REIMAGINING ALLYSHIP: COMMODIFICATION RESISTANCE AND LIBERATORY POTENTIALS

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Abstract

In this conceptual article, we explore allyship as the intended result of participation in LGBTQ+ social justice education interventions on college campuses, often called Safe Zone or Safe Space trainings. We contextualize how these trainings align with Boyer's (1990) concepts of teaching and learning in student affairs practice. We argue how the token of completion (sticker or other symbol) distracts from a transformative educational experience to a commodification of allyship. We offer Love's (2018) liberatory consciousness as a more expansive conceptualization of allyship to sustain efforts for individuals to grapple with dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression.

Keywords: allyship, LGBTQ+, liberation, social justice

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Introduction

"You can go through workshops and receive an allyship badge... Where the struggle is commodity, allyship is currency" (Indigenous Action Media, 2014, p. 1)

The question of the value and purpose of diversity and inclusion work in higher education is not new and will likely persist as higher education attempts to reckon with the intransigence of inequity in higher education (Stewart, 2020); efforts to create more inclusive campuses, especially for marginalized populations, require approaches that address entrenched systems of power and oppression (Patton et al., 2019). Social justice educational interventions (SJEIs) in higher education outside of the formal curriculum (i.e., workshops or trainings) are one approach to fostering equity and inclusion. These interventions engage students, staff, and/or faculty to learn content, take action steps, and avail themselves of campus resources. Yet, the opening epigraph disrupts the commonplace function of SJEIs, as a reminder that attendance, in and of itself, is insufficient. Spencer and Patterson (2017) argued that, among other things, a belief that attendance at a university's LGBTQ+ SJEI "becomes an identity that one can confidently claim after acquiring an ally sticker, rather than a (conditional) label one earns by consistently acting in solidarity with a marginalized group" (p. 307). The sticker becomes a shield from criticism for oppressive behaviors, practices, and interactions (Spencer & Patterson, 2017). Further, attendance as the arbiter of allyship has the outcome of invalidating and commodifying allyship (brown, 2017).

Historically, marginalized student populations demanded that higher education institutions demonstrate an investment in making campuses more inclusive (Ferguson, 2017; Patton et al., 2019). Institutions responded by creating SJEIs, which were often placating gestures meant to assuage the persistence of oppression embedded in the fabric of higher education (Ferguson, 2017; Patton, 2010; Patton et al., 2019). Student affairs professionals with their institutional locations are often the designers and facilitators of these trainings as their institutional locations encourage engagement in uncomfortable and necessary dialogues (Watt, 2007). SJEIs provide content about social identities and related topics such as microaggressions and implicit bias in the hopes of transforming campus environments. Interestingly, there is a paucity of research on SJEIs in higher education (Patton et al., 2019), even though, for example, LGBTQ+ ally trainings became popular in the 1990s and persist today (Draughn et al., 2002; Poynter & Tubbs, 2008; Woodford et al., 2014). In this article, we critically examine allyship as a commonly used outcome of SJEIs, using LGBTQ+ content as our focus. As an educational outcome, allyship serves as an ideal example of the application aspect of Boyer's (1990) model for scholarship.

For LGBTQ+ SJEIs, an aspirational outcome is to cultivate committed allies. After attending a training that involves learning content knowledge and appropriate action steps, attendees receive some type of ephemera (e.g., sticker) to signal completion. The aspiration of providing a transformational educational experience (Mezirow, 1991) becomes a transactional dynamic that potentially dilutes the original purpose because of participant fixation on receiving the symbol of completion (Spencer & Patterson, 2017). If these trainings fail to intentionally engage in intra- or interpersonal transformational change or potentially enhance critical thinking (Lange, 2019), then education becomes transactional with allyship signified as a commodity. More troubling is how this transactional approach obfuscates any intentional and critical analyses that challenge the maintenance of power inequities and perpetuations of oppression (Patton et al., 2019). Put simply, the token of completion becomes a distraction from the purpose of the diversity education interventions to interrupt the status quo and illuminate ways individuals,

policies, and practices reinforce oppressive structures at the institution. We assert that student affairs as a field must embrace a more expansive conceptualization of allyship through a liberatory consciousness approach, which emphasizes the continuous processes of awareness, analysis, action, and accountability (Love, 2018). A liberatory consciousness approach to trainings reframes allyship as a process focused on the journey, not the destination (Love, 2018); this involves moving away from education as a transaction and towards a transformation (hooks, 1994; Mezirow, 1991). We need not replace the persistent and familiar language of allyship, only to reconceptualize our understanding of it. A liberatory consciousness framework means asking an unresolved question in a new way: how can student affairs professionals engage in transformational education practices that address systemic and institutional roots of oppression by resisting transactional learning?

To tackle the task of our conceptual reimagining, we start with our positionalities as collaborators in this project. We then contextualize how SJEIs align with Boyer's (1990) concepts of teaching and learning within student affairs. We ground our analysis of allyship in a brief literature review of ally scholarship with a focus on LGBTQ+ allyship efforts. Next, we introduce liberatory consciousness as a framework to reimagine these SJEIs. Finally, we demonstrate how liberatory consciousness as a conceptual framework opens the possibilities for what sustainable and transformative SJEIs could be in higher education.

Reflexivity: What it means to be in a collaborative partnership

We come to this project as two white trans and queer scholars who share a history of full-time professional work in LGBTQ+ student services in higher education. Chase was a director of an LGBT Resource Center for 5 years, and is currently an assistant professor in a Higher Education program at a research university. Roman worked as an assistant director of an LGBT Resource Center for 4 years and at the time of writing, became a full-time doctoral student in a higher education program. We came to know each other through a relatively small, but robust, transkinship network in higher education and connected over conversations about LGBTQ+ SJEIs. Our collaboration on this project stemmed from our similar professional experiences, research interests, and conceptual framework alignment (social justice). We both approached our work in LGBTQ+ student services through a lens of teaching and learning that centers social justice.

We root our collaborative efforts to explore the liberatory potentials of LGBTQ+ allyship trainings in a space of hopefulness through what we witnessed and experienced as institutional failures to commit to LGBTQ+ equity in higher education fully. As researchers and practitioners, we are intimately familiar with the paradox that LGBTQ+ SJEIs, like other SJEIs, "may insidiously operate to maintain existing systems of power and oppression" (Patton et al., 2019, p. 192). We also recognize that such an exploration of the role and purpose of LGBTQ+ allyship trainings must include an awareness of institutional demands faced by staff, students, and faculty who devote their time and energy to LGBTQ+ inclusion efforts. Our discussion of the history of LGBTQ+ SJEIs and proposal of a critical framework for their imperative transformation recognizes the deep history of LGBTQ+ allyship efforts, the pressures those leading this work face, and the overall necessity of this work.

Teaching & Learning for Allyship

Student affairs practice requires various forms of advocacy. Advocacy is a type of application of knowledge that requires attention to both learning and teaching. Boyer's (1990) scholarship of application, defined as a dynamic relationship with discovery and interaction between theory and practice, provides an opportunity to grapple with advocacy as connected to teaching and learning. We situate our manuscript with co-curricular ap-

plication to inquire how student affairs LGBTQ+ SJEIs deploy allyship as a framework to build inclusive campuses. Research about campus climate and culture often offers best practices to increase diversity education (e.g., Pryor, 2015). Yet, education is not one size fits all, and institutional specificity is an important consideration. Student affairs must address how SJEIs foster allyship and, ultimately, advocacy.

Leaning on Boyer's (1990) model of scholarship with a focus on the realm of application encourages an exploration of SJEIs and their connection to student affairs practices and what role these interventions play in a current collegiate context. As a form of scholarly service, framing LGBTQ+ SJEIs through allyship responds to Boyer's (1990) question: "how can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems" (p. 21). LGBTQ+ SJEIs invite students, staff, and faculty into a conversation and function as a campus-based effort to create and sustain a more culturally engaging campus environment (Museus, 2014), at least along the axes of (some) genders and sexualities. These SJEIs utilize a social justice education pedagogy that is in relationship with and reflective of the broader world (Adams, 2016). Adams (2016) argued for a specific kind of pedagogy for social justice education, one that could handle "the constellation of subjective knowledge, challenging information, charged emotions, multiple perspectives, differing social identities, and the coordination of concrete experiences with abstract frameworks" (p. 29). A social justice pedagogical approach is another way of addressing Boyer's (1990) question because issues of power, privilege, and oppression exist inside and outside higher education institutions with deleterious effects. SJEIs, as an educational practice, surface systems that produce oppression that dominant (hegemony) discourses hide.

Teaching and learning are key parts of student affairs practice (Baxter Magolda, 2000). Through curricular and co-curricular approaches, the goal is to provide an "inclusive and effective learning environment in which opportunities for complex cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development exists for all students" (Baxter Magolda, 2000, p. 94). The alignment of a social justice education pedagogy for individual development of students, and all campus constituents, aligns with student affairs practice because it must attend to the reactions of participants when grappling with challenging perspectives, remain supportive, and acknowledge the emotional and cognitive aspects of learning (Adams, 2016). LGBTQ+ SJEIs are a form of social justice education. They deal with everyday life experiences and connect those experiences to theoretical and conceptual ideas to deepen critical thinking and exploration of our experiences (Adams, 2016). Integral in these notions of teaching and learning is the persistence of the work; the curricular or co-curricular experience is not a simple exchange of content bound by time, as it requires continuous meaning making of knowledge in various contexts to support cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development. In this way, LGBTQ+ SJEIs should serve as an entry point for participants, not a stopping point or a destination.

LGBTQ+ SJEIs endeavor to engage participants in transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991), yet the neoliberal environment frames knowledge acquisition as transactional. Neoliberalism seeks to produce indifferent subjects focused on individualism (Giroux, 2014). Transformative learning resists neoliberalism's structure of individualism-based education demanding acquiescence by utilizing pedagogies that "unsettle common sense, [and] make power accountable" (Giourx, 2014, p. 6). The design of LGBTQ+ SJEIs may seem far removed from Freire's (1996) banking model of education because of the interactive dynamics of the learning process (reflection, activities, small and large group discussions). But it is the acquisition of the ally title with institutional recognition that should prompt reconsideration. Indeed, knowledge acquisition (e.g., terminology) and skill development (e.g., how to respectfully ask someone

their pronouns) are components that indicate a transformation. However, if the SJEI lacks the opportunity for critical thinking about assumptions, the communal dynamic of learning, and self-reflection, then it removes the necessary components of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991). Embedded in the exchange is how the token given as the result of attending an LGBTQ+ SJEI signals ally identity. However, these literal and figurative signs are suspect to LGBTQ+ populations since they know not all who display them are ready to affirm, let alone advocate for, all LGBTQ+ identities (DeVita & Anders, 2018). The intention is laudable, but the impact is problematic because it perpetuates the idea of allyship as a goal instead of a process and exemplifies transactional instead of transformational education. Ally as an identity removes it from actions, as in allying with people and communities to achieve change (DeVita & Anders, 2018).

Allyship Literature Review

Student affairs professionals have a long history of engagement in LGBTQ+ ally advocacy, and the prevalence of LGBTQ+ allyship trainings as a practice in higher education denotes a rich history of creation and development on college campuses (Evans, 2002; Washington & Evans, 1991). There remains a paucity of exploration on the history of these trainings, possibly because they often manifest in response to public examples of queer and/or transphobia at a specific institution (e.g., Alvarez & Schneider, 2008). The hallmark of their early existence was "the public identification of allies by placing a 'safe' symbol, usually incorporating a pink triangle or rainbow or the word 'ally' or a combination of all three, on office doors or within living spaces" (Poynter & Tubbs, 2008, p. 123). The presumption remains that the symbols of the program are indicative of a campus climate welcoming for LGBTQ+ people (Evans, 2002). Early iterations of artifact distribution did not require attendance at an educational session, only a sticker accompanied by a brochure that delineated the implications of what it means to post it (Evans, 2002). The stickers defined a person or spaces as 'safe' based on self-identification as an LGBTQ+ ally, and eventually as a response to participation in some form of educational intervention completion.

LGBTQ+ SJEIs are a popular form of student and professional development (Draughn et al., 2002; Poynter & Tubbs, 2008; Woodford et al., 2014). The names of these trainings vary (e.g., Safe Space, Safe Zone, Allies), and the purview of logistics and content vary based on campus (e.g., LGBTQ+ Resource Centers, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Offices). Facilitation might be the responsibility of staff within a specific office or volunteers committed to advancing LGBTQ+ equity on their campus (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008; Ballard et al., 2008; Poynter & Tubbs, 2008). Despite these variations across institutions, LGBTQ+ SJEIs often have the same purpose: to counter forms of queerphobia and transphobia to build a more welcoming and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ members of the campus community.

The infusion of these broad goals in the training ostensibly organizes the training curriculum. Woodford et al. (2014), in the most contemporary research on variations of what they termed as LGBT Ally Trainings, noted curricular themes of review of terminology, language, concepts, manifestations of discrimination, support methods, and methods of advocacy. Many trainings conclude with an activity where participants sign a contract or values statement as a continued commitment to supporting LGBTQ+ individuals on campus and/or to receive a sign or symbol to signal their completion of the training.

Who is an Ally?

The prevalence of LGBTQ+ SJEIs in higher education indicates that this approach leans on the conceptual framing of ally and allyship (Hardiman & Jackson, 1982; Washington & Evans, 1991). Empirical higher education research focused on social justice allies (Broido, 2000; Broido & Reason,

2005; Edwards, 2006) or allies to other populations such as undocumented students (e.g., Chen & Rhoads, 2016). Outside of the field of higher education, such as within human resources scholarship, research explored how these trainings impact participant ally identity (Jones & Brewster, 2017). The concept that allies exist on college campuses and simply need training to motivate them towards action is an accepted perspective that limits perceptions of ally and allyship. Washington and Evans (1991) defined an ally as a person who engages in work to end oppression "as an advocate with and for, an oppressed population" (p. 195). Dominant group members on campus, specifically heterosexual and/or cisgender students, staff, and faculty, become the intended audience of LGBTQ+ allyship trainings, which operate from the notion that dominant group members are primarily responsible for creating a more inclusive LGBTQ+ campus community (Jones & Brewster, 2017).

One of the more prominent explorations of the ally concept on college campuses is Broido's (2000) developmental model of social justice allies. Broido's definition of a social justice ally leaned heavily on the work of Hardiman and Jackson (1982) and Washington and Evans (1991), focusing allyship as the work of "members of dominant social groups (e.g., men, Whites, heterosexuals) who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on their social-group membership" (Broido, 2000, p. 3). Broido (2000) sought to understand the developmental process of students who identify as social justice allies, revealing how participants described a demonstrated commitment to allyship behaviors and action. Their development as allies "was predominantly a learning process: a combination of acquisition of new information, engagement in meaning-making, and growth of self-knowledge" (Broido, 2000, p. 13). Broido's work utilized ally as both an identity and a description of action (behaviors). To be an ally centers a privileged identity position and their responsibility to marginalized communities. To position ally as the dominant group flattens out the nuances of even the LGBTQ+ moniker and assumes implicit relationships between and across LGBTQ+ identities.

Limitations of Ally Conceptualizations

The review of LGBTQ+ SJEIs illuminates how heterosexual and/or cisgender populations are the intended audience and perpetuate the idea that they are the proper subject of the word ally. This approach makes two assumptions about identity and experience. First, it assumes an affinity, familiarity, and equal depth of knowledge across LGBTQ+ populations. This assumption ignores how LGBTQ+ individuals can contribute to intra-group oppression through their own lack of awareness or, in some cases, personal malice. Additionally, ally in this framework completely disregards how cisgender individuals may not be heterosexual, and heterosexuals may not be cisgender. In this case, the LGBTQ+ moniker perpetuates the false history that queer and trans communities are a monolith (Lange et al., 2019) instead of giving appropriate attention to the plurality of communities.

Second, the definition gives a singular view of ally identity, failing to appreciate how systems of oppression intersect and overlap to amplify marginalization (Crenshaw, 1989). This approach at best assumes there is an affinity between and across people of various marginalized identities (e.g., assumes heterosexual People of Color have a vested interest in unpacking the intersections of racism and heterosexism). However, it also requires the content and curriculum of any SJEI to recognize and grapple with race and LGBTQ+ content, to reveal how norms about gender and sexuality center whiteness in history, language, and descriptions. This assumption creates a qualification for who can ally, while it also conflates the needs and experiences of people of white, able-bodied, class-resourced, and other privileged identities with all people of marginalized genders and sexualities.

The result is that despite efforts to engage in action through allyship (Broido, 2000; Broido & Reason, 2005), LGBTQ+ SJEIs often presuppose an understanding of ally as a stagnant, fixed identity. This construction does not unpack what it means to ally with as actions and behaviors (DeVita & Anders, 2018; Pryor, 2020). Nor does ally as an identity contribute to the dismantling of "the organizational and institutional manifestations of power hierarchies and their effects on individuals and groups" (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. ix). Instead, ally and allyship isolate marginalized identities into discrete categories or populations, obfuscating how intersectionality functions in the background like a computer operating system. It also fails to account for the global context of identity, the fluidity of identity, and the multifacetedness of one's experience of privilege and oppression (Routenberg, 2013). A reasonable suggestion might be to change ally language usage, but we believe it is too ubiquitous to create that change. Instead, the definition of ally within LGBTQ+ SJEIs must incorporate a more nuanced understanding of allyship behavior, identification and action, and solidarity (Charles, 2016; Indigenous Action Media, 2014).

In addition to the limiting ways these trainings conceptualize who allies are and how they advance work on campus, LGBTQ+ SJEIs also potentially perpetuate outdated and normative understandings of who LGBTQ+ people are and the dynamics necessary for them to thrive. Calls from researchers and practitioners ask for LGBTQ+ SJEIs to more consistently reflect the evolving change and nature of terms and language related to gender and sexuality (Jourian, 2015; Lange, 2019; Nicolazzo et al., 2018). These efforts should not rely on understanding gender and sexuality as distinctly separate and stable categories, a construction that perpetuates a Western lens of LGBTQ+ identity (Lange, 2019; Lugones, 2008). LGBTQ+ SJEIs should also consider how to disrupt their tendency to embed whiteness in their curriculum and center the experiences of white lesbian, gay, bisexual, and to a lesser extent, transgender individuals in higher education (Fox, 2007; Lange et al., 2019). An intersectional approach to LGBTQ+ SJEI curricula potentially de-centers certain dominant raced and classed formations of LGBTQ+ identities and experiences.

LGBTQ+ SJEIs must root their construction within a specific campus environment (Nicolazzo et al., 2018). These SJEIs can often fail to further LGBTQ+ equity by overemphasizing the role of acceptance and not incorporating an oppression-based analysis of allyship (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008; Patton et al., 2019; Sue, 1991). If SJEIs focus on helping the individual learn content knowledge, then they may fail to account for consequent structural change and limit their potential to advance change within an institution. LGBTQ+ SJEIs must consider how their content and curriculum challenges participants to envision change at institutional and societal levels (Patton et al., 2019). In an effort to offer a way forward for more responsive LGBTQ+ SJEIs, we describe a critical framework for allyship that honors its liberatory potentialities.

Resisting Transactional Education: Applying a Critical Framework to Allyship

Our inspiration for a critical examination of allyship came from Ahmed's (2012) work on a tick box approach to diversity work and workers in higher education. Ahmed (2012) defined a tick box approach to diversity as "when institutions can 'show' that they are following procedures but are really not 'behind' them" (p. 114). For LGBTQ+ SJEIs, displays of allyship through an email signature, stickers, placard, or some other token intends to signal a type of personal investment in LGBTQ+ inclusion, a speech act. At the same time, these tokens of allyship act as a non-performative (Ahmed, 2012). The public display of the token intends to demonstrate LGBTQ+ allyship through naming the individual as an ally, but "to name is to not bring into effect" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 117). Importantly, it is not about the intention of the indi-

vidual but that the tokens "come to stand in for the effects" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 117).

Tokens as nonperformatives appear to demonstrate an institution's commitment to equality or diversity but only operate on a surface level as a type of "image management" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 117) and show appropriate imagery of inclusion. LGBTQ+ SJEIs, as the dispensers of the nonperformative token, become a token themselves to portray active efforts of institutional change. Administrators responsible for facilitating LGBTQ+ SJEIs may experience institutional pressure to make it visible and account for attendance at each training; this reflects a documentation of participation versus demonstration of participant learning. Ahmed (2012) described how documentation serves as a stand-in for actual significant action towards institutional change and instead reflects a politics of appeasement allowing institutional agents to believe they solved the issue of LGBTQ+ oppression. Digging deeper into individual, institutional, and systemic efforts of allyship illuminate what kind of commitment these tokens mean for allyship in action and how educators can balance the documentation demands of institutions with a substance approach to allyship.

Alternative Approach to Allyship: Liberatory Consciousness

Liberatory consciousness (Love, 2018) is not a panacea to fix an institution's tick-box approach to diversity because complex problems require contextual, complex, and historical recognition approaches. However, as a framework for LGBTQ+ SJEIs, liberatory consciousness offers transformational curricular capabilities through actions. Additionally, a liberatory consciousness framework encourages individuals to engage in diversity and social justice work at an institution of higher education collectively to influence campus through their actions. As Love (2018) reminded us, "systems do not perpetuate themselves: they are perpetuated by the actions of people who act automatically on the basis of their socialization" (pp. 614-615). A liberatory consciousness framework offers individuals that the work is ongoing, dynamic, and requires continual practice (Love, 2018).

We use Love's (2018) liberatory consciousness to reconceptualize allyship as a capacity-building approach to transformational and sustainable change through her four elements: awareness, analysis, action, and allyship/accountability. Love's liberatory consciousness is non-linear; however, for clarity, we initially present them as such and then discuss their non-linearity. A liberatory consciousness development begins with a disposition towards a commitment "to changing systems and institutions characterized by oppression to create greater equity and social justice" (Love, 2018, p. 651). In many ways, this initial desire precedes any of the components because the desire must exist to engage in a critical approach of praxis (Freire, 1970).

The first element of enacting a liberatory consciousness is awareness or "developing the capacity to notice, to give our attention to our daily lives, our language, our behaviors, and even our thoughts" (Love, 2018, p. 612). Noticing requires constant engagement with oneself and the world around us and resisting to shrug in response to pernicious thoughts, words, and actions (Love, 2018). For instance, one element often explored in LGBTQ+ allyship training is the role and use of inclusive language, specifically pronouns. Awareness involves a conscious acknowledgment of all the ways we use gendered language verbally and internally in our day-to-day activities with people known and unknown. Gendered language within an English-speaking context is frequent, and in some cases harmful, because gendered ways of referring to ourselves and others are a part of our socialization process (Harro, 2013). Intentional awareness of the contexts and frequencies by which a person uses gendered language opens the door to understanding the pervasiveness of pronouns through analysis.

Analysis is an element that requires meaning

making on the part of the individual to take the information or situation one notices and "theorize about it" (Love, 2018, p. 612). Analysis requires an individual to question the what, the why, and the how in response to a situation or interaction. There is always a range of possible activities in response to a given situation, and analysis requires thoughtful and critical explorations of the situation and possible responses. To continue with the initial example, analysis helps deepen considerations of contexts and frequencies with which a person uses pronouns and gendered language. What are the bodies upon which we ascribe gendered language, and do they include a raced and/or classed dynamic? How do we understand the impact of gendered language and misgendering individuals as ingrained within our linguistic practice? Analysis also allows us to critically examine the processes by which our institutions seek to employ inclusive language. How do these efforts manifest within campus communities and from what purpose (e.g., image management, institutional transformation, etc.)? Who leads these efforts and how do these efforts center the needs and experiences of those most marginalized within LGBTQ+ communities? Is there an expectation that LGBTQ+ people engage in this labor of facilitating SJEIs, an expectation that assumes a salience and outness of their LGBTQ+ identity(ies)? Analysis brings forth these critical questions as part of a liberatory consciousness and encourages participants to differentiate action from transaction, engagement from nonperformatives.

From an individual and interpersonal standpoint, analysis also encourages thinking about the nuances of pronouns in different situations. Analysis supports questioning whether practices of pronoun introductions are a function of whiteness or if pronoun introductions are a 'best practice' to create gender inclusion. Analysis means questioning the purpose of introducing pronouns and the meaning of such an introductory activity (Jaekel & Catalano, 2019; Nicolazzo et al., 2018). Delivering the topic of inclusive language and pronouns this way helps participants resist fixating on the way to create inclusion through the pursuit of a thoughtful and critical exploration. Awareness and analysis help move acts of misgendering—when a person refers to someone by the incorrect pronoun(s)—from a recognition of an event(s) to why the person misgendered another. The roots of the error are within the individual who misgendered the person and their own socialization. Analysis exposes historical roots of gendered language, and that learning is an ongoing process, complete with numerous mistakes and conscious unlearning practices.

Analysis and awareness provide opportunities to engage in action, and Love's (2018) liberatory consciousness proposes that action is not merely a destination. Action often appears as an LGBTQ+ allyship checklist, echoing Ahmed's (2012) tick box approach, and as a set of steps to achieve allyship status or respond to situations. Liberatory consciousness frames action as occurring simultaneously alongside awareness and analysis through a variety of contexts, relationships, and situations (Love, 2018). Mapping this notion of action onto the gendered language and pronouns component of an LGBTQ+ SJEI means to denote ongoing processes where individuals seek to address misgendering, untangle gendered language in their own life, and engage in learning and conversation with others about the nuances of this topic. Additionally, action in conjunction with awareness and analysis requires the recognition that there is no singular way to support LGBTQ+ people and communities.

We all must take actions in our efforts towards liberation because collective action "provides the best possibility of gaining liberation for any of us" (Love, 2018, p. 613). We are all complex individuals with multiple identities and positionalities, so there is no singular way to be a liberation worker, which makes sense when we consider the final element of accountability. Accountability requires perspective sharing and collaboration. By working across and within identity groups, the possibilities

of change and progress increase (Love, 2018). Accountability is a way to remind all people of their roles to play within liberatory projects because all groups benefit from liberation. The persistence of oppression means ally cannot be a position or perspective taken by only those in the dominant or privileged group. "If people in the dominant group had access to and were able to hold a perspective that allowed them to change systems and patterns of domination, they would have done so already" (Love, 2018, p. 614). Accountability is an element that inspires collaboration instead of placing the onus on any specific group or individual. Importantly, accountability moves allyship tokens away from nonperformatives and towards a recognition of responsibility.

What it means to resist the transactional approach to allyship

Love's (2018) conceptualization of allyship is a part of a larger liberatory process for engagement that supports a critical approach to praxis. A liberatory consciousness approach requires a continuous and intentionally incomplete approach to LGBTQ+ SJEIs, which mitigates the possibility of a transactional dynamic. By centering Love's (2018) conceptualization of allyship, we can begin to imagine the ways to infuse these elements within the content of LGBTQ+ SJEIs. A liberatory consciousness allows for applying allyship beyond a singular identity approach and resisting oversimplifying diversity education interventions as a best practice (Nicolazzo et al., 2018). A few possibilities emerge for how those responsible for LGBTQ+ SJEIs can resist the commodification of allyship.

The first possibility is to disrupt the notion that any training that occurs once is sufficient. LGBTQ+ SJEIs must frame curriculum as a continuous process of critical self-awareness exploration (Wagner & Catalano, 2021) done alongside LGBTQ+ communities. De Vita and Anders (2018) noted the limitations of one-off trainings as lacking the ability to address the diversity within and across LGBTQ+ communities, reveal institutional and systemic oppression, and offer experience towards various types of advocacy work. Their research is instructive because they focused on LGBTQ+ people's perceptions of what it means to be an ally, and an overall finding was the perception that "educational trainings that only produced a credential were insufficient" (De Vita & Anders, 2018, p. 77). LGBTQ+ SJEIs must reconsider how and why they deploy a credential for completion and encourage participants to examine their impetus for needing proof of their allyship (De Vita & Anders, 2018). They must include complex discussion about the purpose of tokens as an act of visibility, how a token symbolizes a sense of goodness, and investigate the limitations of visibility. How is the token of completion an act of image management or nonperformative and how might that change? For instance, exploring and centering accountability shifts liberation from solely intrapersonal development to collective activity, and that could apply to tokens functioning to encourage accountability (instead of affirmation of accomplishment). LGBTQ+ SJEIs should include exposing tensions of working towards allyship and acknowledging critiques of ally identity and actions.

Awareness, analysis, action, and accountability are components relevant in design, facilitation, and participation, and this is the second benefit of utilizing a liberatory consciousness framework. Liberatory consciousness encourages designers and facilitators to engage in their own work of self-awareness (Love, 2018) and self-actualization (hooks, 1994). Facilitators must also consider their own positionality, experiences, and knowledge to engage in transformative education (Mezirow, 1991). Education as transformation for emancipatory potentialities must provide space for learners to bring their whole selves. Designers and facilitators must provide a learning environment that inspires critical self-awareness and collaborative imagining.

Infusing a liberatory consciousness lens into the content of the training addresses the compo-

nents of awareness, analysis, action, and accountability to address multiple forms of marginalization. For example, curricula should consider how gender norms used to instigate conversations about trans identities and stereotypes about sexuality also center white and/or able-bodied norms about bodies, beauty, and access. In this way, attention to norms surfaces awareness and analysis, as well as accountability to multiple marginalized social identities; SJEIs should actively center accountability and action (ally with) and frame allyship as intrapersonal growth, interpersonal connections, and collectivist actions. A liberatory consciousness enhances curricular opportunities to explore allyship beyond LGBTQ+ identities and communities, resisting focus on dominant identities within LGBTQ+ communities. The benefit of such an approach allows for a more expansive consideration of allyship and broadens accountability across marginalized groups.

For designers of LGBTQ+ SJEIs, it is necessary to intentionally consider context and community input, such as how content reflects the specificity of campus, local, and state environments. A liberatory consciousness approach would mean soliciting contributions from students, staff, and faculty to increase awareness, analysis, accountability, and potentials for action needed for campus communities. Additionally, institutional support of an LGBTQ+ SJEIs must include well-resourced opportunities for continuous content and professional development for designers and facilitators. Those who seek offering an LGBTQ+ SJEI for their department should begin with questioning how it aligns with the department's professional practice and competence goals. For instance, how does the LGBTQ+ SJEI apply to departmental roles, build on previous knowledge, and connect LGBTQ+ content across various aspects of professional expectations?

Finally, a liberatory consciousness framework requires an approach to facilitation that requires content and process considerations (teaching and learning). A benefit of using a liberatory consciousness is how it resists conveying LGBTQ+ communities as a monolithic group, requiring individuals to rethink previous knowledge and reanalyze it (e.g., questioning the benefits and challenges of the LGBTQ+ moniker). Critical examinations of commonplace assumptions require attention to the process of teaching and learning. A liberatory consciousness framework also requires SJEIs to resist content from an ahistorical lens, thus reminding participants that social movements about race and queerness have long legacies of collaboration (Ferguson, 2017). For instance, using a historical approach reveals hegemonic norms (e.g., settler colonialism, whiteness, ableism) to allow for a deeper analysis. Most importantly, an LGBTQ+ SJEI framed through a liberatory consciousness lens recognizes that allyship is the responsibility of everyone (Love, 2018), as layers of power and privilege exist even within marginalized groups and communities (e.g., colorism). Queer and trans people are also responsible for allyship within our own communities and across communities. To conceive of and frame allyship within an LGBTQ+ SJEI as only the responsibility of cisgender and heterosexual people is to ignore intragroup harm perpetuated within the LGBTQ+ communities. To frame allyship as the action of dominant groups (heterosexual and cisgender) takes agency away from LGBTQ+ communities by framing them as requiring rescuing. Instead, a liberatory consciousness frames action as everyone's responsibility, awareness and analysis as everyone's work, and keeps us all accountable to each other.

The necessity of LGBTQ+ SJEIs specifically and SJEIs broadly, are opportunities for engagement in higher education. We offer a liberatory consciousness framework as a possibility to develop SJEIs into transformative learning experiences, instead of a hollow gesture towards inclusivity. The teaching (design and facilitation) frames education as an ongoing process with the LGBTQ+ SJEIs as an invitation to ongoing connections. Learning recognizes attendance as an entry point to broader social justice considerations within

their roles and identities. With these possibilities in mind, a liberatory consciousness provides a framework to engage in education as active, not transactional, and meaningful beyond the recognition of participation.

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