To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Stephanie Megan Roth entitled " 'Like What Do You Do – Hand Out an Announcement?' – Combating Heteronormativity in Physical Education." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommended that it be accepted in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Sport Studies.

Leslee A. Fisher

_____

Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Joy T. DeSensi

_____

Chris Holmlund

_____

Accepted for the Council:

Anne Mayhew

_____

Vice Chancellor and Dean of Graduate Studies

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

"…LIKE, WHAT DO YOU DO – HAND OUT AN ANNOUNCEMENT?" COMBATING HETERONORMATIVITY IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

A Thesis Presented
for the
Master of Science Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Stephanie Megan Roth
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to teachers who are deeply committed to the well-being of all students, resisted the intolerance from others toward LGBT students and workers in our schools, and who provide positive role models for all in the school community.

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There are many individuals that I owe my gratitude for the production and completion of this journey. This research would not have been possible without the six women who took the time to share their experiences and thoughts with me. The courage of these women to break the silence around sexual identity in education and their willingness and honesty made me appreciate each of them individually. With their words comes knowledge, with knowledge, comes power. These six women have influenced my thoughts and ways of knowing, thank you.

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ABSTRACT

For many years, women in physical education have been stereotyped as lesbians and seen as intruders to the masculine arena of sport. Social norms within the school system make it very clear what is acceptable as a female teacher, and anything differing from the created norm is considered deviant. With this being the case, it was my desire to break through the walls of heteronormativity (pattern of thought which places heterosexuality as the normal, natural, and accepted sexual orientation, failing to recognize any other form of sexuality) within education and expose the injustice towards a stigmatized and marginalized population of physical educators. Through semi-structured interviews five teachers had a chance to share their experiences and bring voice to an often, silenced topic. A qualitative inductive analysis of the data revealed the silence around the topic of sexuality in education, heterosexual privilege, the influence of the administration, and the consequences of a heterosexist and homophobic environment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	PAGE
Personal Narrative	1
Brief Introduction	2
Statement of Problem	4
Purpose of Study	4
Significance of the Study	4
Limitation	5
Delimitation	5
Definitions	5
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	
Women in Teaching: A Short History	9
Women in Physical Education	12
Homosexuality in Education	15
Heteronormativity in Sport & Physical Education	17
Queer Theory	22
Origins and Conclusions	24
Performative Gender and Sexuality	26
Summary: Queering Physical Education and Sport	28
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
Introduction	30
Qualitative Research Methodology	30
Framework	31
Ontology	31
Methods and Procedures	32
Bracketing interview	32
The pilot interview	33
Co-participants	34
Main study interviews	34
KayDee	36
Julie	36
Monica	36
T	36
Joann	37
Data Analysis	37
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	

Guiding Question #1: Deconstructing Heteronormativity –
How is heteronormativity deconstructed in education by female physical educators? 41
Guiding Question #2: Sexual Identity –
How does female physical educators' sexual identity influences their experiences in education? 53
Summary 61

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUMMARY

Finding #1: Differences in Experiences of Straight and Gay Co-participants 62
Finding #2: Examining My Own Privilege 64
Finding #3: Applications for Sport Psychology 65
Finding #4: Changing the Heteronormative Environment 65
Suggestions for Future Research 66
Limitation 66
Conclusion 66
Summary 67

REFERENCES 69

APPENDICES 76
Appendix A: Interview Guide 77
Appendix B: Key Informant Script/ Letter of Interest 80
Appendix C: Informed Consent 82
Appendix D: Researcher Confidentiality 84

VITA 86

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Teachers must transform their educational practice, so that the way we live, teach, and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity, our passion for justice, and our love of freedom"

-bell hooks (1994, p. 30)

Personal Narrative

I knew from a young age that life would be full of curveballs and challenges that would take me through the rollercoaster of life. Growing up, I participated in any activity that involved a competition with my favorite subjects consisting of recess and physical education. In physical education I found solace, I found a safe space to be who I wanted to be, a girl who liked to wear "boys" clothes and play sports. This marked the beginning of my journey through sports, naive to what this journey would mean and how it would mold me into who I am today. Some would say a "tomboy"; I disagree because I was not a boy, I was a girl who did not fit the feminine gender category that girls and boys are expected to follow. Sport and physical education was a place where I felt safe because what matters most in sport is ability. The focus on appearance is far less than the focus on performance. In the seventh grade, I knew I was going to be a physical education teacher. I often wonder how I knew this was my destiny at such a young age, but as it turns out, I find myself on the brink of entering the sport and physical education profession. It is now in my final year of earning my masters degree that I find myself looking critically at the institution of education and searching for my place within it. It is my desire to continue the fight to bring social justice to our schools and provide safe spaces for students and teachers. More specifically, I refuse to abide by the hegemonic norms of heterosexuality and femininity. Thus, it is my quest to bring social justice into

education and deconstruct the perceptions of gender and sexuality. In this chapter, I discuss the statement of the problem, purpose, limitations and delimitations of my study. I also give definitions of the terms that are used within my thesis.

Brief Introduction

With the creation of the Association for the Advancement of Physical Education came a swell of women physical education teachers in the United States (Paul, 2001). Teaching became a site for adventurous women who did not want to conform to the roles of wife and mother. These women were allowed to attend higher education; yet, a paradox existed with men studying the sciences of anatomy and physiology while women were restricted to being classroom teachers who could lead healthful exercises and games for children at recess (Paul, 2001). By the 1890's dance and sport were introduced to the women's curricula (Paul, 2001). Today, we see girls and women of all ages participating in sports and physical activity all over the United States (Acosta & Carpenter, 2004). Young girls who are growing up with aspirations of becoming a professional athlete now have female role models. Many girls and boys alike have the opportunity to experience physical activity in physical education classes within their educational institution. It is within these physical education classes that some find a love for a game, a sport, or a particular exercise. Ultimately, the women teaching these physical education classes serve as role models for some young girls who want to be a part of sport and engage in physical activity.

For years, women in physical education have been stereotyped as lesbians, seen as intruders in the masculine arena of sport, and often forced to live double lives if they are single, unmarried, or lesbian. Historically, Sykes (2001) explains, "Women's physical

education has provided a unique site within education where lesbian desire may be directed towards athleticized female bodies and expressed in women-only contexts" (p. 13). Sykes further explains that while historically this was the case, the reality of existing in a heterosexist society and profession has restricted lesbians from acting on these desires. Social norms make it very clear what is acceptable as a female teacher, and anything different is deviant.

With this being the case, it is my desire to break through the walls of heteronormativity within education and expose the injustice towards a stigmatized and marginalized population of physical educators that, in turn, affects all women in the field. It is no secret that lesbian and gay teachers exist and have existed for many years (Blount, 2005; Bredemeier, B., Carlton, E.B., Hills, L.A., & Oglesby, C.A, 1999; Griffin & Genasci, 1990, 1992; Khayatt, 1992; Olson, 1987; Sanlo, 1999). The questions are: Why do many still feel unsafe to be themselves and often find themselves wearing a mask to hide their lives outside of school? What is it that exists within education that celebrates heterosexuality and deems homosexuality deviant? Who are the positive role models in schools for the rising number of gay teens coming out in middle school and high school? How can we fight the heteronormitivity within these schools so that school can become a safe place for everyone - gay, straight, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered? These questions bring me to the focus of this current study, in which I examined how heteronormativity affects women in sport and physical education and the ways they perform their identities within the institution of education.

Statement of the Problem

Women physical education teachers- lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and heterosexual - are teaching in our schools today. Studies over the past two decades (Blount, 2005; Griffin, 1990, 1992; Khayatt, 1992; Olson, 1987; Sanlo, 1999) have identified an often-silenced population of U.S. educators - lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) educators who are forced to implement strategies to conceal their identities. It seems that within the confines of education, strict underlying hegemonic ideals are enforced on teachers, which lead them to perform prescribed roles. What is crucial to understand, however, is that heteronormativity in education affects all teachers and, specifically, women physical educators who walk on contested ground as "deviants" of women in sport.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how heteronormativity affects the way women physical education teachers perform their identities within their educational institution. Through qualitative, semi-structured face to face interviews, I tried to provide a safe space for these often silenced women physical educators to talk about their experiences within the strict confines of education.

Significance of the Study

This work is significant in the following ways:

(a) there is a dire need to discuss issues surrounding sexuality in education in general and in physical education more specifically;

(b) it is interdisciplinary in nature; and

(c) although not the original intent, it focused on the experiences of Latina physical educators, a population which to date, has received little attention in sport and physical education literature.

Limitation

The study was purposefully limited to a sample of five female physical education teachers, three who identified as heterosexual and two who identified as lesbian/homosexual. Therefore, the data should not to be generalized to other heterosexual or homosexual women physical educators.

Delimitation

The study was delimited to a focus on five co-participants (three heterosexual and two lesbian/homosexual) female physical educators from three different regions of the United States.

Definitions

In this section, I define the terms used in the context of this particular study. It is important to acknowledge that variations of these terms may exist in other contexts.

Binary: "A way of conceptualizing realities that divides concepts into two, mutually exclusive categories, e.g., white/black, man/woman, reason/emotion, and heterosexual/ homosexual" (Collins, 2000, p. 298)

Bisexual: One who has significant (to oneself) sexual or romantic attractions to members of both the same gender and/or sex and another gender and/or sex, or who identifies as a member of the bisexual community (Bisexual Resource Center, 2001).

Compulsory Heterosexuality: the belief that all individuals are or should be heterosexual (Rich, 1993)

Deconstruction: "…the illustration of the implicit underpinnings of a particular binary opposition" (Namaste, 1994, p.223).

Femininity: Socially constructed gender category/ideology "… that involves accepting behavioral and physical restrictions that make it difficult to view oneself, much less to be viewed by others, as equal with man" and includes stereotyped behaviors such as wearing tight clothes, having long hair, wearing makeup, etc. (Messner, 2004, p.72).

Gender role: Rules assigned by society that define what clothing, behaviors, thoughts, feelings, relationships, etc. are considered appropriate and inappropriate for members of a given gender. Which things are considered masculine, feminine, or unisex varies according to location, class, occasion, and numerous other factors (Bisexual Resource Center, 2001).

Hegemonic apparatus: For the purpose of this study, referring to education as part of a dominant ideology directly influences the students and perpetuates the beliefs of the ruling class (Gramsci, as cited in Khayatt, 1992).

Hegemony: "…occurring when the intellectual, moral and philosophical leadership provided by the class or alliance of classes and class fractions which is ruling, successfully achieves its objective of providing the fundamental outlook for the whole society" (Bocock, 1986, p.63).

Heteronormativity: Refers to a pattern of thought which places heterosexuality as the normal, natural, and accepted sexual orientation, failing to recognize any other form of sexuality and deeming any variation as deviant (Krane, 1997).

Heterosexism: "Is a system of dominance in which heterosexuality is privileged as the only normal and acceptable form of sexual expression. In this system of dominance,

heterosexual identity is valued and rewarded, while homosexual and bisexual identity are stigmatized and punished…operates on multiple levels (individual, institutional, and cultural" (Griffin, 1998, p. xv).

Homonegativity: An extension of homophobia that speaks directly to "discrimination against lesbians" (Krane, 1997, p. 145)

Homophobia: The "irrational fear or intolerance of lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people" (Griffin, 1998, p. xv.)

Identity Performance: Referring to the way in which gendered and sexed identities are performative in that the performance pre-exists the subject (Butler, 1990)

Lesbian: A woman whose primary psychological, emotional, and sexual attraction is to women (Matlin, 2004).

Queer: "…marks an identity that, defined as it is by a deviation from sex and gender norms either by the self inside or by specific behaviors, is always in flux" (Gamson, 2000, p. 349).

Queer Praxis: "Blending queer theoretical underpinnings with practical change that attempts to disrupt regimes of sexual normativity and dismantle homonegativism and heterosexism" (Kauer, 2005, p. 21).

Queer Theory: Heavily influenced by poststructuralist thought, queer theory proposes "…a focus not so much on specific populations as on sexual categorization processes and their deconstruction" (Gamson, 2000, p.349). Gamson (2000) goes further to say, "Queer theory built on the insights of constructionism and Foucault, but moved poststructuralist and post-modernist concerns to the forefront-critiques of identity and identity politics, an

emphasis on discourse and its deconstruction, a suspicion of "grand narratives" (p.354) (further delineated on p. 29-30).

Sexual Identity: How one thinks of oneself, in terms of having significant sexual and romantic attractions to members of the same or sex or to another gender or sex. Based on one's internal experience, as opposed to the gender of one's actual sexual partners (Bisexual Resource Center, 2001).

Transgender: "Broadly speaking, transgender people are individuals whose gender expression and/or gender identity differs from conventional expectations based on the physical sex they were born into. The word transgender is an umbrella term which is often used to describe a wide range of identities and experiences, including: Females To Males [FTMs], Males To Females [MTFs], cross-dressers, drag queens, drag kings, gender queers, and many more. ..." (Wikipedia, 2005).

White Privilege: A notion referring to unearned racial privilege that those in power – e.g., whites - are carefully taught not to recognize. An invisible package of unearned assets which can be cashed in each day. "White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks" (McIntosh, 1989, p. 77).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Women in education have a long history in the United States. Traditionally, teaching has been seen as a woman's profession, but that is not how it has always been. There are both similarities and differences in the teaching of physical education. In this chapter, I discuss the historical perspective of women in teaching, homosexuality in education, deconstruct the heteronormativity in sport and physical education, and finally, the queer theoretical framework that shapes my study.

Women in Teaching: A Short History

In the latter part of the nineteenth century women began working in the field of education (Khayatt, 1992). In the beginning, educated single women were hired at a lower pay rate than men because teaching was seen as an extension of their already prescribed housewife duties (Khayatt, 1992). By the 1900's, the number of women teachers had rapidly grown. Women accounted for over two-thirds of all teachers and this number continued to rise into the 1920's (Blount, 2005). As women were integrated into the field of education, new positions in school personnel began to appear. However, at this time, even though teaching was a place for single women to earn money, they were expected to eventually marry a man, quit teaching and raise children. Expectations for male teachers, however, were very different. Male teachers saw teaching as a stepping-stone, a place to establish a reputation within their communities and then to move on to a career in professions such as law, medicine, or the ministry (Blount, 2005). Since the majority of teachers were women, positions were established in the administration reserved for men to ensure that the power stayed in their hands. This meant there were

male administrators making the decisions and, in turn, female teachers lost some of their independence and authority (Blount, 2005). The educational model was based on patriarchal ideas similar to that of the traditional household made up of a housewife who stays at home and a husband who provides and is in charge of the family.

It is important to note the shift that occurred within the span of 100 years. At the beginning of the 1800's, women were an untapped teaching resource; yet, by 1900, women filled the teaching profession. In fact, by 1900 women accounted for about 70 percent of all teachers and of that 70 percent, 90 percent were either single, widowed, or divorced (Blount, 2005). At this time, female teachers were to remain single, and if they did want to marry, they were forced to resign. So, while they made up 70 percent of teachers, they were still treated unequally and forced to abide by educational standards developed by predominately men who held all of the power. Despite the blatant inequalities women teachers faced, few complained about the privileges men enjoyed. It was not until women began to gain political power that they disputed the unequal wages they received and began to live independently of men (Blount, 2005).

Since so many single women were doing most of the work within the schools, teaching was termed a "spinster's" (Blount, 2005, p. 45) profession. Teaching became a safe place for white women who did not want to conform to what Collins has referred to as the "cult of true womanhood" (p.72). Collins (2000) goes on to say:

> According to the cult of true womanhood that accompanied the traditional family ideal, true women possessed four cardinal virtues; piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Propertied White women and those of the emerging middle class were encouraged to aspire to these virtues.

> African American women encountered a different set of controlling images (p.72).

As more and more white female teachers began to resist the four cardinal virtues they were expected to abide by, critics started questioning the gender and sexual influences that the "spinsters" (Blount, 2005, p. 45) had on other female teachers (Blount, 2005). People in society began to realize that these teachers may not be the best role models for their children and, therefore, were chastised by many in society who wanted to see a "true woman" set the example for her students. Many teachers sought to mold their students to be just like them and were, therefore, seen as being a bad influence on their students (Blount, 2005). "Spinster" (p.45) teachers were stereotyped as trying to make every girl they taught grow up to be like them. The changing face of what a female teacher should look and act like - the fact that teachers were now being labeled "spinsters" (p. 45) and deviant- prompted school boards to instead hire married women who fit the gender norms of society. At the same time, European sexologists studying sexual orientation were "identifying and pathologizing non-mainstream sexual orientations and genders" (Blount, 2005, p.60). This led to the beginning of ostracization of the gender- and sexual-nonconforming teachers within the system.

In the mid-century, teaching shifted from a predominately "spinster" (Blount, 2005 p. 45) profession to one dominated by married women. As sexuality was brought to the forefront through plays, books and cinema, people continued to question the direction of the teaching profession. Interestingly, spinsterhood paralleled the stigma related to lesbianism, for many in society questioned how women who were stepping outside of gender-appropriate roles could provide the proper guidance for students without tainting

them with "immoral" characteristics. The National Education Association (NEA) took action by examining hiring policies, particularly focusing on how school districts hired only single teachers. Many bans were lifted and married women began to pour into the profession. The NEA put the pressure on school districts to hire married woman. The once "safe haven" for single teachers had drastically shifted to what was a culturally idealized representation of married men and women. As Blount (2005) states:

> By the early 1950's, ongoing headlines brought the topic of homosexuality into the home….They sought, in part, to provide correct gender modeling for children. However, they also wished to provide modeling of monogamous, married heterosexuality (p. 78).

Schools in the United States now weeded out anyone who was suspected of being a homosexual. Administrations stereotyped any gender nonconforming teachers as homosexual and often based qualifications for jobs on gender representation (Blount, 2005). Although gender nonconforming teachers faced many obstacles, women physical educators were met with the most challenges when breaking through barriers in the male domain of sport.

Women in Physical Education

Catherine Beecher was one of the first of many to make the connection between health and exercise and the educational role it could play in schools. In the 1820's, Beecher's fiancé passed away and she determined that teaching was the only acceptable career option available for women (Paul, 2001). Beecher often included different "sophisticated forms of exercise" (p.183) in women's seminars that would, in turn, lead women to choose physical education as a career option. Thus, came a swell of physical

activity programs in colleges and universities throughout the United States, which aimed to guard women's health in higher education. Many adventurous women were drawn to the field of physical education; however, many of them were hired as "combination" teachers who were required to teach additional subjects. Paul (2001) provides four reasons why women in the early nineteenth century chose physical education: (a) other than teaching, few approved careers for the nineteenth-century women beyond wife and mother existed; (b) physical education offered new and unexplored opportunities for adventurous women; (c) the promise of a more active life; and (d) physical education appeared to offer personal freedom from convention and it contributed to the health of the "weaker sex" (p. 185).

Although physical education began as a strategy to maintain women's health through higher education, it can be looked at as the beginning of women contesting the masculine arena of sport. When these women were allowed to enter physical education teacher programs, the challenges and obstacles they would face were just beginning. Paul (2001) notes some common obstacles in education, including: (a) a lack of academic support; (b) inadequate facilities; (c) controversy over gymnasium costumes; and (d) the stigma of masculinity (p. 185). As still today, physical education held a low status in education because critics felt that it lacked experiences that would involve reflective thinking. Despite this belief, "No professor on the academic faculty [had] a larger opportunity to influence the health, happiness, and character of the student" (Paul, 2001, p.186). This quote speaks to the importance physical education plays in the total well being of students and how physical education earned a permanent position in academic institutions (Paul, 2001).

With this being the case, many women's colleges were more likely to provide the necessary equipment, facilities and physical education programs while the co-educational colleges, equipment and facilities were very meager. By the 1920's most women's colleges had a gymnasium of their own (Paul, 2001). After they had their gymnasium, the controversy over the costumes that were to be worn by women in physical education arose because "…the standards for clothing during the Victorian Era demanded modesty" (Paul, 2001, p.190). While women educators struggled to enhance their academic education by including physical activity, many of these programs followed strict rules to ensure that the conduct of women followed traditional roles of femininity.

By the 1900's, many in society were becoming more and more concerned about women participating in and teaching sport. Many feared the consequences of women deviating from their prescribed role of "mother" and "wife." Paul (2001) asserts that "Consciously or unconsciously, homophobia was perhaps a major factor in shaping the women's sporting tradition from earliest times into the 1960's" (p. 191). Women physical educators faced a challenge to continue to offer sports and physical activity without deviating from the traditional ideals of womanhood. Thus, they were forced to create a separate and different sporting sphere for women (Paul, 2001). This separate sphere was implemented to control female students and ensure that their behavior was considered "acceptable." From the beginning, physical education for women was a source for hegemonic beliefs about gender. With all of this in mind, I now turn to the broader sphere of sexuality in the institution of education.

Homosexuality in Education

Within the confines of the educational institution one would expect to be faced with compulsory heterosexuality, heterosexism, and homophobia (Birden, 2005; Blount, 2005; Khayatt, 1992; Olson, 1987; Sanlo, 1999; Woods & Harbeck, 1992). This is because throughout history, the teaching profession in the United States has been held to higher moral standards and expectations than other professions (Woods & Harbeck, 1992). Teachers are considered to be employees of the state who are seen as a source of hegemonic ideologies that will be passed down to students. In the words of Madiha Khayatt (1992), "Consequently, they are invariably assumed to be heterosexual, typically married, preferably parents (or soon to be), and ideally young and male…" (p. 71). As a role model to students and often surrogate parents, the idea of a lesbian or gay teacher is unimaginable. Contrary to this belief, however, LGBT educators can be found in our classrooms and in administrative positions today. Some are parents and serve as role models for LGBT youth.

Despite the oppressive nature of our school systems, in the past two decades, more and more research has focused solely on the topic of homosexual teachers (Olson, 1987; Khayatt, 1992; Griffin, 1992). Olson (1987) examined this issue by surveying gay and lesbian teachers regarding their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences. She found that many of these teachers lived double lives and that there would be detrimental consequences if anyone were to find out their sexuality. Khayatt's (1992) ethnographic study of lesbian teachers also broke new ground by focusing solely on women and by addressing the historical, ideological, political, and social contexts which force lesbian teachers to conceal their identities. Using qualitative methodology, Khayatt wanted to

learn more about how lesbian teachers managed their sexual identity within the context of the classroom and in their particular community. Although much of her research was done in Canada, Khayatt assumed that the development of women teaching in England and the United States was similar to Canada - another Western, English-speaking industrial nation. Specifically, Khayatt (1992) used Gramsci's concept of hegemony to address sexuality. She suggested that society celebrates heterosexuality and the state plays a direct role in encouraging heterosexual marriage by legitimizing it legally, socially, and economically; this, in turn, is transmitted through the institution of education (Khayatt, 1992). Therefore, the school, church, and media act as a "hegemonic apparatus" (p.65) which enforces heteronormative prescribed feminine roles for women. As Khayatt (1992) concludes:

> The danger lies, not in the knowledge of a lesbian's [teacher's] sexuality itself, but in the implications such a life has on normative, patriarchally prescribed female lives. The danger lies in women universally, but in different ways, becoming conscious of our strengths outside of men and regardless of our sexual preferences. The danger finally, in all these invisible options becoming visible, and therefore possible, therefore potent (p. 243).

Moreover, this issue is related to the affects of heteronormativity on all teachers within education. Thus, deconstructing the experiences of all women in teaching regardless of their sexual orientation may expose injustices that exist in education related to sexuality. For the purpose of this study, it was important to examine the heteronormativity found in sport and physical education.

Heteronormativity in Sport & Physical Education

In the past fifteen years, several researchers have delved into the lives of physical educators and sporting women in general and lesbians in particular (Bredemeier, B. et. al, 1999; Griffin, 1990, 1992a, 1992b; Krane, 1996, 2001, 2003; Lenskyj, 1997, 2003; Sykes, 1996, 2001; Woods & Harbeck, 1992). Griffin's (1998) groundbreaking book *Strong Women, Deep Closets* initiated a long-overdue discussion about the experiences of lesbians in sport, the effects of homophobia and heterosexism on all women in sport, and the connection between homophobia, heterosexism, and sexism in sport. In particular, Griffin (1998) discusses the lesbian label and its negative stigma. As she states:

> As long as women's sports are associated with lesbians and lesbians are stigmatized as sexual and social deviants, the lesbian label serves an important social-control function in sport, ensuring that only men have access to the benefits of sport participation and the physical and psychological empowerment available in sport (p. 20).

Based on the negative stigma, many female athletes, coaches and physical educators have feared the lesbian label and, therefore, try to avoid it at all costs. This fear creates what Griffin (1998) identifies as three different climates encountered by lesbians in sport: (a) hostile climates, where lesbians are seen as the problem; (b) conditionally tolerant climates, where lesbian visibility is the problem; and (c) open and inclusive climates, where discrimination and homophobia, not lesbianism, are the problems. Although these climates are defined as related to sport, the same could be said of climates within educational institutions in general. In the United States, with a few exceptions, the climate of most schools falls into the hostile climate where lesbians are seen as the

problem. Within this climate, lesbians must conceal their identity at all costs often living double lives and living in fear of being "outed."

In order to conceal their identity; lesbian physical educators more than likely implement identity management techniques. These identity management techniques used by lesbian physical educators have been defined as the decision-making processes lesbians go through every day in determining how much of their lesbian identities to reveal or conceal (Griffin, 1998; Woods & Harbeck, 1992). As one can imagine, these management strategies are no easy task, yet, they are continuously played out in many lesbian teachers', coaches', and athletes' lives. Griffin (1998) provides four management strategies often used by coaches: (a) passing as heterosexual; (b) covering lesbian identity; (c) being implicitly out; and (d) being explicitly out.

Even though research on lesbian physical educators exists, (Bredemeier et. al, 2003; Sparkes, 1994; Sykes, 1994; Woods & Harbeck, 1992) the invisible presence is still talked about by few. Woods & Harbeck's (1992) study was the first of its kind to specifically examine the lives of lesbian physical educators. At the time, this was cutting-edge work since research on homosexuality in education in the past had not examined physical education teachers. Similar to the strategies defined by Griffin (1998), Woods & Harbeck (1992) identified two categories of lesbian identity management techniques: (a) strategies to conceal one's lesbian identity; and (b) risk-taking behaviors that could disclose one's lesbian identity. The strategies found to conceal their lesbian identities were: (a) passing as heterosexual; (b) self-distancing from students, teachers, and administrators; and (c) self-distancing from issues of homosexuality. It was also found that participants rarely took risks to confront gay

stereotyping. For example, teachers rarely intervened when they heard derogatory comments like "*That's so gay"* or "*You are a fag"* for fear of revealing too much of their beliefs which, in turn could reveal their sexuality. Most, therefore at best: (a) obliquely overlapped their personal and professional lives; two less frequent responses were (a) actively confronting homophobia and supporting gay and lesbian students; and (b) overtly overlapping their personal with their professional lives. Ultimately, these researchers concluded that participants all experienced homophobia both on the internal and external levels. On the internal level, they felt anxiety and fear making sure not to reveal too much to anyone. On the external level, they felt that no one would accept their sexuality and they risked losing their job if anyone were to find out. Heterosexuality was celebrated as the norm, thus, the lesbian teachers lived in constant fear of being outed and/or losing their jobs. This landmark study was the beginning of research on women physical educators in general and lesbian physical educators in particular.

In the words of Griffin (1998), "The only way we can successfully address heterosexism and homophobia is for heterosexual women to understand how their lives are affected by these social injustices" (p. x). In order to create social change, all athletes, teachers, and researchers should understand that heterosexism and homophobia affect us all. Griffin & Genasci (1990) provide an overview of what they feel are the responsibilities of teachers and researchers in addressing homophobia. They strive to promote a professional dialogue about issues of homophobia in education in general and physical education in particular. As they state: "The social taboo surrounding the serious discussion of homophobia and homosexuality in physical education results in the perpetuation of ignorance, fear, violence, isolation, and psychological stress" (p. 212).

Griffin (1990) feels further that many teachers are not prepared to deal with issues such as homophobia effectively and compassionately because this is an issue that is often avoided at all costs. She has helped end the silence of many teachers who have been forced to live double lives due to the negative stigma attached to homosexuality that runs rampit within our schools. Griffin (1990) concludes by offering some suggestions for teachers and researchers who are striving towards social justice: (a) teachers should educate themselves and push for an open dialogue about the subject insisting that issues with homophobia be dealt with; (b) researchers should reflect on their own social identities and beliefs about homosexuality; and, finally, (c) "The combined work of teachers and researchers in physical education can begin to change the oppressive nature of the silence imposed by homophobia that keeps some of us invisible, others of us ignorant, and all of us afraid" (p. 220).

In order to understand how heterosexism and homophobia affects female physical educators, it is critical to examine the feminine image of females in sport and physical activity. Often, the acceptable feminine image of a woman in sport is promoted, encouraged, and highlighted. Both Krane (2001) and Griffin (1998) discuss the underlying messages sent to women that athleticism and femininity are contradictory, and that female athletes must work to prove they can be both athletic and feminine. Krane (2001) explains the institutionalization of hegemonic femininity in women's sport and how these traditional ideals of femininity impact athletic females. Some characteristics of hegemonic femininity include being emotional, passive, dependent, maternal, compassionate and gentle. Hegemonic masculine characteristics, however, include strength, competitiveness, assertiveness, confidence, and independence. These

characteristics coincide with gender roles which have been so ingrained in us that they are accepted and never questioned. Individuals who do not fall within their prescribed gender role are often scrutinized and marginalized (Krane, 2001). Rich's (1993) concept of compulsory heterosexuality further explains our society's hegemonic beliefs about sexual orientation. The term "compulsory heterosexuality" is the belief that all individuals are or should be heterosexual. Krane (2001) further explains that

> Once compulsory heterosexuality is integrated into the discussion of the impact of gender and gender roles, the following interactions emerge: (a) gender-roles determine acceptable behaviors based on gender (i.e., females are to be feminine, males are to be masculine); (b) behaviors considered gender-role appropriate ate predicted on heterosexuality; and (c) assumptions of heterosexuality guide 'appropriate' gender socialization (p. 117).

Women athletes who appear feminine and, therefore, heterosexual will be considered normal and acceptable. This "…creates a paradox in that females are accepted in sport as long as they preserve their heterosexual attractiveness" (Krane, 2001, p.118). With this said, women in sport have tremendous pressure to conform to society's gender role expectations in order to avoid the lesbian label as discussed earlier.

The topic of coming out in physical education has been researched as well. Bredemeier et. al (2003) sought to give a voice to the often silenced population of lesbian sportswomen through discussing the moral aspects of coming out in physical education. More specifically, the homophobic and heterosexist sport and physical education environment increases the dangers around the issue of coming out publicly. Bredemeier

et. al (2003) blurred the strict categories of identity calling for a more complex interpretation of identity formation. Through interviewing lesbian sportswomen, the researchers explored the experiences of the sportswomen as well as the constructed meaning of their experiences. Bredemeier et. al (2003) state "our goals resonate with bell hooks' call for a new kind of education, helping students transcend racial, sexual, and class boundaries in order to achieve the gift of freedom" (p. 420).

In summary, it is apparent that heteronormativity in sport and physical education exists on many different levels within sport. Although researchers are making visible the once invisible, there is still an ever - present uphill battle in the quest for social justice. Building on the research on identity management strategies used by lesbian physical education teachers (Griffin, 1992; Sparkes, 1994; Woods & Harbeck, 1992), Sykes (1996) calls for a "…shift in research focus from the individual lesbian identity toward how institutional discourses constrict and construct lesbian identities" (p. 459). More recently, Sykes (2001) work on feminist-poststructural life histories of physical education teachers examines the paradox of using "spoken accounts" (p.13) to investigate "homophobic silences" (p.13) about lesbian sexuality. In order to fully understand the effects of heteronormativity on female physical educators, I used a queer theoretical framework to explore how heteronormativity affects the way female physical educators perform their identities.

Queer Theory

It was not my intention to define queer theory because as queer theorists point out, that is a very un-queer thing to do (Butler, 1990; Jagose, 1996; Sullivan 2003). However, it was my intention to examine the ways in which queer theory has been used

by contemporary theorists to explore how it might contribute to this study. "Queer" can be understood as fluid, forever changing and as such contradicting itself. "Queer" perspectives can and do, however, provide opportunities to challenge normative knowledge and identities. Queer theory was conceptualized and developed as a way to build on lived experience of people being/ having one identity in one context but other identities in other contexts. This can be seen in the historical evolution of terms used to describe peoples' sexuality. For example, using the term "queer" as a more fluid and modern way to describe one's sexuality allows for the possible change of identities in different contexts, whereas the terms "lesbian" or "gay" limit the possible fluidity of sexuality. As Halprin suggests, "…queer is a positionality [rather than an innate identity] that potentially can be taken up by anyone who feels themselves to have been marginalized as a result of their sexual preferences…" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 49). While there is no "true identity", people often assign labels to themselves and others in different contexts.

Moreover, "Queer theory encapsulates issues of power, race, and ethnicity that are often excluded in gay and lesbian studies and is a response to perceived limitations of the gay and lesbian movement that essentialized gay and lesbian experiences" (Kauer, 2005, p. 21). Queer theory is not aligned with one identity category; therefore, it has the potential to be used in a wide variety of discussions related to sex, power, race, or ethnicity. It is important to acknowledge that historically, gay and lesbian studies have been centered around identity politics, believing that identity is the necessary aspect for political action. As Jagose (1996) explains, "Queer on the other hand, exemplifies a more mediated relation to categories of identity" (p. 77). Thus, queer theory can be

thought of as the latest institutional transformation of previously known gay and lesbian studies. It seeks to deconstruct norms, to move beyond binaries (male/female, gay/straight, etc.), and into the power and privilege that operates within the discourse of sexuality.

In this study, I used queer theory to ask how heteronormativity affects the way women physical education teachers perform their identities within their educational institution. Capper (1999) considers the possibilities for research with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered school administrators by moving beyond the focus on individual sexual identities and instead examining the social construction of sexuality. This approach can be utilized in deconstructing heteronormativity within the educational institution by exploring both straight and lesbian physical educators' experiences. Ultimately, it is queer theory that can expose these underlying power dynamics within schools and society as a whole.

Origins and Contestations

Attempting to understand a queer theoretical framework requires an examination of the origins and contestations of the subject. Judith Butler, a renowned philosopher, has provided many books that have contributed to queer theory drawing heavily from psychoanalytic, feminist, and post-structuralist theories. Queer theory arose from a coalition of feminist, post-structuralist, and psychoanalytic theories, all of which have heavily informed Butler's work. Butler has been widely referenced, especially her work in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), which examines the formulation of identities. Simply put, Butler believes that feminist theory should be careful not to idealize certain forms of gender expression, excluding people who deviate

from that ideal and, in turn, restricting gender expression. This restriction often results in homophobic consequences. Butler (1990) does not see any true or original gender expression. She also denounces the idea of a binary world split between male and female.

Butler's (1990) work draws from what was called French feminism (Salih, 2002) and French post-structuralism. Post-structuralism, is most often associated with a rejection or a critique of humanist logic, which offers a rethinking of concepts such as meaning, truth, subjectivity, freedom, power, etc. (Salih, 2002). It also sets out to undermine Western thought by "contesting and undoing binary oppositions" (Salih, 2002, p. 21). Drawing on poststructuralist theorists, Foucault (1978), for example, argues that there is not a universal truth and that particular forms of knowledge come to engender their subjects; therefore, they become normalized and naturalized in historically and culturally specific ways. More specifically, "For poststructuralist theorists there is no true self that exists prior to its immersion in culture. Rather, the self is constructed in and through its relations with others, and with systems of power/ knowledge" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 41). Queer theorists thus seek to turn the focus to the deconstruction of heteronormativity versus focusing on deviant sexualities.

This change of focus can be seen in the work of Foucault (as cited in Jagose, 1996) who has reconceptualized identity in ways that have contributed to the transformation of gay and lesbian studies. As Jagose (1996) states, "…within poststructuralism, the very notion of identity as a coherent and abiding sense of self is perceived as a cultural fantasy rather than a demonstrable fact" (p. 82). A focus on identity politics is deemed problematic since the foundational category of any identity

excludes potential subjects in the name of representation (Jagose, 1996). On the other hand, both Judith Butler (1990) and Monique Wittig (1993) argue that heterosexuality is a complex matrix of discourses and institutions that have become normalized in our culture. This, in turn, makes certain relationships, desires, and identities seem natural, ahistorical, and universal. Within the matrix of discourses, compulsory heterosexuality is played out over and over again, which, in effect, leads to heterosexuality being currently understood as a "truth" in our society. This is a result of the systems of power and hegemony in our society that provide us with the taken-for-granted meaning of gender and sexuality. As a result, the meaning of gender and heterosexuality can be challenged and is open to change. In this study, I attempted to move beyond binary identity categories by examining the construction of heteronormativity in education.

Performative Gender and Sexuality

It is clear that Butler (1990) is less interested in the individual and more interested in the process by which s/he comes to understand his or her position as a subject. Butler (1990) contends that gender can be neither true nor false, that there is no original from which we deviate. Instead, gender is produced as the true effects of a stable identity that really does not exist. Specifically, in *Gender Trouble,* Butler (1990) describes how gender and sexuality are constructed within the heterosexual matrix. It is important to note that Butler (1990) does believe that it is possible to construct gender and sex differently within the matrix. Butler (1990) claims that gender identity is a set of acts or a performance where the subject is not the doer because the performance presupposes the existence of the subject. In other words, Butler believes that the subject is an effect rather than a cause. In addition, Butler separates the relationship between sex and gender

denying that they rely on each other for existence. For example, Butler (1990) would deem it acceptable for there to be a feminine man or a masculine woman. She asserts that gender is a process that has neither an origin nor an end; it is something that we do rather than who we are (Butler, 1990).

On the other hand, Butler (1990) believes that in our current society a social construction of gender takes place that falsely posits a "true" and "original" gender identity. This is why she refers to drag as illuminating and mocking the notion of true gender identity. In this sense, drag draws attention to the constructedness of heterosexual identities and effectively reveals the imitative nature of all gender identities. The hegemonic ideals of American society tell us that those who perform their gender appropriately are rewarded and those who do not are punished by society.

Butler (1990) goes on to say that "gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences" (p. 178). If women do not perform their prescribed roles and fit the mold of femininity they may face the stigma of being labeled "lesbians" and experience exclusion from a society where heterosexuality is the norm. These hegemonic beliefs about femininity and masculinity govern the act of performing one's gender appropriately or inappropriately. Thus, in deconstructing gender, Butler (1990) offers a reconceived notion of how one should view gender. As she states:

> …gender identity might be reconceived as a personal/ cultural history of received meanings subject to a set of imitative practices which refer laterally to other imitations and which, jointly, construct the illusion of a primary and interior gendered self or parody the mechanism of that construction (p. 176).

Reconceiving notions of gender allows for a broader meaning of such construction. In other words, Butler (1990) deconstructs the meanings of gender providing that all meanings exist in opposition to one another, are culturally driven, exist as imitations and all the while create an illusion of a primary gendered self acting/ imitating the construction of that meaning.

Summary: Queering Physical Education and Sport

Parallel to research on sexual orientation in sport, early research on lesbians in physical education focused on the way lesbians work to conceal and manage their identities (Clarke, 1995; Griffin, 1992a, 1992b; Sparkes, 1994; Woods & Harbeck, 1992). Although this research broke new ground in the early 1990's, Sykes (1998) sees this previous research as perpetuating the marginalization of lesbians and creating the sense that lesbians are the "Other" to heterosexuals. This creates a situation where, the privileged status of heterosexuality is continually re-produced. Sykes (1998) further explains that:

> The privileged discursive position of heterosexuality—our ways of speaking, seeing, experiencing sexuality—presumes that heterosexuality is the most normal, natural form of sexuality. This heterocentrism is contingent upon taken-for-granted links between gender identity, biological sex, sexual acts, and so on (p. 156).

Until these taken-for-granted links are dismantled and challenged, heterosexuality will remain the norm and those who do not fit that norm will continue to be marginalized. Utilizing a queer framework can expose the effects of heteronormativity on women physical educators by interrogating the hierarchical relations of the gay/straight,

masculine/feminine, and inside/outside binaries (Sykes, 1998). Thus, a queer framework can reveal how female heterosexuality within physical education places itself as the original and the true sexuality. The benefits of acknowledging this hierarchy can create a more diverse and open environment in our schools where LGBT teachers and students can feel safe to be themselves.

The current study centered around female physical educators' experiences; however, using a queer framework requires another dimension of analysis. Sykes (2001) was "faced with the dilemma of using "spoken" accounts to investigate "silences" about lesbian sexuality" (p.14). Exploring the silences around educators' spoken accounts can provide understanding of the told and untold story. Queer theory can be applied when deconstructing the accounts of co-participants by looking for what is not said as well as what is taken for granted. For the purpose of this study, identifying taken- for- granted notions of sexuality and binaries in turn illustrates how heteronormativity is constructed in physical education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how heteronormativity affects the way women physical education teachers perform their identities within their educational institutions. Through qualitative semi-structured interviews, I tried to provide a safe space for these often silenced teachers so they were free to talk about and reflect on their experiences as women physical education teachers within the strict confines of education. In this section, I discuss the qualitative methods used for this study as well as the procedure and data analysis. All steps were taken only after full approval from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee Knoxville.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative research has different strains depending on the framework utilized. As Gamson (2000) notes, qualitative research "has meant different things in its different moments" (p. 349). Whereas, Denzin & Lincoln (2000) provide a definition of qualitative research which I feel captures the essence of the field:

> Qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and sometimes…counterdisciplinary field. It crosscuts the humanities, the social sciences, and the physical sciences. Qualitative research is many things at the same time. It is multiparadigmatic in focus. Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of multimethod approach. They are committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human existence (p. 1048)…[Thus,] qualitative researchers study things in

their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings the people bring to them (p. 3).

Qualitative research can make the once invisible now visible. It can provide a voice for populations who have been oppressed. Therefore, it is my hope as Denzin & Lincoln (2000) note, to transform the world by representing one aspect of physical education through interpretation of semi-structured interviews.

Framework. Adopting a research paradigm to frame the research is essential in qualitative studies. Hatch (2002) defines a paradigm as "…sets of assumptions that distinguish fundamentally different belief systems concerning how the world is ordered, what we may know about it, and how we may know it" (p. 11). Similarly, Denzin & Lincoln (2000) see a paradigm as the "net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises" (p. 19). Within the assumptions of each paradigm, different forms of knowledge are produced. Thus, I have adopted a critical/queer and post-structural paradigm to conduct this research (Krane, 2001; Sykes, 1998).

Ontology. From an ontological standpoint, similar to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), I believe that reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values that reflect society and are crystallized over time. Epistemologically, there should be a deconstruction of what is known as "Truth", taking into account which grand narratives have been constructed in a social historical context set in place to serve the purposes of those in power (Hatch, 2002). Parallel to Foucault (1978), I believe that society should be skeptical of the socially constructed taken-for-granted categories of sexuality. Looking through a queer lens, I can investigate the "reality" of education

experienced by female physical educators. Queering education can allow for a deconstruction of the heteronormativity within the institution without focusing on socially constructed identity categories (Sykes, 1996, 2001).

Method and Procedures

Bracketing interview. The bracketing interview took place before I began the pilot and main study interviews. There are two purposes of doing a bracketing interview: (a) to expose my biases related to the topic of study; and (b) to tweak the interview guide prior to the pilot interview (Hatch, 2002). I asked a researcher with experience in qualitative interviewing to interview me using the same questions contained in the interview guide (see Appendix A). She also asked me about the expectations and assumptions I had about how the co-participants would respond to the interview guide. Sample questions included: "Do you feel like you work in an environment where you feel safe to be who you are?" "Are there any stereotypes of physical educators that you are aware of?" "Do you know the sexual orientation of other teachers? How?" and "Is there anything about your sexual orientation that shapes your teaching philosophy?" These were asked after the demographic questions were completed. The bracketing interview was audiotaped, transcribed, and thematized.

The bracketing interview helped me acknowledge my biases going into the study to illustrate that I am not free of my own perspective. From the bracketing interview, it became clear that I feel education in the K-12th grade levels is an environment where heterosexuality is the norm. I also feel this type of environment affects all teachers but, specifically, female physical educators because of the stereotypes which have stigmatized the profession. I view education as a socially unjust environment which often does not

provide a safe space for LGBT teachers or students. I also believe that dialogue about the subject of sexuality can provide a learning experience for students and teachers. In addition, after the bracketing interview, I took out a few questions that seemed unnecessary as well as rearranged questions to make them flow better.

The pilot interview. The pilot interview was conducted before the actual interviews for the study. The purpose of this interview was to test the protocol and interview questions to insure that they aligned with the purpose of the study, were easily understood and flowed well. The interviewee was a forty-three year old woman who taught special education in grades K-12 for a total of sixteen years within the same school district in the southeastern region of the United States. She held an administrative position which required her to travel to many of the schools within her school district and community. This co-participant[1] was chosen because although she was not a physical education teacher, she was a female teacher who self-identified as a lesbian and had a rich background of experience in the public education system. The pilot interview was audiotaped and then transcribed verbatim.

The pilot interview was helpful because I became more familiar with the interview guide as well as had practice asking the questions. During the interview, I found myself struggling because it was the first time I had asked those questions. After the interview was transcribed, I read through it once without making any notes. Then, I read it a second time highlighting re-occurring themes and subthemes. After the pilot

[1] I chose to use the term "co – participant" to reflect the belief that we co – constructed knowledge in this study (Hatch, 2002).

interview, I gained more confidence in my questions and also tweaked some of the questions for clarity and a smooth progression.

Co-participants. The co-participants for this study were five female physical education teachers currently teaching physical education at a K-12 grade level (see Table 1). Three identified as Hispanic, one as white, and one as biracial. Consistent with feminist qualitative research, in order to eliminate the hierarchy between the researcher and the researched (Stanley & Wise 1990), I considered myself a co-participant along with the other co-participants. I feel as though I learned a lot about myself in the process.

I recruited co-participants using one of three strategies: (a) through personal contacts; (b) by trusted individuals who knew lesbian physical education teachers via key informant script and letter of interest (see Appendix B)(this explained the purpose and procedure of the study while keeping confidentiality of all those involved); and (c) snowballing (Patton, 1990; Martin & Dean, 1993). The last method of snowballing - obtaining additional co-participants through co-participants already interviewed - proved to be the most useful when searching for co-participants; one co – participant was helpful in finding three other co-participants willing to be a part of the study.

Main study interviews. About a week after completing the pilot interview, the quest to find co-participants had begun. After three unsuccessful attempts with possible individuals who met the criteria and agreed to take part in the study, I found one woman willing to participate and that snowballed into three more interviews. The date and times were coordinated through the trusted co-participant.

I first read the confidentiality statement and obtained informed consent from each co-participant (see Appendix C). After informed consent was obtained, I proceeded to

Table 1

Demographic information

Name*	Age	Race	Yrs. of teaching experience	Yrs. at current school	Grade level taught	Public or private	Sexual orientation**
KayDee	41	Hispanic	15	4	High School	Public	Heterosexual
Julie	36	Hispanic	1	1	Middle School	Public	Heterosexual
Monica	31	Hispanic	7	4	Middle School	Public	Heterosexual
T	29	Biracial Hispanic & White	7	2	Middle School	Public	Lesbian/ Gay/ Homosexual
Joann	43	White	21	1.5	Lower-end Middle, K-8	Private	Lesbian
	X= 36		X= 10.2	X= 12.5			

* This column represents the pseudonym each co – participant chose for herself.
** This column represents the sexual orientation description each co – participant chose for herself.

answer any questions the co-participant had about the interview. I then gave her the opportunity to choose a pseudonym to represent herself in the transcript, throughout data analysis, and in discussion of the data. After any questions were answered, I conducted the entire interview following the interview guide (see Appendix A). Each interview was audiotaped, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed for themes. Once the interview had been transcribed, a copy of the transcript was given to the co-participants to view for accuracy and make any changes they deemed necessary. At the time of the analysis, none had responded.

KayDee. The first interview for the main study was with a forty-one year old female physical educator – "KayDee" – who had been teaching physical education for fifteen years and had been at her current school for four years. She was also a coach at the high school at which she currently taught. She self-identified as heterosexual and did not have a significant other.

Julie. The second interview was with "Julie" who was a thirty-six year old female physical education teacher in her first year of teaching middle school. She also currently self-identified as heterosexual and was married with two kids.

Monica. The third interview was with "Monica" who was a thrity-one year old middle school physical education teacher who had taught for seven years and also identified as heterosexual. She was married with two kids.

T. The forth interview I completed was with " T," a twenty-nine year old who had seven years of experience teaching physical education. She taught middle school and had been at the current school teaching for two years. She currently self-identified as

homosexual and was not in a relationship. It is important to note, however, that throughout the interview, I noticed that T used "lesbian" to describe herself. Yet, when I asked her what her sexual orientation was, she used the term "homosexual". This may be because of the terminology I used or because she did not really see a difference in the terms "homosexual", "gay", or "lesbian". This would be a good follow-up question for T, should she respond to the invitation to view the final paper.

Joann. The fifth and final interview with "Joann" was the only phone interview that was done. She was a forty-three year old physical educator who had twenty-one years of experience teaching. She had been at the school she currently taught at for one and a half years. It is a private school and she is responsible for teaching the lower-middle school, pre-K – 8th grades. She self-identified as a lesbian and was currently in a relationship. Joann stuck with the term "lesbian" throughout the interview and, therefore, I used the same term in order to stay sensitive to the way she described herself.

Data Analysis

After each interview was completed, I recorded audio journals to reflect on each experience. I then transcribed and read each interview once to get a sense of the co – participants' words. The process of understanding the data collected in qualitative research requires a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves having the researcher search for patterns in the data both within and across co-participants (Shank, 2006). In order to fully understand the themes emerging, an inductive analytic approach was utilized. Although the term "inductive" can take on different meanings, in qualitative research, the term "inductive" as described by Shank (2006) was used to "…indicate the process of moving from the specific to the general" (p.149). I used a line-by-line analysis

– of what was said and what was not said in each interview – to identify specific codes, general categories, and then patterns of sub-themes and themes. Quotes from the interviews were highlighted and notes were made in the margins. Utilizing a feedback and comparison method, an incident comparison allowed similarities and differences to emerge from the data (Strauss & Corbin 1998). I also utilized two researchers with qualitative research experience who conducted an independent line-by-line analysis to determine which themes and sub-themes emerged. The two researchers signed a confidentiality agreement prior to analyzing the transcripts (see Appendix D). After receiving the interviews that the two researchers thematized, I made a table with all the notes from each member in order to move from the more specific to more general and to create themes and subthemes.

As previously mentioned, co – participants were each sent copies of their transcripts to see if they accurately captured their experiences. None made any changes to their transcripts. The results and discussion of the interviews are presented next.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of heteronormativity on female physical educators and the role it plays in how these women experience their identities within the institution of education. Findings from analyses of all interviews are presented in this section. Transcripts were analyzed using an inductive analysis, moving from the specific to general themes emerging consistently throughout the interviews. Results are organized according to the two prominent sections of the interview guide, which served as guiding questions (see Table 2). Each guiding question is from a section of the interview and guiding subquestions – the actual questions asked – from each section are presented along with a discussion of co-participant responses; pertinent literature has also been added.

In addition, two co-participants self-identified as lesbian/ homosexual while three self – identified as heterosexual. Through analysis of the data from the interviews, it became evident that although a heteronormative environment affects all teachers, the thoughts and experiences of heterosexual and homosexual teachers' responses were different in more ways than they were alike. T self-identified as homosexual, then lesbian and Joann self-identified as a lesbian: their experiences and perspective differed from that of the other co-participants who self- identified as heterosexual. Both T and Joann spoke about their awareness of the environment they teach in, the need to overcompensate because of their marginalized sexuality, and the effect their sexuality had on their teaching philosophy and principles. Although varying identities and categories depend on each other for existence (Butler, 1990), it is important to note the effect that

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes of Co – Participant Interviews Based on Interview Questions

Guiding Questions	Themes	Subthemes
1. How is heteronormativity deconstructed in education by female physical educators?	a. Homosexual perspective	Hyperawareness of their surroundings
	b. Heterosexual privilege	
	c. Gender performance	Hegemonic femininity
	d. Institutional silence	Impact of administration
2. How does female physical educators' sexual identity influence their experiences within education?	a. Gender performance	
	b. Homosexual perspective	The effect of teaching philosophy

these constructed categories have on women physical educators. As previously noted, these results should not be generalized to all female physical educators, but instead are representative of the five co-participants of this study.

Guiding Question #1: Deconstructing Heteronormativity – "How is heteronormativity deconstructed in education by female physical educators?"

The interview began with a set of demographic questions (refer to Table 1 for demographic information). Following the demographic section, the interview continued with co-participants' thoughts on what they were searching for in a physical education job. We then discussed their experiences as female physical education teachers. The sub-questions co-participants were asked in this section were as follows:

(a) Was it important to you what your colleagues were like when you looked for physical education teaching jobs? If so, what?

(b) Do you feel like you work in an environment where you feel safe to be who you are?

(c) Are there any stereotypes of women physical educators that you are aware of? Do any of them affect you personally, or you teaching?

(d) Have you ever encountered an incident or issues relating to sexual orientation or homophobia? If so, what was the incident; how did you react; how did the administration react?

(e) Do you know the sexual orientation of other teachers?

In terms of whether it was important what their colleagues were like when they looked for physical education teaching jobs, Joann – a lesbian educator – said:

> The community of the school is very important to me, um, whether or not you feel comfortable in the school, or comfortable with your colleagues um, that's a very important piece. Which is a part of being a lesbian because you are always trying to figure out in education, how far you can, can you come all the way out and still feel comfortable with your colleagues, the parent body, and the administration? Or do you have to walk the tight rope and tiptoe through the pronouns?

In stark contrast, Monica – a straight educator – responded by stating, "No, no, not at all, I wasn't worried about who I was going to teach with or coach with. You know, anybody I work with I respond very well with them."

Joann's experience has taught her to look very carefully at the community of the school when she was searching for a job, whereas Monica expressed little concern about the environment of the school and the colleagues with which she would be working. As a lesbian in education, Joann placed emphasis on a safe environment and was constantly trying to judge the environment making sure she stayed within the limits of feeling safe and comfortable, being careful not to go too far. As Woods & Harbeck (1992) found in their study, Joann was experiencing "internal homophobia" – feelings of anxiety due to the constant fear of revealing too much to anyone, students, colleagues, or parents. On the other hand, Joann was also experiencing "external homophobia" because she feared the ultimate consequence of possibly losing her job if she "come[s] all the way out [of the closet]." Thus, it appears that as a lesbian physical education teacher, Joann faced a constant struggle between internal and external homophobia while Monica's

heterosexuality may have provided her with the privilege to be oblivious to such struggles.

When asked, "Do you feel like you work in an environment where you feel safe to be who you are?" KayDee – a straight physical educator – said, (after giving a puzzled look and a long silence), "Um, yea pretty much, yes." Similarly, Monica said:

> Definitely, and I think that also has to do with the culture down here. Being Hispanic and the majority of people around us are Hispanic. So, um, it's just we have got so much in common, as far as background, family background, it's easy to get along with anybody here.

It appeared that Monica's ethnicity as a Hispanic among other Hispanics made her feel more at home and served as a more salient identity component. Julie also said she felt safe and did not express any concern about her environment:

> Yes, as long as I know what I am doing, you know, do everything that I am supposed to…

In contrast to these heterosexual teachers' responses, T said:

> Yea, I don't know, I think it is difficult. The whole locker room issue is a scary thing for me…I just go in there and do my job and like, I don't want them thinking I am staring at them….You know, you don't ever want, I try not to make eye contact with any of the kids when you are walking through there and that is just how it is for me…

And Joann said:

> …I have always worked in the "don't ask, don't tell" type of environment…This school, I feel more comfortable on being who I am

but, uh, its taken baby steps to get to that place. Because after twenty-one years in the field, you don't have a lot of trust. So, you kind of take a look at, 'Does the school follow what they say, you know, in their literature?' 'Does the school stand up for people who 'come out?…'

The puzzled look on KayDee's face may have been related to McIntosh's idea of unacknowledged heterosexual privilege (1998); she had never given thought to her safety due to the unearned privilege attached to heterosexuality. Parallel to KayDee, Monica felt very safe in her environment and she attributed that safety to a commonality of Hispanic ethnicity and family background with her students and community. What KayDee and Monica did not mention was the assumption about sexuality. Coming from a point of heterosexual privilege, their silence was just as powerful as their words on this issue.

T points to a topic that none of the other secondary teachers mentioned in the interviews. The locker room was a scary place for her because she was constantly aware of her actions, making a point to avoid eye contact and just "do her job." Perhaps heterosexual physical educators do not fear the locker room as lesbian teachers might because of the negative stigma attached to homosexuality. For example, T's perception of herself as a lesbian affected her actions when she was in the locker room; this was perhaps in order to avoid the possibility of being accused of staring at the students inappropriately.

Heterosexual privilege is not a topic that is talked about on a daily basis, especially not in education, yet it is threaded throughout co – participant interviews, especially when they were asked if they were aware of the environment around them.

KayDee, Julie, and Monica never had to fear for their safety while Joann and T had to think about their safety while being aware of their overall environment. Both T and Joann exhibited a hyperawareness of their surroundings, of the environment they worked in. With Joann's experience, came a lack of trust and the need to find out if the school really followed through with what they said they stood for – an environment free of sexual orientation bias. Most of the interviews brought out a sense of privilege from those educators who identified as heterosexual. McIntosh (1988) discusses how unacknowledged male privilege, white privilege, and heterosexual privilege go hand in hand, acting as an "invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency tear and blank checks (p. 2)." This analogy illustrates the unearned privilege that men, white people, and heterosexuals carry with them from one context to another. Although McIntosh (1988) focuses on male privilege and its relation to white privilege, there are some clear parallels seen in unearned heterosexual privilege. This privilege creates a heteronormative environment where LGBT teachers are often marginalized.

Similar to the research on white privilege, there has been little research done on women of Latina heritage in sport and physical activity (Jamieson, 1995). This study is unique because unlike other studies, four of the five co-participants were of Hispanic descent. Jamieson (1995) notes that, "Often, Latinas and Latinos are left out or invisible when discussing athletes and other sport figures and leaders (p. 46)." More specifically, this study gave four Hispanic physical educators an opportunity to provide a voice for themselves. Co-participants in this study used the term "Hispanic". Theorists like Jamison (1995), however, use "Latina" to refer to females who are of Latina ethnicity.

She states that the diverse population of Latinas include people from Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish ancestry or descent (Jamison, 1995). Jamison (1995) explains that "…speaking with Latina students may provide educators with insight into the many ways ethnicity and gender work together to shape these students experiences (p. 45)." This also appeared true for Hispanic physical educators whose experiences are shaped by ethnicity and gender identity.

In answer to the question, "Are there any stereotypes of women physical educators that you are aware of?", KayDee – who was a female coach and physical educator – described herself as being "traditionally" feminine – looking. Because of her appearance, she saw herself as an intruder because she did not fit the stereotypical mold of a female physical educator. She noted that most people would never guess that she was a coach or physical educator since her appearance belies this stereotype. She stated:

> It's totally a big thing because when I meet somebody, they are like, 'What do you teach?' And I am like, 'What do you think I teach?'. You know, they never say 'PE', they never think I am a coach.

Julie shared KayDee's belief in what a female physical educator should look like by stating: "Well, I guess they tend to see the females more, how do I say it, more like a 'butch' type of coach." Furthermore, Julie defined butch as "I guess a girl or a coach that looks like a guy, you know?"

On the other hand, Joann stated what Julie and KayDee had only implied. She said:

> Yea, any woman who is not married by the age of 25 in physical education is a lesbian. If you are very athletic, you know, all physical education teachers, you know, have short hair, um, and look less feminine. I mean,

those are just a few of them that are thrown out there. Kind of gruff, tough. There is another thing, if you watch the media, if you watch something on television where a female education teacher is portrayed, it is always the gruff kind of big woman with short hair.

These quotes lay the foundation for gender–conforming attributes associated with what it means to be a woman and a man. Hegemonic femininity refers to underlying cultural messages in which women and athleticism are seen as contradictory. This belief leads to women having to prove that they can be both athletic and feminine. However, many co–participants bought into the stereotype that physical educators and coaches were "butch"–looking, tying sexuality to femininity. Each was very aware of the stereotypes and the stigma attached to female physical education teachers. These beliefs illustrate the taken–for–granted meanings of gender and what Butler (1990) would refer to as "gender performance".

This theme of gender performance arose from the ways in which co-participants made explicit statements about the traditional boundaries of womanhood/manhood and the actions that are socially required of each. These statements are in direct opposition to Butler's (1990) belief that gender is not a stable identity that is fixed in each individual. She asserts that gender is neither true nor false, and that there is no original template from which one can deviate. Therefore, the relationship of gender and sexuality is juxtaposed, meaning that in order to be perceived as a "real" physical educator, one is expected to look "masculine".

In answer to the question, " Have you ever encountered an incident or issues relating to sexual orientation or homophobia? If so, what was the incident, how did you

and the administration or other teachers react?", each of the co-participants explained the impact of the administration's perceptions of what female physical educators and coaches should look like. Monica felt the pressure from the administration and, in particular, from someone she looked up to when she stated:

> One of the experiences I had, I worked under an athletic coordinator who actually told me, 'We need more feminine coaches out there.' 'You mean, female coaches?' 'No, I mean more feminine coaches like, yea, you know.' 'And, no, we don't need to have these other people, you know, these other people.' Referring to, uh, uh, masculine, you know.

In Monica's example, the athletic coordinator's hegemonic beliefs about femininity were tied to his belief that there should be more coaches who defy the stereotype and exemplify hegemonic femininity. Furthermore, Griffin (1998) suggests that in order to fully understand the impact that homophobic silence has on teachers and students, every teacher needs to understand how homophobia and heterosexism affect us all, like Monica did. Remaining silent on the issue of sexuality perpetuates ignorance and fear of the unknown. As a result, many teachers avoid the topic and are influenced by the administration's expectations.

This was the case with KayDee, who had a particularly interesting experience with a lesbian teacher and coach with whom she had taught and coached previous to moving to the high school level. KayDee was trying to get her a job because they worked well together; she went on to explain:

> They did not bring her in because of that. I was the head. At my previous school, my athletic director was moving from that school to this school

> and when he came, they needed a head basketball coach. And, I tell him, 'Hey, look, I have got this good one, she did well over there, let me bring her in.' As soon as he saw her, they said no. But… the next year he worked with that same girl, the athletic director. I said, 'How about "Piper"? Let's bring her in to coach, we work well together, I think we can get these girls going.' And, he brought her in, we brought her in and introduced her to the principle, and he [snaps] and he said no. And for those reasons [she was perceived as gay based on her appearance]. And, he didn't tell me that but he told him that and he told my athletic director that.

Although "Piper" and KayDee worked well together, the administration discriminated against her and immediately judged her by her looks and outward appearance making the assumption she was gay. Not only is this an example of the power and influence of the administration, it also speaks to the ideal of hegemonic femininity in education and society at large. After inquiring about whether they had told Piper why they didn't hire her, KayDee said:

> No, and she asked me and I didn't want to tell her that was the reason they didn't bring her in. I just said, 'I don't know, he wanted in-house;' that is what I told her. And that was a lie. It was because she looked the way she looked.

This series of quotes exemplifies how the administration successfully denied a job to a person who "looked like a lesbian" perhaps in order to intentionally avoid homosexuality at the school. The way "Piper" looked was enough for the principal not to hire her.

Simply put, she was not what those in power thought an educator should look and/or act like. It was evident by the tone of her explanation that KayDee felt bad about the whole situation and struggled with the administration's reasoning since she felt that appearance did not make a difference in one's capability to teach or coach.

While both Monica and KayDee self-identify as heterosexual, each of them discussed firsthand experiences relating to heterosexism and homophobia. T, however, discussed the curiosity of students surrounding the topic of sexuality. T said:

> No, the kids, like, no, the kids never say anything to me to my face. Actually, it was awesome' cause one kid, like, the first year I was teaching here, he actually came up to me and asked me: 'Coach, I want to know- are you a lesbian?' And I just told him, 'Look, like, does it really make a difference if I am? You know, that's personal; it doesn't make a difference if I am married or if I have kids or if I am a lesbian, like, it doesn't matter, does it? Like, I am still teaching you what you need to learn, so my personal life has nothing to do with this class. And, if that's not a good enough answer for you, then you can come after school and ask me again'. But, you know, just him coming up to me, you know, then me and him had an awesome relationship after that. Like, I always trusted that kid because at least he wasn't being nasty or dirty about it, you know, like just saying bad stuff that kids say in general anyway. But, he actually came up to me and asked me, you know.

The fact that this student had the courage to ask T if she was a lesbian earned him T's respect and trust. This particular student suspected that T was a lesbian and because T

was not "out" in school, she did not come out to the student – she remained silenced – due to the risk of losing her job.

Each of these quotes represents the administration's influence on female physical educators of any sexual orientation. There is an underlying expectation of having a "feminine" female coach to defy the stereotype which comes with a negative stigma. The administration served as what Gramsci (as referenced by Khayatt, 1992) termed a "hegemonic apparatus," where education is seen as part of a dominant ideology which directly influences the students and perpetuates the beliefs of the ruling class. In the U.S, gender conformity is celebrated which has a profound affect on female physical education teachers who are already seen as intruders in the male domain of sport and physical education.

In response to the question: "Do you know the sexual orientation of other teachers? How?" KayDee said without hesitation, "Yea, I guess most of them are straight I would think." Whereas, when Julie was asked, she didn't know how to respond. She said:

> Do, I don't either, not at the school I am at. [Moment of silence…both myself and the co-participant looked at one another puzzled. Assuming the co-participant did not understand the question, I still didn't say anything, and she continued with…] So you are asking me if I know anybody at my school who is hiding their sexuality, if they are gay or lesbian?"

It seemed that up to this point, she had never thought about her sexuality as an orientation; she saw sexual orientation as something that deviated from her own

heterosexual – "normative" – identity. I simplified the question by asking if she was aware of any teachers who were straight and she immediately said, "Oh yea, yea, yea." When I asked how she knew that, she responded with:

> Um, for example, I have a student teacher, he is with me and he was hitting on one of the science teachers. So, they were always constantly coming up to me, she was coming around because he is there with me so she wanted to get information from him. And, I did see them together. And, uh, another gentlemen always constantly talking about, oh, all his girlfriends or whatever."

When heterosexuality is placed as the original and most normal and natural form of sexuality within education, an unequal and unjust environment is the result. This belief only allows for heterosexual teachers and students to feel comfortable talking about their significant others, families, and performing their prescribed roles of heterosexuality. Heterosexual teachers feel free to show interest in other teachers' relationships and families as long as they are between a man and a woman. It seemed that Joann struggled to decide if she should even announce her sexuality as a lesbian, whereas Julie discussed her experiences of other heterosexual teachers being able to perform their identities within education with no consequences to their open flirtation and/or interest in one another. This represents the privilege attached to self- identifying as heterosexual in a heteronormative environment (McIntosh, 1989).

A quote from T further explicates this theme. When asked how she knew personal details about colleagues at her school, she said:

> Just from being there. Like, knowing that they have their pictures of their families in their office and, you know, in their classroom. And, our school is really tightknit. Like at Valentine's Day, there is a dance at the school but everybody goes and they bring their kids to pep rallies and our teachers bring their husbands to the pep rallies, you know. So, you just know by being around them.

This quote from T also represents the heteronormative environment created that allows for only teachers who identify as heterosexual to feel comfortable putting pictures in their office and bringing their families to school activities. These constructed meanings of sexuality create a power structure where heterosexuality is supreme with all other variations seen as deviant (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 2001). Therefore, this belief leads to a heteronormative environment that has a harsh effect on lesbian physical educators.

Guiding Question #2: Sexual Identity – How does female physical educators' sexual identity influences their experiences within education?

The following questions illustrate the influence of sexual identity on the co-participants' experiences in education:

> (a) Is there anything about your sexual orientation that shapes your teaching philosophy? Are any of your teaching principles related to your sexual identity?
>
> (b) Do your co-workers know what your sexual orientation is? How? What was their reaction?

Both co-participants who identified as a lesbian spoke about the profound affect their sexuality had on their teaching philosophy. T said:

> I would say that because I am a lesbian and I am sports – inclined, you know, I just want to make sure that the kids know it is okay for them to be highly athletic, for them to be good at sports and that doesn't necessarily mean that they are gay…. It doesn't necessarily mean that you are a guy or that you are gay because you can score thirty points a game, you know? It just means that you are a better athlete than some of the kids. I think that has a lot to do with it, like I just want them to understand, in a sense, that, you know, it's okay for them to be good at whatever sport they are playing and it doesn't necessarily mean that they are gay. Because that is what those kids think, a lot of them do.

Similarly, Joann said:

> Um, I think I am more aware of kids who have gender identity issues, making sure that they are not bullied. I am aware of kids, you know, the ages I work with, you don't know if you will be gay and lesbian and bisexual. I mean, you might have a middle school kid who 'comes out' but, you know, you don't know. Yea, so the best thing you can do is to make sure students aren't bullied in any respect. But, we know that a lot of bullying has to do with the child being perceived as gay, um, and so, or perceived to have gender identity issues. So, I think it's made me more sensitive to kids who have those issues and how I can, um, I don't know if 'protect' is a good word but give them the freedom to express themselves.

More specifically, the quote from T represents the efforts she put into her teaching to express to the students that it is okay for the girls to be good at sports and that it

doesn't necessarily mean that they are lesbian. As a lesbian teacher, T was taking a risk by talking about the stereotypes that "all girls who play sports are lesbians." Woods & Harbeck (1992) term this type of behavior as one of their two categories of lesbian identity management strategies – risk-taking behaviors that could disclose one's lesbian identity. T was providing voice to a topic that is often not talked about in education, thus, putting herself at risk of revealing her own sexual identity.

Conversely, Joann described how her awareness of multiple sexual identities has, in turn, made her more aware of the students in her class. Joann was also aware that much of the teasing and bullying that goes on in the school can be caused by students perceiving other students as gay, usually labeling them because they do not fall into the "proper" gender category. Similar to Olson (1987), both lesbian co-participants described how their teaching philosophy was unique because of their sexual orientation. In Olson's (1987) study, almost half of the gay and lesbian teachers reported that they were more sensitive to differences as a result of their sexual orientation.

In contrast, Julie expressed a teaching philosophy related to her beliefs on what it meant to be a "feminine" teacher and how she wanted to be just the opposite:

> So, you can't be, you know, uh, I don't know how to define it. But, you know, when some girls are kinda on the soft side, you know, because I am not like that. So, I don't know, I just try to be tough with my girls. And some people might say, you know, that's not too feminine. But, to me, if I am like that, then I am going to have a hard time controlling my class.

Julie viewed "feminine" as a weak characteristic that would not help her gain control over her students. Julie also demonstrated the taken-for-grated link of gender and sexual identity where feminine girls/women are seen as weak and passive.

In response to the question: "Do your co-workers know what your sexual orientation is? How? What was their reaction?", Monica talked about the assumptions made about her sexuality related to the socialized belief of the link between sexuality and gender. She responded by stating:

> I think they would assume by appearance. Because, um, that is what, again, the norm is. If you look a certain way, then you must be a certain way. I think…a lot of that is taught, too.

When she was asked to elaborate on that, her response was:

> I think what is taught is that a person by appearance is that, for example, like a female and she is homosexual or whatever term you want to use, I think what is taught is that she, 'Does she look like a girl?' Well, what do you mean, 'Does she look like a girl? Is she attractive, does she have long hair? Does she have blue eyes?' No, well, 'Does she have short hair? Does she look like a tomboy?' And if she does look like a tomboy and she has short hair, then she must be[gay], you know. I think that is what is being taught. And a lot of people today actually believe it.

Within this quote, Monica was looking more deeply into the relationship between sexual identity and gender while questioning whether this relationship is natural or socially constructed. Specifically, she explained the belief that if a woman has more masculine characteristics such as short hair and a muscular build, then she must be a lesbian.

Conversely, she mentioned that if a woman is attractive and has long hair, then it is assumed she is straight. Although Monica saw these meanings as being taught, she did not explain how these acts could be done differently (Butler, 1990).

Similar to Monica, T also understood the effects of society's view on women in sport. T said that sport is seen as "the manly thing to do"; therefore, women who teach physical education must be masculine and by extension, gay. These meanings are constructed in what Butler (1990) called the "heterosexual matrix," where meanings and links of gender and sex are subject to change and could potentially be constructed differently. For example, Butler (1990) would deem it appropriate for a man to look and act feminine and a woman to look and act masculine. In this sense, gender is "done" differently and the binary category of male and female and masculine and feminine are juxtaposed. When these acts are done differently, these binary oppositions completely crumble because they depend on each other for existence.

Joann spoke about her "battle" between the assumption that she was straight versus the reality that she was a lesbian. She also battled about whether or not to come out. As she stated:

> Once again, I always find it hard to like, you know, like, what do you do - hand out an announcement? I don't know, straight people, they think that assumption of straightness I guess which is wrong in and of itself. But, they just automatically talk about their husbands and wives or whatever. I mean, I don't know, it just of kind of sounds funny to me to hand out an announcement or to stand up in a faculty meeting and say, 'Guess what? I have had a partner for nine years and I am a lesbian.' I have a feeling it

would drop like a bombshell and everybody would look around the room and say, 'What does that have to do with the faculty meeting?' Like, 'Congratulations, we are happy for you.' But, so, I think it is always a challenge to try and figure out, you know, where and when to do it.

Joann's struggles with "coming out" was a topic that even after years in the educational system, she had trouble figuring out how to go about it. She struggled with why gay and lesbian teachers are supposed to send out an announcement while it is assumed that you will talk about your significant other if you are heterosexual. Similar to Sanlo (1999), both lesbian co – participants were forced to think about when to reveal their sexuality. Also similar to Sanlo, (1999) "…it would be most unusual to not know about a colleague's heterosexual husband or wife…" Joann directly spoke about the assumption that the heterosexual teachers would talk about their wives and husbands yet she struggled to know when and how to share the information and how.

It is important to note other themes that came out in the interviews that did not necessarily belong to one particular question but were important to discuss. Joann's experience at her new job is a great example of how the impact of an open environment can positively impact all teachers and students in the school. Her experience is unique because she was the only co-participant who taught in a private school. The interview with Joann brought out the positive impact of a supportive administration and how this open environment let students and teachers feel safe and be themselves. All new teachers at her school attend an orientation. It was at this orientation that she had a particularly interesting experience. She explained:

> There are two diversity coordinators who come and speak to the new faculty. And, what struck me, one of the first sentences that the diversity people said was that, 'We don't want people to have to check who they are at the door before they come in this school. We want people to be able to be who they are and celebrate that so everybody is seen as stable.'

This was a unique experience because in twenty-one years, Joann had never experienced a school that was so open about the subject of teachers' identities. As previously mentioned, however, Joann took what they said with caution due to her past experiences. At the same time, she felt refreshed to be in an environment where she was safe to be herself.

Joann also talked about a few activities that the private school participated in to increase awareness of diversity. Because it is a combined elementary and middle school, the elementary does a "Free to be me" parade and the middle school actually does a gay pride parade. This type of school environment is working to unsilence the topic of homosexuality. Through this increased awareness, students and teachers learn to celebrate differences instead of hiding from them.

A second interesting finding focused on the theme of teachers challenging heterosexism and demonstrated the efforts each physical educator made to challenge students' perceptions about sexuality as well as pushing them to think about the comments they made about other teachers' and students' sexuality.

Julie spoke about an experience that happened on the same day as our interview. She said:

> Just today, one of my students who I was talking about outside, earlier, she got into a fight because she had made a comment that, 'So and so is a dyke' or whatever. And, I was like, 'So, so what is wrong with that, you know?' That is who she is…'Yea, yea. I mean I told her, 'That's her, that's the way she is, that's who she wants to be, respect her. I mean she is not bothering you.'

Julie pushed the student to think about her derogatory comment regarding the other student who had done nothing to her yet faced the wrath of heterosexism and homophobia.

T and KayDee both had experiences where other teachers were being discriminated against based on their sexual orientation. T explained one situation she found herself in:

> …one of the teachers had bought the fight on Showtime and they had a barbeque and stuff and he brought his partner, you know. I asked, I asked one of the teachers, oh yea, one of the teachers had said something, yea, like, 'Awe, yea, that is his boyfriend.' And, I was like, 'And, so, what is the point?' And, then, like, some of the other teachers that were there they were like talking bad about it, you know. So, I just told them, too, 'What difference does it make? Why, because you are sitting by your wife right now, like, it makes it any better or your love is any better that theirs. Like, come on. Like, how old are you?'

KayDee also defended another teacher when the subject of her sexuality was brought up:

> …every time there was a chance, if somebody would say something, I would say, 'It don't bother me. I am fine with you. And, whatever you are, you are.'

Challenging heterosexism is a risk for any teacher and particularly female physical education teachers because of the stereotypes that affect their existence. Although Woods & Harbeck's (1992) study focused on lesbian physical educators and as previously mentioned found that they took risks that may have "outed" them, some teachers in the current study challenged their students to think about stereotypes related to sexuality regardless if they reported being gay or straight. It may not be as much of a risk for the self-identified heterosexual teachers; however, each was faced with a constant battle of proving that they could be a female physical educator and be effective regardless of their sexual orientation.

Summary

In conclusion, it is apparent that each of the co – participants was uniquely affected by the heterosexism and heteronormativity within their schools. In relation to the heteronormative environment, each co – participant expressed beliefs about gender and sexuality and how this affected the way they performed their identities in the workplace as well as the institutional silence surrounding the topic of sexuality. Each co-participant also expressed her desire to challenge heterosexism in her own way with the students, teachers, and administration. Interestingly, constructed beliefs surrounding sexual orientation has affected each one's ways of knowing and, in turn, their experiences. The interviews revealed a stark contrast between the straight and lesbian co-participant responses. The lesbian participants displayed a hyperawareness of their surroundings and the effect their sexual orientation had on their teaching philosophy. Heterosexual privilege of the straight physical educators came out when they expressed less concern about the environment in which they taught.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the ways in which heteronormativity affects female physical educators and how they perform their identities in the workplace. This investigation was possible through five semi-structured interviews that provided a voice for each individual's experience. Building on previous research of lesbians in sport and education (Bredemeier et. al, 2003; Sparkes, 1994; Sykes, 1994; Woods et. al, 1992), this study addressed the issue of heteronormativity through the experiences of women physical educators. New findings and directions for future research are highlighted, in addition, a limitation is discussed and the chapter ends with three major conclusions.

Finding #1: Differences in Experiences of Straight and Gay Co-Participants.

As the analysis of the interviews progressed it appeared that the responses from the self – identified lesbians versus the heterosexual women were in stark contrast. At the beginning of the study, I had anxiety about talking about sexuality to women physical educators who self– identified as heterosexual. I was not sure how they would react; I was not sure if they would be able to understand where I was coming from as a queer physical educator. I did not know if they would be offended by the topic of sexuality, especially as it related to stereotypes placed on female physical educators. I just did not know what to expect. When the interviews were completed and analyzed, it appeared that each co-participant had experienced heterosexism and homophobia at school, be it with students, colleagues, or the administration. They each gave voice to the often ignored injustices in education.

A heteronormative climate in education has a profound effect on female physical

education teachers and the ways in which they perform their identities in the workplace. Each co-participant spoke about stereotypes of women in physical education, heterosexism and homophobia within the administration, and also the relationship of gender and sexuality. Through analyzing co-participant experiences, some of the social injustices within our schools were revealed through their own words. For example, KayDee spoke about a teacher not being hired based on her "masculine" appearance; Julie talked about her experience with a student bullying another student based on the assumption that she was gay –the incident actually happened on the day of the interview. Monica talked about the power and influence that the administration holds and how this effects the environment of the school; T had to deal with a principle who made her life miserable based on T's sexual orientation. And, finally, Joann who had the most years of teaching experience, felt a lack of trust in the educational system. These experiences were fleshed out by looking critically at the institution of education and deconstructing heteronormativity. Although these experiences focused on the negative part of education, Joann reassured me that some teachers have good experiences which can serve as a model for other schools.

To that end, one of the most important findings of this study was the answer to the question about whether their sexual orientation shaped their teaching philosophy. The two lesbian co- participants made it very clear that their sexual identity played a major role in their teaching philosophy, whereas the straight co-participant hadn't made that type of connection. Despite the heteronormative environment of their schools, both T and Joann wanted to make school a safe place for everyone by ending the bullying and harassment about sexuality as well as the false belief that good female athletes must be

gay. Although T's response could be seen as a homophobic response, she appeared to be trying to break the stereotypes of women in sport in her own way. A non-homophobic response to this false correlation could be to acknowledge that some good female athletes are gay and others are not.

Finding #2: Examining My Own Privilege

Although my conclusions come from a standpoint of privilege as a Caucasion in relation to the co-participants, it is important to note my awareness of the unearned white privilege I carry with me. Throughout my life, I have been fortunate to experience cultures and ethnicities different from my own. Through these experiences, I have become sensitive to the oppressive nature of our society and have grown a passion for celebrating our diversity as humans. I felt very fortunate to have been able to research a population which has received little attention in the sport and physical activity context. To that end, it was not my intention to seek out Latina physical educators. However, four out of the five co-participants were of Hispanic descent. Because of this, this study is unique and contributes to bringing a voice to this population. We need to be careful, however, not to homogenize Hispanic experiences. With the growing population of Latinos and Latinas in America, it is important to note the intersections of their identities – race, sexuality, and gender – that influence the experiences of each. In addition, I must admit that my awareness of how race impacted co-participant's gender and sexual orientations was slow to emerge doing the analysis. After the analysis it, was apparent that this study was limited because I did not ask how their ethnicity impacted their identity.

Finding #3: Applications for Sport Psychology

This study broadens the epistemological foundations of sport psychology through its relation to sport and physical activity and ways of knowing. As female physical educators, co-participants talked about their experiences and how they are psychologically impacted by the heteronormativity within the schools. Although this was not an experience that was affecting their sport experience specifically, each was impacted by the stereotypes and negative stigma around women in physical education. This, in turn, affected their teaching philosophy and their students' experiences in the sport and physical activity environment. The effects of heterosexism and its consequences are less obvious (Krane, 2001). Krane (2001) discusses the fear that is created around being labeled a lesbian in sport: such fear may lead girls to avoid playing sports or building muscle because she may be viewed as masculine. As Krane (2001) notes, "Further understanding these feminist issues benefits sport psychologists who work with female athletes confronted by gendered expectations and constraints" (p. 402).

Finding #4: Changing the Heteronormative Environment

The impact of this study lies partly with educators who could begin dialogue about heteronormativity within education in order to bring social justice to our nation's classrooms. Although this may seem like a lofty goal, change happens one person at a time. It is hoped that the information from this study can lead to a change in our schools. By using queer theory to deconstruct education, perhaps educators can break the silence about this topic.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is a dire need for future research on Hispanic women in sport and physical activity and, more specifically, on how they negotiate the varying components of their identities such as gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. It became obvious that co-participants' sexual and gender identity together – as well as their ethnicity – played a large role in shaping their experiences. In order to push queer theory forward, it is necessary to take ethnicity into account in addition to sexuality and gender. Butler (1990) took into account the constructed nature of gender and sexuality; however, she did not include race or ethnicity in her analysis. Ultimately, it was not one determining factor in these co-participants' experience; it was a combination of them all. Using a queer theoretical framework should take all of these factors into account, being careful not to privilege one identity over the other.

Limitation

Finding co-participants who were willing to be a part of the research proved to be a difficult task. This could be attributed to the region in which I am currently located or that the topic of sexuality in education is taboo. Finding people even after explaining the confidentiality of participation was difficult.

Conclusions

Four main conclusions are drawn as a result of this study:

- heteronormativity can affect all physical education teachers, gay or straight;
- the power of the administration can be used either to silence people's discussions surrounding marginalized sexualities/identities or to promote diversity in such identities;

- the link between gender and sexuality is tied to the perceptions people have of themselves and others; and
- this type of research and work needs to be done by straight allies.

Summary

The good news is that there are a number of programs offered in schools across the country which challenge norms and provide a means for educating people about sexuality and gender. Educators who take this risk of acknowledging and accepting students and teachers who do not self- identify as heterosexual could potentially face the negative stigma of homosexuality. Despite the risks associated with speaking out about this often silenced topic, many of these educators have worked with organizations like the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) which provides tools for teaching Gender Equity for All (GLESEN: San Francisco, 2006). One packet is a "comprehensive education, training and support package addressing gender identity and gender expression issues" (p. 1) and includes "Educating for Transgender Student Safety"; such a guide exposes hate – motivated violence in the world especially as it relates to transgender issues. This type of program works to educate our teachers and students about the importance of dialogue about the variety of genders and sexualities and what they mean.

There is a dire need for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight educators to address issues of homophobia and increase professional dialogue within educational institutions (Griffin,1991; Woods & Harbeck, 1992). Even though many educators have taken on the responsibility of addressing these issues, many are still continually restricted by heteronormativity within their particular educational environment. Therefore, it is my

hope that other female physical educators can become change agents within their own schools and find straight allies who will also help in this fight. Utilizing a queer praxis can enable physical educators to challenge the heteronormativity which exists within their specific educational institution.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:
Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this study! I really think it will help us flesh out how physical educators experience their identity in the schools they are a part of.

As the researcher, I want you to know that I agree to maintain strict confidence regarding your name and everything that is said during this interview. Similarly, any individuals who are asked to help with this study will sign a confidentiality statement and will agree to the same. You can chose a pseudonym to represent yourself in all transcripts and written analyses so that your actual name will not be linked in any way with your data. And by the way, all data collected will be kept in a secure and confidential space located at the University of Tennessee.

What pseudonym would you like to choose to represent yourself?

Do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

Demographics

- Why don't you start by telling me a little about yourself-where you are from, your age, do you have a significant other? How long have you been a teacher?
- How long have you been at the school you currently teach in?
- Can you describe for me the culture of the community in which you live?

Professional History/ Career & Teaching Climate

- What's it like to be a (elementary/jr. high/high school) teacher?
- When did you know that you wanted to be a physical education teacher? What is it that attracted you to the field of physical education?
- What are your current teaching responsibilities?
    - Grade level, number of class periods, number of students?
- In general, are there any differences between physical education teachers and other teachers in the school?

Deconstructing Heteronormativity

- Was it important to you what your colleagues were like when you looked for physical education teaching jobs? If so, what?
- Do you feel like you work in an environment where you feel safe to be who you are?
- What is considered the "normal" teacher at your school in terms of gender, race, class, sexual orientation?
    - How do you know?
- What messages does the administration put out about being a "normal" teacher? About sexual orientation, if any?

- Are there any stereotypes of women physical educators that you are aware of? Do any of them affect you personally, or your teaching?
- Have you ever encountered an incident or issues relating to sexual orientation or homophobia?
    - If so, what was the incident?
    - How did you react?
    - How did the administration/ other teachers react?
- Do you know the sexual orientation of other teachers? How?
- Do you know of any gay, lesbian, bisexual teachers at your school? How?
- Ok, so is there anything else related to being normal within the schools that you think is important (i.e., things people DON"T talk about)?

Sexual Identity

- How do you define your sexual orientation?
- When did you become aware of your sexual orientation? (a particular experience)?
- Do your co-workers know what your sexual orientation is? How? What was their reaction?
- Is there anything about your sexual orientation that shapes your teaching philosophy? Are any of your teaching principles related to your sexual identity?
- Are students aware of your sexual orientation? If so, do you feel like this impacts the quality of your relationship with them in any way? How? If they don't know, are you glad they don't know? Why?
- Do you feel comfortable talking about your partner or your private life to any colleagues? To some and not others? Why?

Debriefing

- Anything else you think is important for us to discuss related to being a physical educator in your school that we did not discuss?
- Thank you!!

Appendix B
Key Informant Script/Letter of Interest

Key Informant Script

I am contacting you about a study examining women in teaching and sexual identity. Stephanie is interested in your perceptions and experiences as a female physical education teacher. She would like to interview you, which will take 60 minutes. Also, Stephanie is interested in exploring the experiences of lesbian and bisexual women in teaching, so there will be a question asking you about your sexual orientation. If you are interested in learning more about this study, fill out this interest form, return it to me, and I will give it to Stephanie. This does not commit you to participate in the study. It indicates you want to learn more about it before you make a decision about participation. If you complete the form, Stephanie will contact you and explain the study to you in more detail. At that point, you can ask the researcher any questions and set up a time to interview. Thank you.

Interest Form

I am interested in communicating with Stephanie Roth to learn more about her study about female physical education teachers. After gaining more knowledge about her study, I will decide if I would like to be interviewed about my own experiences as a female physical education teacher. By providing the following information, I am indicating that I am willing to talk to Stephanie Roth about participating in an interview for her thesis.

_____

Signature Print Name

_____ _____

Phone # E-mail address

Appendix C
Informed Consent

Informed Consent

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville supports the practice and protection of human subjects participating in research. The information that follows is given so that you are aware of the nature of the study and can then decide if you wish to participate in this study. If you decide to participate in the present study, you are free to withdraw at any point during the course of the study without penalty.

This study is being conducted in order to address how heteronormativity affects the way female physical education instructors in K-12 teaching situations perform their identities. Your involvement will include the completion of one semi-structured interview. The anticipated interview time length will be one hour. With your participation in this study, it is hoped the information acquired can be used to help others interested in physical education to better understand not only this distinct population, but also facilitate the psychological aspects of understanding the experiences of female physical educators.

We foresee no major risks associated with your participation. However, should you feel any emotional discomfort during the interview due to the discussion of your identity, more specifically sexual identity, you will have a formal opportunity at the end of the interview to express any concerns or questions you might have regarding any process that occurred before, during or after your participation in this study. There are also counseling services available to students at most universities should you feel it necessary. The University of Tennessee has a policy that although there are no major risks associated with involvement in this study, compensation will not automatically be provided for physical injury or psychological distress.

To ensure that your rights as a participant are maintained, the principal investigator will keep all records and data collected in a secure and confidential space located at the University of Tennessee. Any data collected over the course of your participation will be viewed by the principal investigator, her faculty advisor, and a research group that will assist in analyzing the data. Upon completion of the analysis, the data w ill be locked in a file at HPER RM # 366 for three years. The audio recordings will be deleted upon transcription to a word processing document. No quotes will be used that would identify you as a participant of this study in any way, including in formal write-ups or presentations; all results will be used to discuss the general experience of female physical educators at the K-12 levels.

Your participation is solicited, but strictly voluntary, and you can withdrawal at any time with no penalty. You will have a formal opportunity to express any questions or concerns following the completion of the interview. However, please feel free to contact the principal investigator or faculty advisor if there are any questions or concerns during any stage of your participation. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and those associated with the present study thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Megan Roth
Principal Investigator
(865) 974-9973
sroth3@utk.edu

Leslee A. Fisher, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor
(865) 974-9973
lfisher2@utk.edu

Participant's Name (Please Print) _____

Participant's Signature:_____ Date: ___/___/____

Appendix D
Researcher Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement

As an individual involved with this thesis, I understand the interview transcriptions that I will help analyze may contain information of a sensitive nature. I also understand the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the information given in the interviews.

With this in mind, I agree not to discuss these interviews outside of the context of working with the principle investigator. In addition, I agree I will make no attempts to identify the research co-participants. If at any point during my involvement in the research group I feel I can identify any of the research co-participants whose interviews are being analyzed I will excuse myself from the research group.

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____

Name (printed)

VITA

Stephanie Megan Roth was born in Houston, TX on October 19th, 1981 to Marcia Phillips and Daniel Roth. She attended Farmington High School in Farmington, NM until she graduated in 1999.

In 2004, Stephanie earned a Bachelor of Science in Education at New Mexico State Univeristy.

Stephanie entered the master's program in the sport studies department at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the Fall of 2004. While there she earned a graduate teaching assistant position in the sport studies department. Her research focused on female physical education teachers and how heteronormativity effects the way they perform their identities within the institution of education- in order to bring voice to an often silenced subject in education and to create social justice in not only sport but also sport psychology. Stephanie received a Master of Science in sport studies with an emphasis in sport psychology.