element.disclosure"/>
    <ref name="element.redacted"/>
    <ref name="element.writing"/>
    <ref name="element.practice"/>
  </element>
</define>
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    </attribute>
</define>

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    </attribute>
</define>

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                    <value>authority</value>
                    <value>knowledge</value>
                    <value>community</value>
                </choice>
            </oneOrMore>
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                    <value>sexuality</value>
                    <value>trauma</value>
                </choice>
            </oneOrMore>
        </list>
    </attribute>
</define>

<define name="attribute.typeAttitude">
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                    <value>frustrated</value>
                    <value>upset</value>
                    <value>hostile</value>
                    <value>friendly</value>
                    <value>safe</value>
                </choice>
            </oneOrMore>
        </list>
    </attribute>
</define>
<value>agreement</value>
<value>disagreement</value>
<value>like</value>
<value>dislike</value>
<value>comfortable</value>
<value>discomfort</value>
<value>funny</value>
</oneOrMore>
</attribute>
</define>

Item 3: XSLT Script for obtaining number data

<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<xsl:stylesheet version="2.0"
xmlns:xsl="http://www.w3.org/1999/XSL/Transform"
xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">
<!-- NB: Incorrect namespaces -->
<xsl:template match="set">
<html>
<head>
<title>Statistics</title>
</head>
<body>
<p>There are <xsl:value-of select="count( //marking)"/> indications of marking.</p>
<p>Of those, <xsl:value-of select="count(//marking[@type='difference'])"/> are marking difference, <xsl:value-of select="count(//marking[@type='community'])"/> are marking community, and <xsl:value-of select="(count(//marking[@type='difference community']) + count(//marking[@type='community difference']) + count(//marking[@type='authority difference community'])))"/> have both community and difference.

  The student also marked authority or knowledge <xsl:value-of select="(count(//marking[@type='authority']) + count(//marking[@type='authority difference']) + count(//marking[@type='authority community']) + count(//marking[@type='authority difference community']) + count(//marking[@type='community knowledge']) + count(//marking[@type='knowledge']) + count(//marking[@type='knowledge difference']))"/> times. <p>
  This student disclosed something <xsl:value-of select="count( //disclosure)"/> times during
their interview.

They disclosed their sexuality, or an experience with their sexuality <xsl:value-of select="(count(//disclosure[@type='sexuality']) + count(//disclosure[@type='sexuality experience']) + count(//disclosure[@type='experience sexuality']))"/> times.

They had <xsl:value-of select="(count(//disclosure[@type='experience']) + count(//disclosure[@type='personal experience']))"/> experiences they disclosed that didn't relate to their sexuality.

The student talked about their writing practices <xsl:value-of select="count( //writing)"/> times, and about writing center practices <xsl:value-of select="count( //practice)"/> times.
Item 5: Full Question List

Note: These questions are not in the order they were necessarily asked. Some questions were asked in different contexts or as responses to answers the interviewees gave. They are provided here for transparency.

Can you tell me a little about yourself? How old you are, what your first language is, what your major is, and your interests?

How do you identify as a member of the LGBTAQ community?

In what areas of your life are you “out?” Where do you choose not to disclose your identity as an LGBTAQ individual?

What are your experiences with academic writing? Have you taken any writing classes at the college level? What sort of writing did you do?

Have you ever talked about your LGBTAQ identity in your academic writing? Have you revealed it in your creative writing? And in what situations do you do that?

In what ways does writing like that, about your LGBTAQ identity, affect you?

Do you feel satisfied with the ways you get to express yourself and your identity through writing? What places, classes, or assignments make you feel the most satisfied with your writing?

Have you ever revealed your LGBTAQ identity during a Writing Center session? In what situations do you choose to disclose that or not disclose that?

What kinds of experiences and interactions have you had in the Writing Center in regards to your LGBTAQ identity, including with coworkers and administrators?

How did you come to work at the Writing Center? Why choose you work there? Can you tell me about the working environment?

How did you come to work at the Writing Center? Why do you work there? Can you tell me about the working environment?

Are there aspects of the Writing Center that you would like to change which would make you feel more comfortable as an LGBTAQ student?
Could you talk more about your creative writing versus traditional academic writing and the different ways you felt your LGBTAQ identity at play there? Do you talk about them in different ways at all? Do you feel any tension between queer theory and your queer identity, or things of that nature?
Do you ever feel tension there, about the acceptableness of queer theory versus self insertion into academic paper?
And have you ever worked with creative writing during writing center sessions? Has anyone ever come in with creative writing?
And has anyone brought a paper into a session that revealed that they were LGBTAQ, or come out to you during a session?
Are there other LGBTAQ people in the writing center you have camaraderie with?
You mentioned a session where a student brought in a paper that talked about their LGBTAQ identity. How did this session start?
Once you realized the paper was about him being LGBTAQ, how did you react? Did you mention anything to the student about your own identity?
What was the focus of the session? Do you remember what kind of tutoring strategies you used?
You also mentioned being a creative writing student, and how that was one of your paths for expressing your identity. What were the ways and places you worked on these writings? Did you ever workshop them in an environment like the writing center?
When you did work on creative pieces, did you ever work on them with LGBTAQ students or professors?
Was writing part of coming out?
You write often about queer theory. Do you ever work on these papers with others? For instance, have you workshopped them with other writing center tutors?
Have you ever workshopped a queer theory academic piece with another LGBTAQ academic?
You mentioned you write for yourself. Can you tell me more about this? Who do you write for, and about what?
When writing these creative or journal pieces, do they ever focus on your LGBTAQ identity? How does this expressive writing about your identity affect you? How do you feel when writing, and after writing?
What are the writing circumstances that make you able to do writing that makes you feel good? What kinds of writing situations are most fulfilling to you?
What writing situations make you feel most able to express yourself and your identity?
You mentioned being more open about your sexuality at the art school you attend. Can you tell me more about that? Has this ever come forward in your academic writing?
Post Trump, did what you write on the foamcore wall have to do with your LGBTAQ identity? How did that writing process feel to you?
How did you feel during and after the session?
Did you talk about the session to anyone after? Other tutors, or administrators? What happened
in those conversations. 
You mentioned a training session that you really enjoyed. What about that training session was so effective to you?
You mentioned a session where a student came out to you. How did this session start?
What was the paper about? Did you mention anything to the student about your own identity?
What were you feeling during and after the session?
You also mentioned song writing, and how that was one of your paths for expressing your identity. What were the ways and places you worked on these writings? Did you ever workshop them in an environment like the writing center?
When you did work on creative pieces, did you ever work on them with LGBTAQ students or professors?
Did you find creative writing was useful to you emotionally as a way of expressing or experimenting with your LGBTAQ identity?
Have you ever workshopped a queer theory academic piece with another LGBTAQ academic?
Have you ever discussed LGBTAQ concerns in regards to academic materials? Even outside the context of your personal identity?
What are the processes for your papers like? Do you ever co-write? Who reads or edits these papers for you or with you?
You mentioned having a student come in with a paper that was vaguely homophobic in nature. Can you describe to me what happened in that session?
What was the focus of the session? What concerns did you work on, and what techniques did you use?
Can you talk at all about how you talk to other members of the center about LGBTAQ issues?
When does it get talked about?
In what ways do you feel the writing center has offered adequate support for LGBTAQ tutors?
What was effective about these support mechanisms?
What has been ineffective? Why did you feel it wasn’t working?
If a student were to come in with homophobic writing, how would you respond? Why?
Do you feel supported and empowered by the administration?
Do you feel there is a queer community at the writing center?
In what ways do you feel a community would be useful to queer tutors?
What programming, community building, or curriculum do you feel the writing center should be offering to educate on LGBTAQ issues?
In what ways do you feel we could better be supporting LGBTAQ students that come in?
What do you feel better supporting queer identifying tutors might do in the long run? Who might benefit from this, and how?
Bibliography


