

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Anthony I. Terndrup for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling presented on September 24, 1998. Title: Factors that Influence Career Choice and Development for Gay Male School Teachers: A Qualitative Investigation.

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Abstract approved: \_\_\_\_\_

  
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This study investigated factors that influence career choice and development for gay male school teachers. Ten gay educators participated in the investigation. Data collection methods involved two semi-structured personal interviews and one structured telephone interview for a total of 30 sampling units. Data analysis procedures included reviewing audiotapes, reading transcriptions, browsing documents, coding text units, consulting with mentors and peers, comparing coding categories with previous literature and research, and reflecting on emerging relationships among the data.

Major findings relate to identity development, social and family attitudes, secrecy and disclosure, and career motivation. All of the participants described experiences of (a) forming a vocational identity as a school teacher and a sexual identity as a gay man, and (b)

blending or merging these primary self-concepts through occupational expressions of advocacy and activism, gender role flexibility, or both. The data further indicate that (a) social bias against public education has a negative influence on career maintenance and performance, (b) family respect for school teachers has a positive influence on career choice, and (c) special case strategies help gay men circumvent the negative influence of social bias against them to enter the teaching profession.

Most of the participating teachers revealed their primary reliance on "implicitly out" identity management strategies (Griffin, 1992) to alleviate fears of discrimination, public accusation, job loss, and impaired credibility. Additional qualitative evidence suggests that the need for gay self-disclosure varies with the potential for vocational self-expression in the teaching profession. In the course of their teaching careers, all of the participants reported either (a) compensating for some developmental lag or deficit experienced during childhood or adolescence, or (b) partially satisfying their developmental need to father children.

Hypothetical associations among these major findings form the trilateral foundation of an emerging theory that more specifically explains factors that influence the career choice and development of gay male school teachers. This three-part framework reflects the interacting influences of identity integration, self-expression, and self-

actualization and reciprocal effects of and on the teaching profession.  
The theory emerging from this investigation has practical applications  
for counselor and teacher education, as well as for career counseling.

Factors that Influence Career Choice and Development for Gay Male  
School Teachers: A Qualitative Investigation

by

Anthony I. Terndrup

A DISSERTATION

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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

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Anthony I. Terndrup, Author

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation manuscript is dedicated to my special loved ones,  
in honor of the living and in memory of the dead.

### *In Honor*

Lena Cappello, grandmother and godmother

Helen and Don Terndrup, parents

Norma Cappello, educator, counselor and aunt

Tom Eversole, educator, counselor and spouse

### *In Memory*

Faust Cappello, grandfather and godfather (1903-1986)

Lee Bennett, spouse (1960-1992)

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CAREER CHOICE AND DEVELOPMENT  
FOR GAY MALE SCHOOL TEACHERS:  
A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This first chapter introduces the problem and significance of the study, frames it as a larger theoretical problem, proposes an initial research question, and forecasts the literature to be reviewed in the second chapter (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Additionally, the personal experience and theoretical orientation of the researcher is disclosed and the potential influence of these variables on the investigation is discussed.

Foreword

The available research suggests that the incidence of homosexuality in the United States currently ranges from 4% to 17% (Gonsiorek, Sell, & Weinrich, 1995; Gonsiorek & Weinrich, 1991) and that bisexuality is rather common (Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994). Regardless of the actual size of the heterosexual majority, gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans share similar experiences with other U.S. minority groups. These common conditions include (a) being subordinate segments of a larger society; (b) exhibiting features that

are devalued by the dominant segments of society; (c) being bound together as a community because of these characteristics; and (d) receiving differential treatment because of these traits (Herek, 1991). In order to reinforce this perspective, as well as to avoid repetition, the term sexual minority is used interchangeably with gay, lesbian, and bisexual throughout this dissertation. The term homosexual is used sparingly, although specifically in reference to individuals and groups prior to onset of the gay liberation movement during the late 1960s.

The oppression of sexual minority groups is maintained by homophobia and heterosexism. Homophobia is described both as an irrational fear of homosexuality (Bhugra, 1987) and as an intolerance of any sexual differences from an established norm (Gramick, 1983). According to Neisen (1990), however, the concept has become so expanded and extended over time that much of its meaning has been lost. For example, homophobia seldom refers to a phobic or fearful response, as the term itself implies. Often, it is used to indicate anti-homosexual prejudice (Haaga, 1991) and to characterize a wide range of negative emotions, attitudes, and behaviors toward gays and lesbians. In addition to other experts (Morin, 1977; Morin & Garfinkle; 1978), Neisen (1990) discussed the need to redefine homophobia as heterosexism in order to incorporate the pervasive ramifications of the social environment which places a superior value on heterosexuality.

Accordingly, heterosexism has been defined as "a world-view, a value-system that prizes heterosexuality, assumes it as the only appropriate manifestation of love and sexuality, and devalues homosexuality and all that is not heterosexual" (Herek, 1986, p. 925). This concept has been described similarly as the institutional promotion of heterosexual life and the concurrent subordination of gay, lesbian, and bisexual experience. Thus considered, the term promotes an understanding of the associations between and among various forms of oppression experienced by members of other minority groups. Like racism and sexism, for example, heterosexism is based on unfounded prejudices (Neisen, 1990). Additionally, all three types of oppression separate the powerful and the powerless into mutually exclusive categories: White over color, men over women, and heterosexual over gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Williams, 1987).

### Problem and Significance

Sexual minority school teachers have experienced a prolonged history of heterosexist oppression in the American workplace. Before World War II, many social, cultural and political determinants in the United States merged to uphold the authority of school administrators in the dismissal of homosexual teachers (Harbeck, 1992). For example:

Homosexuality was considered to be innately evil; teachers were required to be role models of exemplary behavior; school administrators had almost unrestricted power in hiring and retention decisions; and the cost of litigation was prohibitive to the individual who might have considered rising above their [sic] own condemnation and that of society to argue his or her right to remain an educator. (pp. 121-122)

During the early 1950s, the oppression of sexual minority Americans, including homosexual teachers, progressed further under McCarthyism: “the political practice of publicizing accusations of subversion and disloyalty with insufficient regard to evidence” and “the use of unfair investigative and accusatory methods in order to suppress opposition” (Webster’s, 1988, p. 735). The McCarthy era was a period of intense persecution for homosexual individuals and groups, as well as for Communist suspects and sympathizers. While Congressional witch-hunts were conducted to investigate homosexual risks along with Communist threats to national security, people attracted to persons of their own sex were stereotyped and stigmatized as “perverts” and “subversives” (Katz, 1985, p. 91). In 1952, homosexuality was classified officially as a mental illness in the American Psychiatric Association’s first edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-I). Considering the contexts of pathology and stigma which then were being used to assess and evaluate sexual minority persons, Lambert (1954) asserted that vocational guidance was “the most constructive therapeutic approach

that could be made in helping homosexual clients improve their social adjustment” (p. 254). Although career counseling/development generally has replaced vocational guidance in the professional literature, the terms are used interchangeably throughout this thesis in order to minimize redundancy.

In sharp contrast and partial response to the oppressive McCarthy era, the 1960s was a period of social, cultural, and political transition and transformation. By the end of the decade, the case law on homosexual teachers clearly recognized changing public opinions and legal perspectives (Harbeck, 1992). For instance:

The California Supreme Court’s decision in Morrison v. State Board of Education [1969] called for an extensive analysis of the individual’s behavior in relation to his or her job responsibilities before employment dismissal was possible. Furthermore, the Court announced that the status of being a homosexual was insufficient grounds for dismissal unless coupled with some related misbehavior. (p. 126)

On June 28, 1969, a generation of legal and political activism culminated in dramatic social and cultural change when a police raid on a gay bar in New York City met strong opposition from homosexual patrons and passers-by. This resistance has come to be called the Stonewall Rebellion and represents the point of departure from which further gay liberation has advanced. Three years into the movement, Blair (1972) echoed Lambert’s (1954) earlier assertion with a claim that “homosexuals in this society are more likely to need an

employment counselor than a psychiatrist” (p. 7). Accordingly, the American Psychiatric Association officially declassified homosexuality as a mental illness in 1973.

By 1973, “Morrison [v. State Board of Education]” was firmly established as one of the strongest statements in favor of an individual’s rights to retain employment despite a wide variety of personal indiscretions” (Harbeck, 1992, p. 126). In 1977, however, the Supreme Court of Washington cited Morrison when it affirmed a trial court’s conclusion that a high school “teacher was guilty of immorality and that, as a known homosexual, his fitness as a teacher was impaired to injury of his high school in which he taught, justifying his discharge” (Gaylord v. Tacoma School District No. 10, 1977).

According to Associate Justice Horowitz:

A teacher’s efficiency is determined by his relationships with his students, their parents, the school administration and fellow teachers. If Gaylord had not been discharged after he became known as a homosexual, the result would be fear, confusion, suspicion, parental concern and pressure on the administration by students, parents, and other teachers. (88 Wash.2d 286. 559 P.2d 1340)

During 1977 and 1978, a conservative backlash against the gay liberation movement’s civil rights campaign further threatened to oppress sexual minority teachers. Anita Bryant’s “Save Our Children” crusade, for example, was very successful in its efforts to repeal gay rights ordinances in Eugene, Oregon; St. Paul, Minnesota; and

Wichita, Kansas as well as in Dade County, Florida. In California, Proposition Six called for the dismissal of any school employee who advocated, solicited, imposed, encouraged, or promoted private or public homosexual activity aimed at, or likely to draw the attention of students, other employees, or both. Former governor Ronald Reagan, however, asserted that the ballot measure would be too expensive to enforce, involve too much government responsibility, and encourage students and parents to blackmail teachers. Although California voters rejected the initiative in November 1978, the Oklahoma legislature unanimously passed an essentially similar proposal during the same year. When the U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit, ruled that the legislation as drafted was unconstitutional in 1984, the State of Oklahoma appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. During Justice Powell's medical leave in January 1985, the other eight judges split their votes and failed to reach a decision. Consequently, the ruling of the appellate court was upheld (Harbeck, 1992).

From the oppressive McCarthy era to the post-Stonewall gay liberation movement, Lambert (1954) and Blair (1972) each called for a social-critical approach to vocational guidance for gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons. From a critical-social perspective, career counseling:

ought to be a force for social change in the cause of freedom and equity and the empowerment of people, regardless of gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, ability, or fiscal wealth, to participate fully in their communities as informed, creative

and interested citizens. (Professional Teacher and Counselor Education Licensure Program, 1994, p. 1)

In other words, sexual minority workers, including prospective gay and lesbian teachers, should be encouraged to develop their employment potential in order to improve the quality of their own lives as well as those of their communities.

Nearly 20 years after Gaylord v. Tacoma School District No. 10 (1977), a recent Gallup poll found a substantial increase in social tolerance of gays and lesbians in American society (Saad, 1996). There is now extensive agreement among Americans, for example, that lesbian women and gay men should have equal rights in the workplace. Accordingly, 84% of Americans now think that gays and lesbians should have equal rights in terms of the job opportunities available to them (Saad, 1996). Some distinctions are made, nonetheless, among a variety of occupations in which lesbian women and gay men should be employed. For instance, one third of Americans still think gays and lesbians should not work as secondary school teachers while 40% think homosexual candidates should neither be hired as elementary school educators nor ordained as clergy. Furthermore, Americans are as divided as ever over the legality of same-sex relations (43% approve, 47% disapprove; Saad, 1996). In his classic text The Nature of Prejudice, Allport (1954) asserted that "no one can be indifferent to the abuse and expectations of others" (p.

143). Thus, it is reasonable to expect that these discriminatory attitudes toward sexual minority workers and their intimate relationships further influence their career choice and development in the fields of elementary and secondary education.

### Theoretical Importance

Although professional counselors have been summoned to facilitate vocational guidance for gay, lesbian, and bisexual clients, few researchers have attempted to study the career choice and development of sexual minority populations. Nonetheless, the body of nonempirical literature repeatedly calls investigators to this task (Chojnacki & Gelberg, 1994; Croteau, 1996; Croteau & Bieschke, 1996; Ellis, 1996). In particular, several contributors have suggested recommendations specifically related to the evolution and expansion of theory.

Following a review of methodological issues that limit empirical investigations, for example, Lonborg and Phillips (1996) outlined an agenda for future research which asked the following question: "How applicable are existing theories of career development to the career-related experiences of sexual minorities?" (p. 191). Fassinger (1995) similarly proposed that "researchers can begin to examine the extent to which existing theories . . . in the vocational literature are

applicable to [gays and] lesbians” (p. 163). Likewise, she subsequently added that:

responsible theorizing and research must begin with a clear and consistent articulation of constructs that accurately describe [gay and] lesbian vocational experience; qualitative methods may be useful in this regard, particularly those that encompass theory building in their analytical methods. (Fassinger, 1996, p. 173)

After exploring the relevance of three theories of vocational psychology in specific regard to sexual minority women, Morgan and Brown (1991) advised that “socially sensitive research in this area is also needed, to explore the strengths and limitations of current theories for explaining [gay and] lesbian career development” (p. 289).

Based on their review of the available literature on career issues facing gay men, Hetherington, Hillerbrand, and Etringer (1989) further concluded that “the predictions of present vocational theories must be specifically tested” for this population (p. 454). Prince (1995) later determined that “the limited literature addressing the career development of gay men points to the need to expand the theories that guide our practice so that they have more explanatory power” (p. 175).

### Initial Research Question

In the words of Strauss and Corbin (1990), “a grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it

represents” (p. 23). Accordingly, “the grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon” (p. 24). The goal of grounded theory method is to develop theory that reflects and enlightens the area under investigation. Consequently, “the research question in a grounded theory study is a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied” (p. 38). Initially, the research question is framed broadly and openly. During the research process, however, it is reframed more narrowly and closely, as constructs and their associations are discovered gradually to be pertinent or unrelated.

Consistent with the recommendations and suggestions specified in the previous section, the initial research question will focus on grounding a theory that more specifically explains the vocational pursuits of gay male educators. Specifically, the research question will be framed initially as: “What factors influence gay men to choose and develop careers as elementary or secondary school teachers?”

Data analysis will begin with data collection. During these parallel processes, the research question will be refined and specified (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Hopefully, data analysis will produce the rudiments of a grounded theory to elaborate and refine existing theories of career choice and development so that these hypothetical

explanations have more descriptive potential for gay male teachers (Prince, 1995).

### Forecast of Literature Review

A term frequently associated with grounded theory is theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). "Theoretical sensitivity refers to a personal quality of the researcher" and "indicates an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data" (p. 41). Literature is an important source of theoretical sensitivity. As such, it provides a rich background of knowledge that "sensitizes" researchers to the phenomena under investigation.

In Chapter Two, three types of literature are reviewed. First, recent writings on the most influential theories of career choice and development are summarized briefly. Next, these theories and their conceptual components provide the framework for a review of the nonempirical literature on gay, lesbian, and bisexual vocational behavior and work experience. Finally, three categories of related findings from 13 empirical studies in this field of inquiry are described and discussed.

Of these 13 investigations, more than half (7 = 54%) focused exclusively on lesbian women. While over a third (5 = 38%) also included gay or bisexual participants in their samples, only one of the

13 studies concentrated primarily on gay men, comparing their career interests and aspirations to those of their heterosexual counterparts (Chung & Harmon, 1994). Furthermore, less than a third (4 = 31%) relied solely on qualitative methods. Otherwise, the written surveys used in four mixed design studies included more quantitative than qualitative items. Based on these figures, it is legitimate to conclude that qualitative research on the career choice and development of gay men is lacking and merits the attention of this investigation.

#### Personal Experience of the Researcher

In September 1979, I entered a Roman Catholic seminary college in order to complete my baccalaureate studies and to discern a vocation to the order of priesthood. After falling in love for the first time with one of my classmates, however, I struggled to reconcile my initial experience of same-sex attraction and attachment with my calling to celibate ministry. I gradually foreclosed on the process of pastoral identity formation in order to resolve my sexual identity confusion. Specifically, I decided to leave the seminary fraternity in order to explore relationships with women and thus reconstruct a heterosexual self-image. I additionally sought to redeem my vocational self-concept by accepting a position teaching theology at a parochial high school. I nevertheless developed a deeper awareness of

my same-sex orientation and eventually wrestled with integrating my sexual identity as a gay man with my vocational identity as a religious educator. In the meantime, I concealed my sexual identity in the workplace and equivocated official Church teaching on homosexuality.

The order of nature requires that a male should join with a female so that procreation will occur and the human species will continue in existence. Sexual union between persons of the same sex is "unnatural" because procreation is impossible, whereas the act itself is ordered for that purpose alone . . . While a homosexual is not responsible for his [or her] condition, he or she is responsible for controlling actions which spring from that condition. (Mc Brien, 1980, pp. 1029-1030)

Consequently, I declined the administration's offer to renew my contract for a second year.

Having abandoned my seminary studies and my catechetical duties in order to further develop a positive gay identity, I searched for a secular alternative to pastoral ministry. In September 1985, I enrolled in a graduate program at a state university in order to prepare for a career in the counseling profession. The curriculum trained school counselors as well as marriage and family therapists. While many students pursued both specializations, I was advised that marriage and family therapy would be a more viable field of study and employment than school counseling for a self-affirming/disclosing gay man. Accordingly, I was told stories of a gay school counseling trainee who was required to counsel students at his internship site with the

door open, and of a lesbian teacher with a school counseling credential whose career mobility on campus was confined to classroom instruction.

These personal experiences have influenced not only my career choice and development as a gay man, but also my assumptions about vocational selection and formation for other gay men. Prior to this investigation, for example, I assumed that a gay man who self-identified before choosing a career would select a vocation which allowed him to further disclose his sexual orientation and develop a positive gay identity. I likewise assumed that a gay man who self-identified after choosing a career would select another vocation if his initial choice oppressed sexual minority workers or suppressed self-disclosure and identity formation. Otherwise, I assumed that his process of career development would reflect a pattern of attempts to either reconcile or integrate his vocational and sexual self-concepts.

#### Theoretical Orientation of the Researcher

My theoretical orientation to counseling incorporates concepts from both psychoanalytic and systemic traditions. Derived from the discoveries of Sigmund Freud, psychoanalysis serves as the fundamental basis for a general theory of psychology. Freud stressed that clinical investigation is the groundwork for psychoanalysis and

that theoretical construction based on immediate experience and direct observation of clinical phenomena can be modified by additional data (Arlow, 1984). Thus considered, psychoanalysis represents a grounded theory established on the constant comparative method and therefore seems compatible with qualitative research design.

According to psychoanalytic theory, “personality evolves out of the interaction between inherent biological factors and the vicissitudes of experience” (Arlow, 1984, p. 24). These intrinsic physiological drives may reflect hormonal, neuroendocrine, and genetic conditions that affect the development of sexual orientation (Bancroft, 1990; Burr, 1993; Dickemann, 1995; Gladue, 1987, 1988; Gooren, 1990; Rosario, 1996). The “vicissitudes of experience” with which “inherent biological factors” interact to form the personality include variations in the familial and social environment. These family dynamics and cultural variables may facilitate or frustrate psychological adjustment and vocational maturity.

Along with their psychoanalytic colleagues who pioneered the field of family therapy (Foley, 1984), systems theorists further speculate that:

all forms of life need to be understood as existing within a certain time and space and as organized into interacting components. The system provides the context in which relationships between component parts may be understood and, if necessary, changed. (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1985, pp. 28-29)

In other words, systems theory assumes that individual persons cannot be studied apart from the networks of kinship and community within which they develop. With regard to this qualitative investigation, participant experiences will be examined from an interpersonal as well as intrapsychic perspective. While psychoanalytic theory will inform the exploration of internal drives that influence vocational and sexual identity formation, my systemic orientation will direct the investigation of social conditions and familial relations that interact with psychological factors to influence the career choice and development of gay male school teachers.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As introduced in the first chapter, literature is an important source of theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This second chapter reviews the body of written works that “sensitizes” both the researcher and the reader to the phenomena under investigation. Accordingly, three types of literature are reviewed. First, recent writings on the most influential theories of career choice and development are summarized briefly. Next, these current theories and their conceptual components provide the framework for a review of the nonempirical literature on gay, lesbian, and bisexual vocational behavior and work experience. Finally, three categories of related findings from 13 empirical studies in this field of inquiry are described and discussed.

### Career Development

In terms of research and practice, the most influential theories of career choice and development include Holland’s theory; the theory of work adjustment; the life-span, life-space approach to careers; Gottfredson’s theory of circumscription and compromise; Krumboltz’s learning theory of career choice and counseling; and a sociological perspective on work and career development (Brown & Brooks, 1996).

The following discussions briefly summarize these approaches to vocational guidance.

### Holland's Theory

Holland (1992) assumed that most personality styles and occupational environments can be classified according to one of six types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, or Conventional. These personality styles and occupational environments interact to determine vocational behavior. Individuals seek vocational surroundings that allow them to exercise their abilities and aptitudes, express their values and viewpoints, and assume appropriate roles and responsibilities. Workers find these surroundings reinforcing and satisfying when environmental patterns reflect their personality patterns.

In regard to interactions between the worker and the workplace, incongruence facilitates change and congruence fosters stability in vocational behavior. Individuals resolve incongruence by seeking new and congruent environments or by changing personal attitudes or habits. The reciprocal interactions of these individuals and their serial employment generally leads to a cyclical sequence of success and satisfaction.

### The Theory of Work Adjustment

The theory of work adjustment (TWA; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) assumes that (a) the worker has biological and psychological needs that can be satisfied by the workplace, and (b) the employer has task and organizational requirements that can be satisfied (partly) by the employee. The abilities of the worker that can be used to satisfy workplace requirements include his or her work and social skills. The capacities of the employer that can be used to satisfy employee needs involve work reinforcers, such as equitable earnings, favorable conditions, amiable co-workers, and impartial managers (Dawis, 1996).

When the needs of the worker and the requirements of the workplace correspond, both employee and employer experience and express satisfaction. In TWA terminology, however, satisfaction refers only to the worker's contentment, whereas satisfactoriness refers to the worker with whom the workplace is content. "Correspondence, then, is when a worker is both satisfied and satisfactory" (Dawis, 1996, p. 82). The duration of an employee's employment, or tenure, depends largely on the worker's levels of satisfaction and satisfactoriness.

Inevitably, change disrupts the ideal state of correspondence between worker needs and workplace requirements. On becoming

dissatisfied, workers may try to improve their satisfaction with the workplace before quitting their jobs. When employees become unsatisfactory, employers may try to improve their satisfactoriness before terminating their employment. These attempts to recover correspondence are called adjustment.

Prior to the initiation of adjustment behavior, the degree to which the worker or the workplace can tolerate disagreement is called flexibility. Adjustment can occur in two ways: (a) in the active mode, the employee or the employer tries to change the other to reestablish correspondence between them; (b) in the reactive mode, the worker or the workplace attempts self-modification to restore correspondence with the other. The duration of persistence in adjustment behavior is called perseverance. TWA culminates with the hypothesis that "tenure is positively related to the worker's satisfactoriness, satisfaction, and perseverance" as well as to the persistence of the workplace (Dawis, 1996, p. 91).

### The Life-Span, Life-Space Approach to Careers

The life-span, life-space theory of career development assumes that people vary in their aptitudes and identities, needs, values, interests, personality characteristics, and self-concepts. By virtue of these attributes, each individual is qualified for a number of

occupations. Each occupation requires a distinctive pattern of abilities and personality traits, with exceptions wide enough to permit some diversity of occupations for each person as well as some diversity of individuals in each occupation (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996).

Vocational choices and capabilities, the circumstances in which people live and work, and thus their self-concepts shift with time and experience. This course of change may be summarized in a sequence of life stages described as a succession of Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Disengagement. In turn, these stages may be subdivided into phases distinguished by developmental challenges. During developmental transitions and career destabilizations, individuals recycle through a mini-sequence of growth, exploration, and establishment.

The structure of the career pattern (i.e., the vocational level achieved and the succession, incidence, and continuance of temporary and permanent employment) is established by the person's parental socioeconomic status, intelligence, education, talents, personality traits, and career maturity, as well as by the opportunities to which he or she is introduced. Success in coping with individual needs and environmental requirements at any specified developmental stage depends on the readiness of the person to cope with these conditions (i.e., his or her career maturity). "Career maturity is a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual's degree of vocational

development along the continuum of life stage and substages from Growth through Disengagement” (Super et al., 1996, p. 124).

Progression through the developmental stages can be facilitated, partly by fostering the enhancement of abilities, interests and coping skills and partly by assisting in reality testing and self-concept formation. “The process of career development is essentially that of developing and implementing occupational self-concepts” (Super et al., 1996, p. 125). The process of integration or reconciliation between personal and social factors, between self-concepts and reality, is one of learning from role-play and feedback.

Life and work satisfaction depends on the degree to which an individual discovers satisfactory channels for aptitudes, needs, values, interests, personality characteristics, and self-concepts. In other words, a person’s degree of work satisfaction is proportionate to his or her degree of self-concept implementation. Accordingly, work and vocation provide a focus for most adult personality organization.

#### Gottfredson’s Theory of Circumscription and Compromise

According to Gottfredson (1996), circumscription is the gradual exclusion of unacceptable vocational alternatives to establish a social space. Social space refers to the range of alternatives in the cognitive map of occupations that are considered acceptable. A cognitive map of

occupations refers to the meaningful organization of common vocational images. Conversely, compromise is the process by which children and adolescents begin to relinquish their most preferred vocational alternatives for less compatible but more available options. "Compromise can occur either in anticipation of external barriers (anticipatory compromise) or after they are encountered (experiential compromise)" (p. 188).

### Circumscription

From early childhood through adolescence, the circumscription of vocational aspirations can be described by five principles (Gottfredson, 1996).

Circumscription principle one. From magical thinking through concrete reasoning, growing children develop the increasing capacity to understand and systematize abstract information about themselves and their surroundings. Children progress through this sequence of cognitive development at various rates because they differ in intelligence.

Circumscription principle two. Self-concept and occupational preferences develop interactively, each affecting the other. Since individuals are concerned about their position in the social order and occupations influence the presentation of self to society, occupational

preferences represent an attempt to enhance as well as implement the self-concept.

Circumscription principle three. Children comprehend and synthesize information about themselves and occupations in order of complexity. For example, they begin to comprehend the more complex differences among individuals (e.g., social class) while they are still integrating the more concrete distinctions (e.g., sex roles) into their self-concepts.

Circumscription principle four. As children integrate more abstract features into their images of themselves, “their self-concepts become more complex and more clearly delineated” (Gottfredson, 1996, p. 190). Concurrently, they eliminate as unacceptable an ever wider range of occupational alternatives. In effect, this constriction of options is irreversible since people seldom reevaluate these rejected alternatives without prompting from some significant or steady change in their social environments.

Circumscription principle five. The process of concurrently delineating self-concepts and delimiting vocational choices is so primary, progressive, and presumed that people commonly cannot casually observe or describe this sequence in spite of its strong and ongoing impact on their beliefs and behaviors. Ordinarily, some external incentive seems necessary to illuminate the presumption.

These five principles of circumscription can be operationalized according to four stages of development.

Stage one: Orientation to size and power (ages three to five).

Preschool children and kindergartners progress from magical to intuitive thinking and begin to develop object permanence (e.g., that people cannot alter their sex by changing their presentation). Further, they start to classify people into simplistic categories (i.e., big and powerful versus little and powerless) as well as to recognize occupations as adult roles.

Stage two: Orientation to sex roles (ages six to eight). At this stage, children have progressed to concrete reasoning and to simple discrimination. As dichotomous thinkers, they are inclined to evaluate everything as good versus bad. Although they have begun to apprehend the idea of sex roles, they concentrate principally on the most observable evidence, such as noticeable behaviors and clothes. They frequently consider rigid compliance to sex roles to be a moral obligation. Consequently, their vocational aspirations reflect their focus on sex-appropriate alternatives.

Stage three: Orientation to social valuation (ages 9 to 13).

During this stage, pre-adolescents become very sensitive to social appraisal, either by their peer group or by the larger community. In addition to male versus female, the issue now includes higher versus lower. By fourth grade (age nine), children evaluate low-status

occupations more severely and stop mentioning them among their vocational aspirations. They further begin to identify the more concrete symbols of social status. By eighth grade (age 13), most early adolescents appraise occupational prestige the same way adults do, and comprehend the close connection among income, education, and vocation.

Additionally, these youth have developed insights both into their own intelligence by comparing themselves to their peers, and into their own competitiveness for more challenging and acceptable occupations. Conversely, they also have learned which vocations their own families and communities would eliminate as intolerably low in social status. In summary, they have begun to recognize a ceiling and a floor for their aspirations.

Stage four: Orientation to the internal, unique self (ages  $\geq 14$ ).

By early adolescence, teens more or less take their position in the social order for granted. While these adolescents further develop an increasing capacity for abstraction, their concentrations shift from social to personal identity formation. "Occupational exploration is confined to the zone of acceptable alternatives (social space) circumscribed at earlier stages" (Gottfredson, 1996, p. 195). Whereas the first three stages involve eliminating unacceptable options, this stage involves recognizing which acceptable alternatives are most desirable and available.

## Compromise

As introduced earlier in this chapter, compromise is the process by which children and adolescents begin to relinquish their most preferred occupational alternatives for less compatible but more available options. In other words, “compromise is adjusting aspirations to accommodate an external reality” (Gottfredson, 1996, p. 195). Anticipatory compromise occurs when individuals begin to adapt their vocational ambitions according to their assessments of accessible occupations. Experiential compromise occurs when obstacles are encountered in the implementation of vocational preferences.

Three principles influence the collection and significance of information on occupational accessibility.

Accessibility principle one. Individuals ordinarily concentrate only on information about the availability of vocations they consider appropriate for themselves, the options within their zone of acceptable alternatives. People are more likely to focus on information about the more desired occupations.

Accessibility principle two. Individuals primarily concentrate on this kind of information when they must begin to implement a vocational ambition. Occupational aspirations become more realistic

than idealistic as the time of implementation approaches or the significance of the commitment increases.

Accessibility principle three. The active pursuit of vocational information and direction on how to access it is directed mainly toward available and reliable sources. Families, friends, mentors, peers, and others in an individual's social system thus shape perceptions of occupational accessibility.

The compromise of vocational aspirations can be described by four principles.

Compromise principle one. "The relative importance of [occupational] sextype, [social] prestige, and [vocational] interests depends upon the severity of the compromise required" (Gottfredson, 1996, pp. 198-199). When minor trade-offs are necessary, for example, individuals avoid compromising interests. When moderate compromises are essential, however, they avoid trading off prestige. When major concessions are required, they will sacrifice interests before prestige or sextype. Although vocational interests are always of moderate importance, they are surpassed by considerations for either prestige or sextype. Finally, "the sextype threshold is more relaxed for women than for men" (p. 201). According to current research, it seems that nontraditional occupations arouse more anxiety among men than among women.

Compromise principle two. In general, individuals are satisfied with the “good enough” choice and either unable or unwilling to collect and consider the often ambiguous and variable information needed for identifying the best alternative.

Compromise principle three. When individuals are dissatisfied with the available choices within their zone of acceptable alternatives, if possible, they will avoid committing to any of them.

Compromise principle four. Individuals adjust psychologically to major trade-offs in their vocational interests, less to concessions in prestige that jeopardize their social status, and least of all to compromises in sextype that threaten the implementation of a gender-appropriate identity.

### Krumboltz's Learning Theory of Career Choice and Counseling

Krumboltz's learning theory of career counseling (LTCC; Krumboltz, 1996) extends his social learning theory of career decision making (SLTCDM; Krumboltz, 1979). The SLTCDM was intended to answer the question of why people enter or change educational programs or occupations and otherwise express different preferences for various vocational behaviors at chosen periods in their lives. The SLTCDM postulates that four groups of factors influence career-decision making for any individual (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996).

### Genetic Endowment and Special Abilities

Genetic inheritance and special aptitudes are hereditary characteristics that may affect an individual's capacity to develop specific scholastic and vocational preferences and proficiencies. These inherited qualities may include ethnicity, gender, bodily appearance, and physical aptitudes. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) assumed that "special abilities such as intelligence, artistic talent, or muscular coordination result from the interaction of genetic factors and exposure to selected environmental events" (p. 237).

### Environmental Conditions and Events

Environmental circumstances and occurrences that influence career decision making include social, cultural, political, and economic pressures, as well as natural catastrophes and resources, that are beyond an individual's control.

### Learning Experiences

According to Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996), learning experiences are classified into two categories: instrumental and associative. An instrumental learning experience is an episode during

which individuals act on their surroundings in order to generate favorable outcomes. Conversely, an associative learning experience is an incident during which individuals notice an relationship between environmental stimuli, frequently by observing actual or simulated examples.

### Task Approach Skills

Interactions among learning experiences, genetic attributes, special aptitudes, and environmental forces produce task approach skills. These proficiencies include performance measures, work routines, mental processes, perceptual and cognitive sets, and affective responses.

As a consequence of the complex interaction among these four groups of factors, individual develop beliefs about themselves and the world of work along with task approach skills. These beliefs affect their method of learning new skills and ultimately influence their ambitions and behaviors. “The SLTCDM refers to people’s beliefs about themselves [i.e., their vocational skills, interests, and values] as self-observation generalizations and beliefs about the world of work [e.g., the nature of various occupations] as world-view generalizations” (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996, p. 243). Task approach skills are defined further as “cognitive and performance abilities and emotional

predispositions for coping with the environment, interpreting it in relation to self-observation generalizations, and making covert and overt predictions about future events” (p. 246).

As a result of the generalizations and skills that develop from learning experiences, individuals participate in various activities that influence their entry into an occupation. These vocational activities include applying both for employment opportunities and to academic or training programs, pursuing advancements, and changing fields of work or study.

### A Sociological Perspective on Work and Career Development

A sociological perspective on work and career development (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996) assumes that status attainment theory and the sociology of labor markets interact to affect the vocational behavior and occupational achievement of contemporary workers. Status attainment theory and labor market sociology are described briefly in the following discussions.

#### Status Attainment Theory

The basic theory of status attainment assumes that the social status of parents affects the occupational level of children through the following sequence of influences: from parental status to attitudes of

significant others about appropriate educational and occupational levels, to career planning, to schooling and training, to vocational status (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996). Empirical evidence suggests that intelligence seems to influence educational and occupational attainment through a similar path of effects (Sewell & Hauser, 1975).

### Labor Market Sociology

Several institutional aspects of the labor market are considered significant in shaping vocational outcomes:

The size of the firm or establishment where one works (Stolzenberg, 1978; Baron & Bielby, 1980, 1982, 1984), the industry in which one works (Beck, Horan, & Tolbert, 1978), manager-nonmanager status (job authority) (Wright & Perrone, 1977; Parcel & Mueller, 1983), whether one is an employer or an employee (Wright & Perrone, 1977; Parcel & Mueller, 1983), and the geographic location of one's job (Parcel & Mueller, 1983) all influence the quality of work. (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996, p. 289)

Accordingly, the achievement of career satisfaction depends more on the acquisition of preferred positions in these systems than it does on productivity.

An essential focus of the structuralist perspective is that control of resources is a main determinant in the distribution of work rewards. Structuralists rely on the concepts of internal labor markets and job ladders to delineate the structures that support the labor-market mechanisms in core firms (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996). Core firms

(a) "are large, hold monopolistic or oligopolistic market power, apply advanced technology, and participate in national or international markets" (p. 290) and (b) "exert control over employees by offering them high wages, job stability, and opportunity for advancement" (pp. 290-291). Internal labor markets are distinguished by organizational ladders of promotion. Incomes are closely bound to the position of the job rather than decided by the interaction of supply and demand. "Good jobs," or primary labor markets, are typified by internal advancement systems that are connected with job security and high earnings. "Bad jobs," or secondary labor markets, are characterized conversely as subject to free market conditions.

### Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Career Development

Three of these six theories of career choice and development have been examined specifically concerning their relevance to lesbian women and gay men. These analyses investigate the appropriateness of Holland's theory (Mobley & Slaney, 1996), the life-span, life-space approach to careers (Dunkle, 1996), and Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise (Morgan & Brown, 1991). While the other three approaches have not been explored explicitly regarding their applicability to sexual minority persons, some of their theoretical constructs (i.e., work adjustment, social learning, status attainment,

and labor markets) are addressed in discussions of gay, lesbian, and bisexual career development in the professional journals. These theories and their conceptual components provide the framework for the following review of the nonempirical literature.

### Holland's Theory

Mobley and Slaney (1996) examined the relevance of Holland's theory for lesbian women and gay men. Their analysis is organized around three central concepts: (a) personality styles, (b) occupational environments, and (c) congruence. Accordingly, they compare perspectives on career development provided by Holland's theory (1992) and by Cass's model of gay and lesbian identity formation (1979, 1984a, 1984b). The following discussions briefly summarize these comparisons.

### Personality Styles

Mobley and Slaney (1996) challenged the theoretical assumption that personality styles measured by the six Holland types (i.e., Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, or Conventional) "are maximally relevant to career choice and development" for lesbian women and gay men (p. 127). They further hypothesized that Cass's model of gay and lesbian identity formation may have descriptive

significance for understanding the vocational development of sexual minority persons in ways that qualify or complement Holland's theory.

Cass (1979) assumed that gay or lesbian "identity is acquired through a developmental process" (p. 219) and thus proposed the following six stages of sexual minority identity formation.

Stage one: Identity confusion. For people attracted to persons of their own sex, the actual process of identity development begins when they become consciously aware that information regarding homosexuality acquired directly or indirectly somehow applies to them. As they continue to personalize this information, the heterosexual identities to which they have been conforming begin to feel discordant. This incongruity often leads to anxiety or confusion (Cass, 1990).

Stage two: Identity comparison. The second stage of the process occurs when people attracted to persons of their own sex can accept the possibility that they might not be heterosexual. Their ability to admit that they may be gay or lesbian reflects a significant decrease in the confusion they sought to reduce during the first stage of identity formation (Cass, 1979), and marks a first step toward committing to a lesbian or gay self-image (Cass, 1990). This phase of peer-identification feels less confusing but more alienating from heterosexual others.

Stage three: Identity tolerance. The third stage of the process occurs when people attracted to persons of their own sex can admit that they are probably lesbian or gay. Although they only tolerate rather than fully accept a gay or lesbian identity, this further identification enables them to acknowledge their social, emotional, and sexual needs. Conversely, this self-tolerance highlights the discrepancy between the way they see themselves (i.e. probably gay or lesbian) and the way they perceive others seeing them (i.e., probably heterosexual).

Stage four: Identity acceptance. The fourth stage of gay and lesbian identity formation is characterized by increasing and ongoing contacts with other sexual minority individuals and groups. These validating and "normalizing" encounters empower self-tolerant persons to fully accept a gay or lesbian self-image. As their contacts with others increase in frequency and regularity, individuals discover preferences for same-sex social contexts and start to form friendships within them.

Stage five: Identity pride. Gay and lesbian individuals enter the fifth stage of identity formation with a strong sense of the incongruity between personal acceptance and social disapproval. In order to manage these discordant feelings, they tend to discriminate between people based on sexual orientation and identification. They now not only accept but also prefer their new identities to a

heterosexual self-image. A strong commitment to the gay and lesbian community generates feelings of group identity, belonging, and pride (Cass, 1979).

Stage six: Identity synthesis. Sexual minority persons enter this final phase of identity development with a sense that a "them vs. us" philosophy no longer applies. As this "heterosexual vs. homosexual" dichotomy is relinquished, gay and lesbian individuals acknowledge their potential similarities with heterosexual counterparts, as well as possible differences with sexual minority peers. Public and private aspects of self become synthesized into an integrated identity which includes sexual orientation among many other dimensions of personhood (Cass, 1979).

Mobley and Slaney (1996) suggested that the development of personality style and Holland type might be qualified by the stage of gay or lesbian identity formation into which a sexual minority person might be classified. Cass (1979, 1984a, 1984b) observed, for example, that people attracted to persons of their own sex lack a clear sense of themselves during the early stages of identity confusion and comparison. Further, an hypothetical relationship between identity development and career indecision has been delineated (Newman, Fuqua, & Seaworth, 1989) and investigated (Weyhing, Bartlett, & Howard, 1984) in the professional literature. For instance, Newman et al. (1989) outlined an extended reciprocal model that best reflects

current thinking about the association between anxiety and career indecision. This pattern represents a reciprocal interaction between anxiousness and vocational undecidedness, as well as between both of these variables and inadequate identity formation. In other words:

The inhibitory effects of poor identity formation on career development may prevent the client from establishing a professional identity, which comprises a major component of identity formation in our culture. The anxiety, which may initially have resulted from identity confusion, would likely serve to further inhibit effective situational responses to the client's environment, thus further exacerbating the identity issues. (p. 227)

Based on the emotional variance that sexual minority persons experience during the course of gay and lesbian identity development, Mobley and Slaney (1996) concluded that "it is important to understand how the career assessment process might be affected" (p. 128).

### Occupational Environments

Holland (1992) assumed that most occupational environments can be classified according to same six types used to categorize personality styles (i.e., Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, or Conventional). Mobley and Slaney (1996), however, proposed that Cass's model of gay and lesbian identity formation may recommend a completely different context for appraising vocational

settings. From this perspective, “the emphasis may be on assessing the receptivity of the environment to lesbian and gay concerns and issues” (p. 128). Accordingly, Cass’s theory indicates that the preferred type of occupational environment may vary depending on an individual’s stage of sexual minority identity development.

### Congruence

Holland (1992) hypothesized “vocational satisfaction, stability, and achievement depend on the congruence between one’s personality and the environment in which one works” (pp. 10-11). Similarly, Cass (1979) speculated that “stability and change in human behavior are dependent on the congruency or incongruency that exists within an individual’s interpersonal environment” (p. 220). Whereas Holland recommended that individuals search for congruence between their personality types and those of other workers in the workplace, Cass suggested that sexual minority persons seek congruency between their attitudes and those of other colleagues toward lesbian women and gay men.

### The Theory of Work Adjustment

As previously summarized, the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) assumes that the worker has needs that can be

satisfied by the workplace and that the employer has requirements that can be satisfied by the employee. When the needs of the worker and the requirements of the workplace correspond, both employee and employers experience and express satisfaction. When change inevitably disrupts the correspondence between worker needs and workplace requirements, attempts to recover this ideal state are called adjustment (Dawis, 1996).

In specific reference to lesbian women, Fassinger (1995, 1996) discussed the process by which sexual minority workers adjust to the workplace. According to Fassinger (1996), "the most salient barrier to the vocational . . . adjustment of lesbians [and gays] is the cluster of environmental variables related to occupational stereotyping, discrimination, and harassment" (p. 166). Similarly, the nonempirical literature on gay, lesbian, and bisexual career development often has considered how negative stereotypes, employment discrimination, and sexual harassment obstruct the work adjustment of sexual minority employees (Badgett, 1996; Chojnacki & Gelberg, 1994; Elliott, 1993; Ellis, 1996; Hetherington, Hillerbrand, & Etringer, 1989; Hetherington & Orzek, 1989; Kitzinger, 1991; Pope, 1995, 1996; Schmitz; 1988).

The theory of work adjustment further assumes that employers possess capacities than can be used to satisfy employee needs (e.g., equitable earnings, favorable conditions, amiable co-workers, and impartial managers). In a homophobic or heterosexist workplace,

however, these work reinforcers may be inadequate to meet the demands of gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers who place high value on being able to express their sexual orientation through, at, and outside of work (Chung, 1995). Not surprisingly, the nonempirical literature on sexual minority career development also has discussed frequently the importance of identity self-disclosure and coming out on the job (Badgett, 1996; Elliott, 1993; Ellis, 1996; Fassinger, 1995, 1996; Morgan & Brown, 1991; Kitzinger, 1991; Pope, 1995, 1996).

Finally, the theory of work adjustment defines flexibility as the degree to which the worker or the workplace can tolerate disagreement prior to the initiation of adjustment behavior. During the developmental stage of identity pride (Cass, 1979, 1984a, 1984b), gay and lesbian individuals tend to discriminate between people based on sexual orientation or identification and adopt a "them vs. us" philosophy. At this phase of identity formation, worker flexibility is inclined to be low as gay and lesbian employees apply a "heterosexual vs. homosexual" dichotomy to adversarial relationships with colleagues and supervisors. Nonetheless, worker flexibility is likely to increase during the final developmental stage of identity synthesis (Cass, 1979, 1984a, 1984b), when gay and lesbian employees blend or merge their sexual minority identities with their occupational self-concepts.

### The Life-Span, Life-Space Approach to Careers

As Mobley and Slaney (1996) did with Holland's theory, Dunkle (1996) considered how the identity formation of lesbian women and gay men, as delineated by Cass (1979, 1984a, 1984b), influences their vocational development, as outlined in the life-span, life-space approach to careers (Super et al., 1996). Dunkle (1996) identified common theoretical assumptions between these two processes:

Both are developmental and involve the progression through a series of life stages. Both . . . also emphasize that career identities and gay and lesbian identities are multidetermined. Finally, both . . . maintain that, for many reasons, individuals can recycle through stages or become foreclosed at any stage. (p. 151)

Further, he organized his reflection according to five stages of career development, as proposed by Super and his colleagues: Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Disengagement. The following discussions supplement, as well as summarize, his supposition.

#### Growth

The Growth stage of the life-span, life-space approach (ages 4 to 13) involves four major tasks of career development (Super et al., 1996): "becoming concerned about the future, increasing personal

control over one's own life, convincing oneself to achieve in school and at work, and acquiring competent work habits and attitudes" (p. 131). Whereas Cass (1979, 1984a, 1984b) assumed that gay and lesbian identity formation begins with conscious awareness that information regarding homosexuality has personal relevance, Troiden (1979, 1989) believed that the first stage of the process (i.e., sensitization) occurs before puberty and is characterized by childhood feelings of social difference and gender nonconformity. Prior to lesbian self-identification, for example, young girls frequently describe themselves as (a) not being interested in boys; (b) feeling unfeminine, ungraceful, and not very pretty; and (c) considering themselves more masculine, independent, and aggressive than other female children. Before gay self-labeling, conversely, young boys often describe themselves as being more interested in the arts and less interested in sports than other pre-adolescent males. In regard to the life-span, life-space approach, Dunkle (1996) suggested that these early experiences of social discordance and gender discrepancy may affect career-specific developmental task performance and mastery during childhood.

### Exploration

Between the ages of 14 and 24, individuals face the developmental tasks of crystallizing, specifying, and implementing a

vocational choice (Super et al., 1996). According to Dunkle (1996), however, "the process of gay and lesbian identity formation may pose several challenges at the exploration stage of career development" (p. 152). During the early phases of identity confusion and comparison (Cass, 1979, 1984a, 1984b), for example, various psychosocial stressors (e.g., internalized homophobia, employment discrimination) are likely to impair vocational maturity. In other words, the coming out process often competes with an individual's concentration on occupational challenges.

### Establishment

The Establishment stage of the life-span, life-space approach (ages 25 to 44) involves the developmental tasks of stabilizing, consolidating, and advancing in an occupation (Super et al., 1996). When new gay or lesbian identities emerge at this phase of vocational development, sexual minority employees may change careers nonetheless and recycle through a mini-sequence of growth, exploration, and establishment. During this recycling process, gay and lesbian workers may reexamine themselves and their environments to initiate appropriate employment in which to implement their newly emerging self-concepts (Dunkle, 1996).

### Maintenance

Between the ages of 45 and 65, individuals face the developmental tasks of holding on, keeping up, and innovating their vocational choices (Super et al., 1996). According to Dunkle (1996), however, a substantial number of adults who begin to self-identify as gay or lesbian between mid-life and retirement may have to cope with the stage-specific stressors of early identity formation during the Maintenance stage of career development. Additionally, lesbian women and gay men in the later phases of identity acceptance, pride, and synthesis (Cass, 1979, 1984a, 1984b) may have to contend with workplace self-disclosure and employment discrimination.

### Disengagement

The Disengagement stage of the life-span, life-space approach (over age 65) involves the developmental tasks of career deceleration, retirement planning, and retirement living (Super et al., 1996). In his reflection on this final phase of vocational development, Dunkle (1996) summarized Berger's (1982) discussion of older lesbian women and gay men. According to Dunkle (1996), Berger asserted that older gay and lesbian adults may experience less stress during the coming out process because they (a) may be less dependent on family members for emotional and financial support; (b) "may be more accustomed to

stigmatization,” having grown up in an era “when attitudes toward homosexuality in the United States were more negative than today;” (c) “may have passed for many years as heterosexual;” and (d) may “have developed a lifetime’s worth of social networks” (p. 156). Additionally, Berger (1982) suggested that, compared to older heterosexual adults, gay men and lesbian women may be better able to contend with negative stereotypes about aging based on their experience of contending with homophobia and heterosexism. If so, then gay and lesbian retirees may feel less stressed during this culminating stage of their careers.

#### Gottfredson’s Theory of Circumscription and Compromise

Morgan and Brown (1991) explored the applicability of Gottfredson’s (1981) theory in relation to increasing counselor awareness of lesbian career experience. Although their exploration was limited to women, their analysis may be applied further to improve clinical understanding of gay male career development. As outlined previously in this chapter, Gottfredson (1996) delineated four developmental stages during which individuals circumscribe vocational alternatives based on internal factors (i.e., self-concept and personal preferences) and external variables (i.e., perceptions of job accessibility and occupational images, such as sex type and prestige level). She

additionally hypothesized that, when forced to compromise their career choices, individuals will abandon their vocational interests before relinquishing their preferred job status. Consequently, sex type is surrendered only after all other options are exhausted. Based on speculations that gay men (Chung, 1995) as well as lesbian women (Fassinger, 1995, 1996) adopt broader definitions of gender-appropriate work, however, Gottfredson's theory would predict that sexual minority persons might demonstrate different career decision making patterns than their heterosexual peers (Morgan & Brown, 1991).

#### Krumboltz's Learning Theory of Career Choice and Counseling

Krumboltz (1979, 1996) established his theories of vocational guidance on principles of social learning. Morrow, Gore, and Campbell (1996) discussed similar concepts in their application of a social cognitive framework to the career development of lesbian women and gay men. Specifically, these constructs included vicarious learning and social persuasion. According to Morrow and her colleagues, these "important determinants of self-efficacy beliefs" (p. 140) interact over time with outcome expectations to influence educational and vocational interests.

Although media depictions increasingly represent women and men in nontraditional vocations, Morrow et al. (1996) acknowledged

that the preponderance of occupational role models are still gender-stereotypic; thus, "social persuasion operates in the direction of encouraging young children to engage and achieve in gender-congruent activities" (p. 140). Further, they affirmed that a lack of appropriate role models or negative social persuasion may undermine self-efficacy beliefs, thereby hindering or restricting the development of career interests. Conversely, they asserted nonetheless that vicarious learning may provide adequate reinforcement to fortify self-efficacy beliefs in the absence of immediate experience, positive social persuasion, or same-gender imitation. Under these circumstances, "even faced with a nonsupportive environment, lesbian or gay children might continue to develop interests based on exposure to gender-nonstereotypic models" (p. 140).

Other contributors to the body of nonempirical literature on sexual minority career development discuss the importance of utilizing gay and lesbian role models in the process of vocational guidance (Hetherington, et al., 1989; Pope, 1995). Based on a review of 15 articles and a frequency count of population-specific career counseling techniques, for example, Pope (1995) concluded that "supporting and encouraging gay and lesbian professionals as role models" (p. 194) is one of the interventions most widely recommended for sexual minority clients. Similarly, Hetherington et al. (1989) suggested tapping into

the gay and lesbian community for role models to increase client awareness of occupational alternatives.

### A Sociological Perspective on Work and Career Development

Hotchkiss and Borow (1996) assumed that status attainment and labor markets are among the influences that interact to affect the vocational behavior and occupational achievement of contemporary workers. The following discussions are organized around these concepts.

#### Status Attainment

The basic theory of status attainment assumes that the attitudes of significant others about appropriate educational and occupational levels affect the vocational status of workers (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996). Included among these attitudes are negative occupational stereotypes of sexual minority persons. In their discussions of career counseling with gay men and lesbian women, for example, Hetherington and her colleagues (Hetherington et al., 1989; Hetherington & Orzek, 1989) cited a survey of 120 college students (Botkin & Daly, 1987) which demonstrated stereotypic attitudes based on gender as well as sexual orientation. According to this sample of the general population, the top three professions presumed (a) for

heterosexual men were doctor, photographer, and engineer; (b) for gay men were photographer, interior decorator, and nurse; (c) for heterosexual women were interior decorator, nurse, and dietitian; and (d) for lesbian women were auto mechanic, plumber, and truck driver. While heterosexual and gay men were assumed to share one common professional interest (i.e., photography), gay men and heterosexual women were assumed to share two common vocational ambitions (i.e., interior design and nursing). In other words, gay men were presumed to be more similar vocationally to heterosexual women than men. Additionally, Hetherington and Orzek (1989) observed that "the occupations listed for lesbian women do not require a college degree" and concluded that "lesbian women may therefore experience deep negative stereotypes because of their sex" (p. 68) along with their lesbianism. To the extent that their significant others internalize and express these stereotypic attitudes, gay and lesbian students and workers are inclined to experience or self-impose restrictions on their attainment of academic and career status.

### Labor Markets

The sociology of labor markets suggests that socioeconomic conditions influence vocational growth (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996). In addition to Gottfredson's (1981) theory of circumscription and

compromise, Morgan and Brown (1991) explored the applicability of Astin's (1985) model of career choice and work behavior with specific regard to lesbian women. Comparable to their discussion of Gottfredson's approach, their analysis of Astin's paradigm may be applied further toward understanding gay male career development.

According to Morgan and Brown (1991), "Astin's model explores the interactions between personal characteristics and social forces and describes how socialization influences each person's view of the [employment] opportunity structure" (p. 285). An especially interesting aspect of this paradigm for application to gay and lesbian career issues is its perspective on how the opportunity structure shifts over time as a result of sociological patterns and trends. "This ability to account for changes in the perceived structure of [employment] opportunity has relevance to the vocational concerns of women [and men] in the process of coming out as lesbians [and gays]" (p. 285). Since economic conditions affect social tolerance toward sexual minority workers (Boswell, 1980, 1994), the sociology of labor markets is pertinent to an awareness of gay, lesbian, and bisexual career experience.

### Review of the Empirical Literature

In addition to the body of nonempirical literature reviewed in the previous section, other contributors have discussed generally the

occupational and vocational issues of sexual minority clients (Belz, 1993; Croteau & Bieschke, 1996; Croteau & Hedstrom, 1993; Croteau & Thiel, 1993; Prince, 1995) and their career counselors (Bieschke & Matthews, 1996; Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995). Few, however, have investigated the career development of gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers.

Accordingly, a literature search was conducted in order to locate empirical research published since 1974 which focused on this field of inquiry. Four qualitative studies (Boatwright, Gilbert, Forrest, & Ketzenberger, 1996; Griffin, 1992; Hall, 1986; Woods & Harbeck, 1992) and six quantitative studies (Chung & Harmon, 1994; Driscoll, Kelley, & Fassinger, 1996; Etringer, Hillerbrand, & Hetherington, 1990; Levine & Leonard, 1984; Schneider, 1986; Shachar & Gilbert, 1983) were found. Additionally, three mixed design studies that combine both qualitative and quantitative methods (Croteau & Lark, 1995; Croteau & von Destinon, 1994; Olson, 1987) were discovered. Overviews of the research are outlined on Tables 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, on pages 55, 56, and 57, respectively.

It is appropriate to challenge any conclusions about the career development of gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers drawn from only 13 investigations with methodological limitations. According to Croteau (1996), however, "one approach to studies with weaker methodology is to evaluate as credible only findings with empirical support across

Table 2.1

Overview of Qualitative Studies on the Career Development of Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Workers

Author(s)	Sample	Stated purpose	General design
Boatwright, Gilbert, Forrest, & Ketzenberger (1996)	10 lesbian women	"Investigate the interface of two developmental processes: career identity and sexual orientation identity" (pp. 210-211)	Phenomenological; a structured individual interview
Griffin (1992)	13 gay & lesbian educators	"Describe the professional experiences of a selected group of gay and lesbian educators" & "empower these educators through collective reflection and action" (p. 168)	Participatory; individual & group interviews; group meetings
Hall (1986)	13 lesbian women in corporations	Investigate work experiences & examine information management strategies	Phenomenological; a semi-structured individual interview
Woods & Harbeck (1992)	12 lesbian physical education teachers	"Describe the identity management strategies used by the participants to conceal or reveal their lesbianism" (p. 144)	Phenomenological; three in-depth, open-ended individual interviews

Table 2.2

Overview of Quantitative Studies on the Career Development of Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Workers

Author(s)	Sample	Stated purpose	General design
Chung & Harmon (1994)	63 gay men & 60 heterosexual men	Explore the career interests and aspirations of gay men	Three self-report assessment instruments
Driscoll, Kelley, & Fassinger (1996)	123 employed lesbian women	Examine relationships among disclosure, work climate, stress & coping, & work satisfaction	Six self-report assessment instruments
Etringer, Hillerbrand, & Hetherington (1990)	15 gay men, 18 lesbian women, & 48 heterosexual persons (16 men & 32 women)	Examine possible differences between participants with regard to the career decision-making process	Two self-report assessment instruments
Levine & Leonard (1984)	203 lesbian women in various occupations	Explore factors affecting employment discrimination against lesbian women	Written survey; quantitative self-report items; some items requiring descriptions
Schneider (1986)	228 lesbian women in various occupations	Study elements of workplace sociability & self-disclosure	Written survey with various forms of measurement
Shachar & Gilbert (1983)	70 lesbian women in various occupations	Investigate role conflict areas & factors influencing coping	Written survey with various forms of measurement

Table 2.3

Overview of Mixed Design Studies on the Career Development of Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Workers

Authors(s)	Sample	Stated purpose	General design
Croteau & Lark (1995)	174 gay, lesbian, & bisexual student affairs professionals	"Provide the first descriptive information about this group's job experiences" (p. 189)	Written survey; quantitative self-report items; one qualitative item about experiences of discrimination
Croteau & von Destinon (1994)	249 gay, lesbian, & bisexual student affairs professionals	"Obtain information from sexual minority Student Affairs professionals about their experiences during job searches" (p. 40)	Written survey; quantitative self-report items; one qualitative item about experiences of discrimination
Olson (1987)	97 gay & lesbian teachers	"Survey a number of homosexual teachers regarding their attitudes and perceptions about schools, as well as their experiences in schools" (p. 75)	Written survey; both quantitative & qualitative self-report items

differing studies” (p. 196). The following discussions thus attempt to integrate findings from multiple investigations whenever possible and describe them in terms of discrimination, disclosure, and choice and satisfaction.

### Discrimination

#### Prevalence

Four of the studies reported findings related to the prevalence of employment discrimination against gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers (Boatwright et al., 1996; Croteau & Lark, 1995; Croteau & von Destinon, 1994; Levine & Leonard, 1984). According to three of these investigations, 25 to 66% of sexual minority employees report experiences of occupational or vocational bias (Croteau & Lark; Croteau & von Destinon; Levine & Leonard). Boatwright et al. further found that all 10 lesbian women in their qualitative study experienced many discriminatory effects of homophobia in the workplace. These data seem to support the general conclusion that employment discrimination is pervasive in the occupational experiences and vocational histories of gay, lesbian, and bisexual populations (Croteau, 1996).

### Formal and Informal

Based on the illustrations of quantitative data in their study, Levine and Leonard (1984) distinguished between formal and informal discrimination in the workplace. Formal bias was defined as “institutionalized procedures to restrict officially conferred work rewards” (p. 706) and included (a) deciding to terminate or not employ individuals due to their sexual orientation; (b) passing over sexual minority employees for promotions, raises, or increased job responsibilities; and (c) excluding same-sex partners from employment benefits. Informal bias was defined as “harassment and other unofficial actions taken by supervisors or co-workers” (p. 706) and included verbal mistreatment and property vandalism, as well as loss of credibility, acceptance, or respect based on sexual orientation.

The distinction between formal and informal employment discrimination seems to fit the data from at least three other studies, all of which included qualitative methods in their research designs (Boatwright et al., 1996; Croteau & Lark, 1995; Croteau & von Destinon, 1994). Boatwright et al. reported that four of the ten participants in their study associated career losses with being out as lesbian women. Formally, they experienced “not being hired for jobs” or “not receiving promotions” (p. 219). Informally, they encountered many problems with supervisors.

Croteau and Lark (1995) grouped their qualitative data into two general categories: “(a) discrimination in employment decisions and personnel policies, and (b) discrimination during regular work activities” (p. 193). Discriminatory employment decisions involved performance evaluations, salary increases, and promotions; biased personnel policies involved failure to recognize the eligibility of same-sex partners for employment benefits. Discrimination during regular work activities included:

(a) overt expressions of homophobic sentiment, as well as harassment or violence; (b) actions perceived to arise out of homophobia but not involving direct expressions of homophobic sentiment; (c) attempts to interfere with respondents’ choices on how open to be about their sexual orientation; and (d) actions that exclude lesbian, gay, or bisexual professionals or their concerns. (p. 194)

Similarly, Croteau and von Destinon (1994) organized their qualitative data into three major categories, two of which seem to reflect further Leonard and Levine’s (1984) distinction between formal and informal employment discrimination: (a) “job search decisions made by employers” and (b) “actions of potential employers during interviews of other parts of the job search process” (p. 43).

### Fear

Seven of the studies reported findings related to fear of employment discrimination among sexual minority workers

(Boatwright et al., 1996; Croteau & Lark, 1995; Croteau & von Destinon, 1994; Griffin, 1992; Levine & Leonard, 1984; Olson, 1987; Woods & Harbeck, 1992). Boatwright et al. found that 5 of the 10 women who participated in their study faced a common fear of "being identified as a lesbian by co-workers" (p. 219). Levine and Leonard similarly reported that over 60% of the women who responded to their inquiry predicted discriminatory reactions at work if their lesbianism became known. Croteau and Lark further found that 44% of the gay, lesbian, or bisexual respondents to their national survey of student affairs professionals anticipated either definite (11%) or probable (33%) employment discrimination in the future. Additionally, Croteau and von Destinon reported that many of the sexual minority college personnel specialists in their national sample expected to experience homophobic or heterosexist bias during their job searches.

Qualitative data from three studies of gay and lesbian educators (Griffin, 1992; Olson, 1987; Woods & Harbeck, 1992) indicated that these faculty members specifically feared losing their jobs in regard to their sexual orientation. Of the 12 lesbian physical education teachers whom Woods and Harbeck interviewed, "11 believed they would be fired if their sexual orientation was publicly disclosed" (p. 148). Similarly, Griffin's "participants believed that a public accusation would inevitably result in one of two equally negative consequences: loss of job or loss of credibility among students,

colleagues, and parents” (p. 171). Furthermore, these sexual minority faculty members feared that such an allegation would result from three particular instances: (a) being charged with molesting children or making sexual advances to students, (b) being accused of recruiting students to a sexual minority lifestyle, and (c) being seen at a gay-affiliated or lesbian-related place or event. In addition to losing their jobs, the gay and lesbian teachers in Olson’s study feared “not receiving tenure or promotions” (p. 78). As described below, the fear or anticipation of these and other incidents of employment discrimination seems to be the major determinant in the decisions of workers to hide their sexual minority identities (Croteau, 1996).

### Disclosure

#### Variability

Eight of the studies reported findings that reflect the variability with which gay, lesbian, and bisexual employees self-disclose in the workplace (Croteau & Lark, 1995; Croteau & von Destinon, 1994; Driscoll et al. 1996; Griffin, 1992; Levine & Leonard, 1984; Olson, 1987; Schneider, 1986; Woods & Harbeck, 1992). Quantitative data from three of these investigations with larger lesbian samples indicated that 16 to 24% of these women reported being totally open, out to all colleagues, or known by all or most people at work (Driscoll

et al.; Levine & Leonard; Schneider). Whereas only 6.5% of the teachers in Olson's study reported that their "sexual preference" (p. 77) had been revealed to everyone, nearly half (47%) of the student affairs professionals in Croteau and Lark's survey responded that all or most people knew about their sexual orientation.

Conversely, additional results from two of the earlier lesbian-specific investigations (Levine & Leonard, 1984; Schneider, 1986) indicated that 27 to 29% of these women reported being neither open at all nor known by anyone at work. Although 21% of the college personnel specialists from one national survey (Croteau & von Destinon, 1994) reported not disclosing even after job entry, only 6% of a similar sample (Croteau & Lark, 1995) acknowledged that no one at work knew about their sexual orientation. Finally, qualitative data from two studies with fewer participants revealed that none of the gay or lesbian educators were either open or publicly out on campus (Griffin, 1992; Wood & Harbeck, 1992). In combination, these various discoveries seem to demonstrate the variability with which sexual minority workers confide in their colleagues (Croteau, 1996).

#### Disclosure vs. Secrecy

The four strictly qualitative investigations reported findings that reflect a continuum between secrecy and disclosure along which the

variability discussed above can be described (Boatwright et al., 1996; Griffin, 1992; Hall, 1986; Woods & Harbeck, 1992). Boatwright et al. interviewed 10 lesbian women, 7 of whom acknowledged “experiencing a need to constantly make decisions about what could or could not be shared about themselves and their lives” (p. 219). One participant reported being indirect with others as well as confiding in a couple of friends. Another woman admitted answering questions aimed at exposing her lesbianism as if she were heterosexual. Three others acknowledged isolating themselves as much as possible at work. In addition to Hall, Woods and Harbeck similarly described various identity management strategies.

According to Croteau (1996), Griffin (1992) organized her qualitative data into the most inclusive model of identity management techniques and identified four main categories along a continuum. On the “closeted” end of the scale, passing and covering strategies respectively involved (a) lying to be seen as heterosexual and (b) censoring to avoid being seen as gay or lesbian. On the “out” end of the continuum, implicit and explicit techniques respectively included (a) telling the truth without self-labeling to allow for being known as lesbian or gay and (b) directly self-disclosing to facilitate being known as gay or lesbian. These categories seem consistent with descriptive reports from the other three studies.

### Correlates

Five studies reported findings related to variables associated with the degree to which sexual minority employees self-disclose in the workplace (Croteau & Lark, 1995; Croteau & von Destinon, 1995; Driscoll et al., 1996; Levine & Leonard, 1984; Schneider, 1986). Quantitative data from two national surveys of gay, lesbian, and bisexual student affairs professionals (Croteau & Lark; Croteau & von Destinon) and from a sample of lesbian workers in New York City (Levine & Leonard) reflected a positive relationship between degrees of identity self-disclosure and experiences of anti-gay discrimination. Nonetheless, two of these three investigations revealed that participants who were more open about their sexual orientation were more satisfied with their level of openness than those who were less open (Croteau & Lark; Levine & Leonard).

Although lacking strong empirical support across differing studies, additional findings seem interesting and important to reference. Based on quantitative data from their investigation of 123 employed lesbian women, for example, Driscoll et al. (1996) suggested that women who disclose their lesbian identity appear more satisfied in the workplace than their closeted counterparts. Among the 228 lesbian women in her sample, Schneider (1986) found that human

service employment and gender segregation increased the likelihood of self-disclosure on the job. Conversely, she discovered that employment with children, higher incomes, larger workplaces, and previous job losses decreased the probability of coming out at work.

### Choice and Satisfaction

Seven of the studies reported findings related to job or career choice and satisfaction (Boatwright et al., 1996; Chung & Harmon, 1994; Croteau & Lark, 1995; Croteau & von Destinon, 1994; Driscoll et al., 1996; Etringer et al., 1990; Olson, 1987). Results from two investigations of lesbian women indicate that workplace climate and characteristics influence career choices (Boatwright et al.;  $N = 10$ ) and work satisfaction (Driscoll et al.;  $N = 123$ ). Accordingly, data from two national surveys of sexual minority college personnel specialists suggest that formal and informal support for gay, lesbian, and bisexual employees affects employment decisions (Croteau & von Destinon;  $N = 249$ ) and job satisfaction (Croteau & Lark;  $N = 174$ ).

As with the previous discussion of self-disclosure correlates, other relevant findings without support across multiple investigations seem nonetheless significant and worthy of mention. Chung and Harmon (1994) administered the Self-Directed Search (Holland, 1985a, 1985b) to measure the career interests of the 63 gay men and 60

heterosexual men in their sample. The Lifestyle Questionnaire was designed for their study to collect various data, including information about each participant's career aspiration (i.e., "What is your ideal occupation?"). As hypothesized, the career interests and aspirations of the gay respondents were found to be less traditional for men than were those of their heterosexual counterparts. According to Chung (1995), "these findings coincide with common stereotypes about gay men's nontraditional career choices" (p. 180).

Etringer et al. (1990) administered the Career Factors Inventory (Robbins, Morrill, & Boggs, 1987) to 15 gay men, 18 lesbian women, and 48 heterosexual participants (16 male, 32 female) in order to investigate between-group differences with regard to several variables in the career decision-making process. On ratings of uncertainty about career choices, gay men reported the highest level and lesbian women reported the lowest level. On ratings of dissatisfaction with career choices, the gay men and heterosexual women reported higher levels than did the lesbian women and heterosexual men. The researchers thus concluded that the degrees of uncertainty and dissatisfaction with career choices may vary by sex and by sexual orientation. In regard to one specific career choice, these findings seem consistent with Olson's (1987) conclusion that "decisions about becoming a teacher . . . are necessarily highly individual and very complex" (p. 80). Considering the findings summarized above, the

extremely personal and complicated career choices of gay men who teach elementary and secondary school provide a legitimate focus for this investigation.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter describes the design and methods of the study and serves three major purposes. Foremost, it summarizes the revised proposal for conducting the research. It further demonstrates the practicality of the investigation. Finally, it maintains the design flexibility that is a distinguishing characteristic of qualitative methods. Eight major topics are addressed: overall approach and rationale; sample selection; researcher's role; data collection; data management; data analysis; trustworthiness; and time line (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

### Overall Approach and Rationale

As discussed in Chapter One, recent Gallup poll data (Saad, 1996) indicate that one third of Americans think gays and lesbians should not work as high school teachers while 40% think homosexual candidates should not be hired as elementary school teachers. Furthermore, Americans are divided over the legality of same-sex relations (43% approve, 47% disapprove). It is reasonable to speculate that these attitudes toward gay men and their relationships influence their decisions to choose and develop careers in elementary and secondary education. Since 1974, only 13 studies published in

professional journals have investigated the career choice and development of gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers. Only one of these investigations has concentrated primarily on gay men, comparing their career interests and aspirations to those of their heterosexual counterparts (Chung & Harmon, 1994).

Based on these considerations, the research question was framed initially as: "What factors influence gay men to choose and develop careers as elementary or secondary school teachers?" The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that influence career choice and development for gay men who pursue vocations to teach elementary and secondary school. As these factors were examined in order to elaborate and refine existing theories of career choice and development, a grounded theory emerged that more specifically explains the vocational pursuits of gay male school teachers. Thus, the significance of this investigation is based on its potential implications for improving career counseling practice.

According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), the qualitative paradigm is uniquely strong "for research that is exploratory or descriptive, that assumes the value of context and setting, and that searches for a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon" (p. 39). The aim of this investigation was to explore and describe the vocational experiences of gay male teachers within the personal, professional, familial, and social

contexts that are likely to influence their teaching careers. Therefore, the qualitative approach provided an appropriate form of inquiry.

Three questions have been posed to determine the soundest research strategy (Yin, 1984):

First, what is the form of the research question--is it exploratory? Does it seek to describe the incidence or distribution of some phenomenon or does it try to explain some social phenomenon? Second, does the research require control over behavior, or does it seek to describe naturally occurring events? And third, is the phenomenon under study contemporary or historical? (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 40)

In the case of this investigation, the research question was exploratory and sought an explanation for gay male experiences of career choice and development in elementary and secondary education. The research additionally attempted to delineate natural occurrences in the lives of gay male teachers. Along with these determinants, the contemporary contexts of this study further suggested application of the qualitative paradigm.

### Sample Selection

Sample size in qualitative research may refer to numbers of interviews or observations as well as to numbers of participants (Sandelowski, 1995). Additionally, sufficiency of sample size in qualitative inquiry is conditional. A sample size of 10, for example,

may be considered sufficient for certain kinds of homogenous sampling but too small to develop a theory (Sandelowski, 1995). In fact, Morse (1994) has suggested that grounded theory studies include about 30 to 50 interviews or observations. Through “purposeful sampling for demographic homogeneity and selected phenomenal variation” (Sandelowski, 1995, p. 182 ), however, an independent investigator with finite resources can defend the minimum number of sampling units recommended yet still generate persuasive and meaningful discoveries.

In terms of phenomenal variation, six of the ten of the participants in this study teach elementary school, two teach middle school, and two teach high school. With regard to demographic homogeneity, all of these educators self-identified as gay men. The “reasonable” grounds on which these selective sampling decisions were made a priori (Glaser, 1978, p. 37; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973) include the Gallup poll data (Saad, 1996) and the underrepresentation of gay men in qualitative research on career development resummairized earlier in this chapter. The decision to omit lesbian women from the investigation increased the demographic homogeneity of the sample. Along with the selective phenomenal variation in levels of instruction, the exclusive focus on gay men further upheld the minimum number of sampling units recommended for grounded theory studies.

Participants for this investigation included 10 self-identified gay men who currently maintain employment as elementary, middle, or secondary school teachers. Sample selection methods involved enlisting personal and professional contacts of the researcher and of other recruits, frequently referred to as “friendship networks” or “snowballing” techniques (Croteau, 1996). Ages of participants ranged from 38 to 57, with a mean of 48.2. All identified their race/ethnicity as White/Caucasian. Three earned bachelor’s degrees and seven earned master’s degrees. All hold teaching certificates, and two also hold administrative credentials. Years employed as a school teacher ranged from 4 to 31, with a mean of 19.4.

### Researcher’s Role

Qualitative researchers play instrumental roles in the lives of their participants. In contrast to quantitative studies that rely on standardized instruments to gather data, qualitative investigators function as their own assessment tools. The potential influence of the researcher’s personal experience and theoretical orientation already were discussed in Chapter One. Role-specific issues for the qualitative investigator, however, can be sorted further into technical and interpersonal considerations (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). In regard

to this investigation, the following discussions respectively address these concerns.

### Technical Considerations

In qualitative research, technical concerns include the researcher's choices about self deployment, access negotiation, and efficiency (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

### Self Deployment

The qualitative researcher's role may vary in terms of "participantness," "revealedness," intensiveness and extensiveness, and focus of the study (Patton, 1990). Marshall and Rossman (1995) defined "participantness" as "the degree of actual participation in daily life," ranging from full participant to complete observer (p. 60). As discussed later in this chapter, data collection methods involved two semi-structured personal interviews and one structured telephone interview. Thus, social interaction sufficient for establishing rapport with individual participants was required. For the purpose of this investigation, however, the researcher's function was limited to the task of interviewer.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) further defined "revealedness" as "the extent to which the fact that there is a study going on is known

to the participants” (p. 60). Accordingly, informed consent was sought and obtained from all participants. Each was given an adequate explanation and opportunity to read the informed consent document (see Appendix A) before it was signed. This authorization form notified participants of (a) the title of the study, (b) the names of the investigators, (c) the purpose of the investigation, (d) procedures, and (e) confidentiality.

Additionally, Marshall and Rossman (1995) defined intensiveness and extensiveness as “the amount of time spent in the setting on a daily basis and the duration of the study over time” (p. 60). Although the study was not designed to demand time spent together on a daily basis, data collection methods required (a) an average of two hours spent in a setting mutually convenient for researcher-participant dialogues, and (b) a brief telephone interview to gather missing or incomplete demographic information. Similarly, the duration of the study over time was dependent on the amount of data collection and analysis needed to reach theoretical saturation of the categories under investigation.

Finally, Marshall and Rossman (1995) observed that “the researcher’s role may vary depending on the focus of the study: specific or diffuse” (p. 61). Although the initial research question was framed broadly and openly, the sample selection and data collection

methods were specified more narrowly and closely. The limited scope of the inquiry, therefore, defined a specific role for the investigator.

### Access Negotiation

Based on doctoral faculty committee recommendations for sampling gay men, access to research participants was negotiated through "friendship networks" and "snowballing" techniques (Croteau, 1996). Initial contacts were established via telephone, letter, or electronic mail. As necessary, access was negotiated further through face-to-face meetings. In compliance with the informed consent document (see Appendix A), the rights of individuals to decline or withdraw participation in this sensitive study were respected unquestionably (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

### Efficiency

In order to facilitate participation in this investigation, each personal interview was scheduled for an hour (60 minutes) and location mutually convenient for the researcher and the participant. Telephone interviews were used for gathering demographic information in order to maximize efficiency and minimize additional expenditures of time and travel. Further, all 20 personal interviews were audiotaped

live and later transcribed by a professional transcriptionist to expedite data collection, storage, and retrieval.

### Interpersonal Considerations

In qualitative research, these interpersonal considerations include concerns about reciprocity and ethics (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

#### Reciprocity

Reciprocity refers to the investigator's awareness and appreciation of the personal and professional investment of participants in the research process. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), the demands of reciprocity may require "providing informal feedback" and "being a good listener" but, nonetheless, "should fit within the constraints of research and personal ethics, and within the constraints of maintaining one's role as a researcher" (p. 51). Based upon their review of 351 reports on homosexuality in 78 journals from 1974 to 1988, however, Walsh-Bowers and Parlour (1992) found that researchers seldom involved participants beyond the role of providing data, ordinarily did not report conditions of consent, infrequently reported feedback, and very rarely indicated using data to promote social action.

The constant comparative method of data collection and analysis described later in this chapter allowed for the provision of informal feedback within the constraints of the investigator's role. During the second round of personal interviews, for example, informal feedback was provided to participants from whom additional data was collected in order to verify and synthesize the theoretical categories into which their previous responses were classified. These semi-structured dialogues additionally offered participating teachers the empathic attention and response of a researcher with advanced training in counseling procedures. Reciprocal self-disclosure of the investigator's gay identity further functioned to facilitate more mutual relationships with research volunteers. Possible long-term benefits to the participants include an increase in their vocational self-awareness as well as the personal and professional satisfaction of contributing to the development of a grounded theory with potential implications for improving career counseling practice.

### Ethics

Ethical considerations relevant to this qualitative study include concerns about confidentiality, dual role relationships, informed consent, and voluntary participation. Confidentiality and dual role relationships are discussed below. Informed consent and voluntary

participation were addressed earlier in this chapter among the technical considerations of self deployment and access negotiation.

During data collection and analysis, all information gathered from participants was kept confidential. Code numbers P1 through P10 were used to maintain their anonymity and conceal their identity. In addition to the investigators, the only person who had access to this confidential information was a professional transcriptionist who agreed to respect the ethical demands of confidentiality prior to transcribing the audiotaped interviews.

As a gay man and a professional counselor, the investigator recognized the risk of forming dual role relationships with the research participants. The role of the researcher as an interviewer, rather than as a psychotherapist, was specified accordingly. The purpose of the personal interviews was designated further in terms of data collection and informal feedback, rather than as professional counseling. Consultation with a doctoral faculty committee member was sought to clarify role confusion as potential conflicts emerged.

### Data Collection

The constant comparative method is a general feature of grounded theory methodology (Glaser, 1965/1967; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994) and thus provided the investigator with

a general strategy for data collection and analysis. Fontana and Frey (1994) referred to structured interviewing as “a situation in which an interviewer asks each respondent a series of preestablished questions with a limited set of response categories” (p. 363). Qualitative interviews, however, differ in the extent to which they are structured. Citing Merton and Kendall (1946), Bogdan and Biklen (1992) acknowledged that “some interviews, although relatively open-ended, are focused around particular topics or may be guided by some general questions” (p. 97). While semi-structured interviews limit the opportunity for understanding how respondents themselves structure the phenomena under investigation, these procedures nonetheless facilitate the collection of comparable data across participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). As the term implies, in other words, the constant comparative method is consistent with gathering and comparing parallel responses to semi-structured interviews.

Data collection methods involved two ( $\times 10 = 20$ ) semi-structured personal interviews and one ( $\times 10 = 10$ ) structured telephone interview for a total of 30 sampling units. Preliminary interviews focused on collecting data for the purpose of classifying phenomena and developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions. A schedule of open-ended questions (see Appendix B) was used to direct and guide the first round of data collection. Items 1 through 5 on this questionnaire relate to the initial research question

introduced in Chapter One. Items 6 through 10 further reflect three “theoretically sensitive” categories of related findings drawn from the review of empirical literature on gay, lesbian, and bisexual career development discussed in Chapter Two, namely (a) discrimination, (b) disclosure, and (c) choice and satisfaction.

Secondary interviews focused on collecting data for the purposes of (a) relating more specifically the categories and subcategories developed during initial data analysis, and (b) integrating the categories to form a theory, validating the integrative statements of relationship, and refining any categories that needed further development. Based on theoretical categories emerging from preliminary data analysis of the initial interviews, another open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix C) was used to direct and guide the second round of data collection. Finally, a structured telephone interview (see Appendix D) was required to gather missing or incomplete demographic information from all participants. Data collection and analysis was continued until theoretical saturation was accomplished (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

### Data Management

Huberman and Miles (1994) defined data management “pragmatically as the operations needed for a systematic, coherent

process of data collection, storage, and retrieval” (p. 438). Bogdan and Biklen (1992) recommended using a tape recorder “when a study involves extensive interviewing or when interviewing is the major technique in the study” (p. 128). All 20 personal interviews were audiotaped accordingly to gather, save, and recover information. A professional transcriptionist was hired to transcribe these audiotape recordings.

Levine (1985) drew on concepts from information and library science in order to propose five common principles for the storage and retrieval of qualitative data. As outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994), these practical standards involve:

1. Formatting: how written-up fieldwork notes are laid out, physically embodied, and structured. . . .
2. Cross -referral: information in one file showing where information in another can be found. . . .
3. Indexing: a generic term for what usually is called “coding.” It includes (a) defining clear categories (codes), (b) organizing these into a more or less explicit structure, embodied in a “thesaurus” or codebook, and (c) pairing of the codes with appropriate places in the database. . . .
4. Abstracting: a condensed summary of longer material . . . .
5. Pagination: using unique numbers/letters as locators of specific material in field notes. (p. 45)

For the purpose of this study, a computer software program (QSR NUD\*IST 4, 1997) was purchased and used to accomplish more easily and simply all of these data management functions.

## Data Analysis

As mentioned above, the constant comparative method is a common characteristic of grounded theory methodology (Glaser, 1965/1967; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994) and thus provided the researcher with a basic approach to data collection and analysis. In other words, data analysis began with data collection. As I listened to the participating teachers tell their stories during the first round of personal interviews, I heard key issues and recurrent events emerge from these semi-structured dialogues.

Data analysis continued as I (a) reviewed the audiotapes of the initial interviews in order to edit the transcriptions of these recordings for accuracy and confidentiality; and (b) specified these documents for entry into the data management software system. During these procedures, I further listened to and looked for fundamental themes and repeated occurrences to emanate from the semi-structured dialogues. After formatting and importing the transcriptions into the computer program, I printed hard copies of these documents in order to facilitate the coding procedures. Before beginning the coding process, however, I read through all 10 transcriptions and highlighted the key issues and recurrent events that I continued to notice as well as those that I previously had heard and seen emerging from the data.

In keeping with the constant comparative method, the coding procedure was a heuristic process. Initially, I electronically coded the fundamental themes and repeated occurrences, and generated 75 nodes or “containers for . . . thinking about the data” (QSR NUD\*IST 4 User Guide, 1997, p. 6). During this initial coding procedure, however, I recognized that the designations and meanings associated with the nodes at which I was coding data seemed to change as I proceeded from the first few transcriptions to the last few documents.

Similar to a teacher who allocates grades to student assignments based on a curve, I decided consequently to (a) reframe my first attempt as another overall survey of the data, and (b) use the 75 nodes that I already had generated to inform my second trial. In other words, I looked for ways to combine repetitious or delete redundant coding options in order to maximize coding consistency for the initial data analysis. Accordingly, I electronically re-coded the key issues and recurrent events, and re-generated 34 nodes.

Whereas I formerly concluded that my first coding attempt produced too many repetitious and redundant or inconsistent nodes for meaningful data analysis, I determined that my second trial generated a more manageable number of coding options that nonetheless seemed to lack conceptual organization. I thus met with two members of my doctoral faculty committee in order to discuss additional data analysis strategies. From and following these

discussions, I decided to compare my qualitative impressions of the data with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Based on these comparisons, I developed 43 “theoretically sensitive” categories that both reflect and relate more specifically the designations and meanings associated with the nodes at which the data had been coded twice previously. During the second round of personal interviews, I collected additional data for supplementary analysis in order to further develop theoretical associations between these classifications. In Chapter Four, written reflection attempts to describe and account for relationships between these categories and corresponding factors that influence career choice and development for gay male school teachers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Glaser, 1978).

### Trustworthiness

In the words of Marshall and Rossman (1995), “all research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated” (p. 143). Accordingly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed four standards that reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility and transferability respectively refer to the validity and generalizability of a qualitative investigation. The plurality of data collection cycles described

previously enhanced the credibility of the research findings (Croteau, 1996). In order to increase the transferability of the study's conclusions, the investigator relied on "purposeful sampling for demographic homogeneity and selected phenomenal variation" (Sandelowski, 1995, p. 182 ) to generate persuasive and meaningful discoveries.

Dependability refers to the researcher's efforts to account for variable conditions in the phenomenon under investigation as well as modifications in the research design based on an increasingly accurate understanding of participant experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). The design flexibility maintained throughout this chapter attends to this criterion. Finally, confirmability refers the conventional concept of objectivity. In response to this standard, the following strategies were incorporated to balance bias in interpretation: (a) a constant search for negative instances (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and (b) the purposeful examination of possible rival hypotheses (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). These competing speculations were drawn from the bodies of literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

#### Time Line

Please refer to Table 3.1 on page 87 for a time line of the research process.

Table 3.1

Time Line of Research Process

Research Procedure	Date
Writing of Research Proposal	July-September 1997
Research Proposal Meeting	October 6, 1997
Writing of Application for IRB Approval	October 1997
Submission of IRB Application	November 7, 1997
First Report of IRB Review	December 2, 1997
Recruitment of Research Participants	Dec. 1997-Feb. 1998
Proposal of Modification to IRB	January 8, 1998
Second Report of IRB Review	January 9, 1998
Initial Data Collection	January-February 1998
Initial Data Analysis	January-August 1998
Secondary Data Collection	May-June 1998
Secondary Data Analysis	May-August 1998
Writing of Chapters 1, 2, and 3	July 1998
Demographic Data Collection	August 1998
Writing of Chapters 4 and 5	August 1998
Submission of Exam Copy to Committee	August 31, 1998
Submission of Exam Copy to Grad School	September 10, 1998
Final Examination	September 24, 1998
Final Submission of Library Copy	By November 5, 1998

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF STUDY

Based on the recommendations of Strauss and Corbin (1990), this chapter attempts to tell “a clear analytic story” (p. 229) of factors that have influenced and influence 10 gay men to choose and develop careers as elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers. This written reflection on the qualitative data includes primary conceptualizations, secondary descriptions, and a “clear specification of relationships among categories” (p. 229). As anticipated in Chapter One, these rudiments of a grounded theory elaborate and refine existing theories of career choice and development in order to increase the descriptive potential of these hypothetical explanations for gay male educators. These first principles further provide a basic foundation on which additional researchers may develop complementary as well as supplementary theoretical constructs.

### Data Collection and Analysis

As introduced in Chapter Three, the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965/1967; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994) provided the investigator with a general strategy for data collection and analysis. Data collection methods involved two ( $\times 10 = 20$ ) semi-structured personal interviews and one ( $\times 10 = 10$ ) structured

telephone interview for a total of 30 sampling units. The first cycle of interviews focused on collecting data for the purpose of classifying subjective phenomena and developing descriptive categories for qualitative analysis.

The second round of interviews focused on collecting data for the purposes of (a) relating more specifically the categories developed during initial data analysis, and (b) integrating the categories to form a theory, validating the integrative statements of relationship, and refining any categories that needed further development. In addition to both series of semi-structured personal interviews, a single succession of structured telephone interviews was required to gather missing or incomplete demographic information from all participants. Data collection and analysis was continued until theoretical saturation was accomplished (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In order to facilitate data collection, storage and retrieval, all 20 personal interviews were audiotaped. A professional transcriptionist was hired to transcribe these audiotape recordings. For the purpose of this study, a computer software program (QSR NUD\*IST 4, 1997) was purchased and used to accomplish more easily and simply coding procedures and other data management functions.

Data analysis began with data collection. During the initial cycle of personal interviews, I first listened to the research participants tell their individual stories and thus heard common themes emerge

from these semi-structured dialogues. Next, I reviewed the audiotapes in order to edit the transcriptions of these recordings for accuracy and confidentiality. Before importing these documents into the software system, I formatted the transcriptions into text units to facilitate coding procedures.

Meanwhile, I further listened to and looked for common themes to emerge from the semi-structured dialogues. After formatting and importing the transcriptions into the computer program, I printed hard copies of these documents to read and highlight prior to the coding process. Specifically, I highlighted the common themes that I continued to notice as well as those that I previously had heard and seen emerging from the data. In the margins of the hard copies, I manually penciled descriptive words and phrases that seemed to capture the essence of these fundamental issues.

In keeping with the constant comparative method, the coding procedure was a heuristic process. Accordingly, it involved (a) browsing the interview transcriptions that I previously formatted and imported in to software system, and (b) coding the highlighted text units from the document hard copies at electronic nodes or “containers for . . . thinking about the data” (QSR NUD\*IST 4 User Guide, 1997, p. 6). During the initial coding procedure, I generated 75 free nodes or storage cells “for unconnected ideas” (p. 6). In the meantime, however, I recognized that the nodes at which I was coding

data seemed to shift in terminology and definition as I proceeded from the first few transcriptions to the last few documents.

Consequently, I printed and examined a list of the nodes among which I searched for conceptual similarity, inconsistency, or both. In other words, I looked for ways to combine comparable and reconcile variable coding options. After re-coding the common themes and re-generating another index of 34 free nodes, I determined that the more manageable number of coding options nonetheless seemed to lack conceptual organization. I thus met with two members of my doctoral faculty committee in order to discuss additional data analysis strategies. From and following these discussions, I decided to compare my qualitative impressions of the data with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Based on these comparisons, I developed 43 “theoretically sensitive” nodes to represent categories that both reflect and relate more specifically the common themes associated with the free nodes at which the data had been coded twice previously. I subsequently re-coded the data to correspond with these conceptually descriptive categories. During the second round of personal interviews, I collected additional data for supplementary analysis in order to further develop theoretical associations between these classifications. Finally, I discussed my qualitative impressions of these emerging relationships not only with committee members but also with a former academic

mentor, my clinical supervisor, and three gay male colleagues (a public health official and former school teacher, a licensed marriage and family therapist, and a pre-doctoral counseling psychologist). In addition to the feedback of doctoral academicians and clinicians, the personal experiences and professional opinions of my gay male peers served both to confirm and refine my qualitative perspectives.

### Preview of Categories

Four primary conceptualizations or categories emerged from the constant comparative method and data coding process described above. Namely, these core categories relate to (a) identity development, (b) social and family attitudes, (c) secrecy and disclosure, and (d) career motivation. The principal constructs thus designate the major headings for the theoretical discussions and secondary descriptions of qualitative findings. As prescribed earlier, (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), associations between these core classifications and their respective subcategories are specified with sufficient clarity.

### Profile of Participants

Chapter Three briefly introduced the participants for this investigation and simply described them as 10 self-identified gay men who currently maintain employment as elementary, middle, or

secondary school teachers. Demographic data for the sample population is summarized in Chapter Three. Please refer to Table 4.1 on page 94 for a profile of individual participants, including their respective code numbers and specific descriptors.

### Qualitative Findings

As prefaced above, theoretical discussions and secondary descriptions of qualitative findings are organized below under major headings that designate the core categories emerging from data collection and analysis procedures. Specifically, these primary designations represent fundamental issues of (a) identity development, (b) social and family attitudes, (c) secrecy and disclosure, and (d) career motivation.

#### Identity Development

According to the life-span, life-space approach to careers summarized in Chapter Two (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996), “the process of career [choice and] development is essentially that of developing and implementing occupational self-concepts” (p. 125). In other words, vocational selection and advancement is basically a process of identity formation and fulfillment. This path toward vocational identity and career maturity has been outlined in a series of

Table 4.1

Profile of Individual Participants

Participant	Code	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Highest Degree Earned	Years of Employment as a Teacher	Level of Instruction
1	P1	57	White/Caucasian	Bachelor's	20	Middle School
2	P2	49	White/Caucasian	Master's	4	High School
3	P3	52	White/Caucasian	Master's	27	Elementary School
4	P4	56	White/Caucasian	Master's	31	Middle School
5	P5	48	White/Caucasian	Bachelor's	21	Elementary School
6	P6	39	White/Caucasian	Bachelor's	15	Elementary School
7	P7	49	White/Caucasian	Master's	21	Elementary School
8	P8	46	White/Caucasian	Master's	20	Elementary School
9	P9	38	White/Caucasian	Master's	10	Elementary School
10	P10	48	White/Caucasian	Master's	25	High School

developmental stages ranging from growth and exploration during childhood and adolescence to disengagement in later adulthood (Super et al., 1996).

Regarding homosexuality, Cass (1979) likewise assumed that gay "identity is acquired through a developmental process" (p. 219) and thus proposed a multiphasic sequence of sexual identity formation advancing from identity confusion toward identity synthesis. In Chapter Two, the influence of the coming out process (Cass, 1979, 1984a, 1984b) on the vocational identity development (Super et al., 1996) of sexual minority persons was considered. Dunkle (1996) observed accordingly that both trajectories involve (a) longitudinal progressions through a number of successive stages, (b) multiple determinants in the course of identity formation, and (c) occasional regressions and premature resolutions in response to developmental challenges.

As subcategories of a core classification, vocational identity and sexual identity formation emerge from further analysis of the data referring to identity development. The following theoretical discussions and secondary descriptions consider the mutual interaction and reciprocal influence of these parallel processes. Intersections between these developmental paths are addressed in terms of identity integration.

## Vocational Identity

One of the factors that seemed to influence the career choice and development of all participants in this study was an experience of vocational identity formation. Super and his colleagues (1996) proposed that occupational self-concepts shift over the life-span in a series of five stages: Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Disengagement. These developmental stages are reflected in transcriptions of the audiotaped interviews and thus provide a theoretical framework for discussion. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, all direct references to the data respectively cite the participant's code (P1-P10), particular interview, and text unit. For example, the citation (P1.2.3) would refer to the third text unit of the first participant's second interview.

Growth. As summarized in Chapter Two, the first stage of the life-span, life-space approach to vocational identity formation involves four major tasks of career development. Prior to adulthood, namely, children and adolescents are challenged (a) to establish of a personal orientation to the future, (b) to internalize a locus of control in their lives, (c) to self-motivate academic and occupational performance, and (d) to acquire proficient work attitudes and behaviors (Super et al., 1996). During their personal interviews, all ten participants described

childhood and adolescent experiences that reflect variations on this introductory step toward vocational identity and career maturity.

Participant One, for example, reported: “As I was growing up, I liked kids a lot and people used to say you should be a teacher” (P1.1.8). Additionally, he recalled: “As long as I can remember, I wanted to be a teacher” (P1.2.8). Participant Two reported that “I started out studying Spanish when I was about 8 or 9 years old” and thus developed “a real interest in learning foreign languages” (2.1.8). Forty years later, he is teaching Spanish at a rural Oregon high school.

Participant Three reported that “things happened in my early education years that slowly brought me to elementary education.” Specifically, he identified that “I’ve always been someone who was very creative in the arts” (P3.1.16); accordingly, he now teaches first grade students at a magnet arts elementary school. Participant Five reported that “from my first recollection I was always teaching somebody else” (P5.1.12) and that “by junior high school, I knew that I really wanted to be a teacher” (P5.1.72). In terms of mentoring, Participant Nine reported:

I had some excellent role models as a child. My scout master is a person that . . . was pivotal as far as giving me a sense of self-worth and a sense of self-assuredness, largely through the things we did in camping. (P9.1.32)

Finally, Participant Ten admitted that “I’ve always had a lot of wanderlust as a child” and further acknowledged that “the big motivation [to become a teacher] was so that I could travel in the summers and have a job where I would have the summers free” (P10.1.8).

Exploration. During the second phase of forming a vocational identity, individuals face the career-specific developmental tasks of crystallizing, specifying, and implementing an occupational choice (Super et al., 1996). All ten participants further described experiences that reflect variations on this exploratory stage of developing a vocational self-concept. Several of the teachers in this study, for example, reported exploring career opportunities and alternatives during adolescence.

Accordingly, Participant Four reported that “we had some career programs when I was in high school and so I went to one on teaching” (P4.1.36). Participant Six similarly recalled having “had career education experiences and course work in high school” which further offered him a “broad exposure to different careers” (P6.2.48). As an adolescent, Participant Seven remembered that “I was in the Future Teachers of America” (P7.1.12) and “I belonged to Future Farmers of America, too” (P7.1.60). In regard to career exploration, Participant Nine reported:

When I was in high school and I was looking seriously at career options, two came immediately to mind . . . One was a career in plant hybridizing or plant pathology . . . And then I'd also been very active in music and drama . . . and dreamed of learning to sing and learning to play the piano. (P9.1.8)

After starting his education career as an itinerant music teacher, he now is an elementary classroom instructor.

Establishment. The third stage of vocational identity formation involves the developmental tasks of stabilizing, consolidating, and advancing in an occupation (Super et al., 1996). During their initial interviews, only nine of the ten participants described experiences that reflect this phase of establishing a teaching career. Although he did not specify the circumstances of his actual entry into the field of elementary education, Participant Seven did report recycling through this stage of career development when he established his membership in the sexual minority committee of the National Education Association (NEA): "So I started getting involved with Oregon Education Association, and I was elected to go to the NEA [convention], and that's how I got involved with the gay and lesbian caucus" (P7.1.204).

Otherwise, the remaining participants recalled various memories of their introductions to pedagogy. Participant One, for example, reported that "my first year was hell . . . but toward the end of the year . . . I got so close to my students that . . . I really hated to see them

leave” (P1.1.88). Similarly, Participant Two acknowledged that “my first job was in the middle school and it was real discouraging” but admitted that “things have been . . . getting better and better every year” (P2.1.8). After earning his degree in elementary education and finding “there were no jobs,” Participant Five reported discovering that “I could become a [gender] minority if I went to the lower [i.e., pre-school and primary] grades so that’s why I chose my first stint in Head Start” (P5.1.12).

Maintenance. During the next phase of forming a vocational identity, individuals face the developmental tasks of holding on, keeping up, and innovating their occupational choices (Super et al., 1996). Once again, all ten participants described experiences that reflect this ongoing stage of career development. Most of the teachers in this study expressed career satisfaction with the teaching profession.

After his discouraging first job in the middle school, Participant Two nonetheless reported that his high school teaching career “becomes more satisfying as time goes on” (P2.1.172). Participant Three likewise declared that “I have been teaching for 27 years” and affirmed that “it’s been a wonderful profession for me” (P3.1.164). Participant Four reported that “I’ve enjoyed teaching my entire career and that’s been a constant theme for me” (P4.1.8). Participant Five likewise remarked that “there’s never been a day that I didn’t enjoy

what I was doing and there's not too many people that can say that about their jobs" (P5.1.60).

A few of the teachers, however, expressed less enthusiasm and more ambivalence about the teaching profession. Participant Six, for example, admitted that "I sometimes ask myself, 'Do I see myself doing this job for the next 20 years?' . . . I would think I'll stick with it. I mean, I can't imagine anything else now" (P6.1.148). After a brief reference to Oregon Ballot Measure 5 and the impact of tax cuts on the school system, Participant Seven wavered that "it's not satis- . . . school teaching is satisfying for me, if I look at the classroom" (P7.1.268).

Disengagement. The final stage of vocational identity formation involves the developmental tasks of career deceleration, retirement planning, and retirement living (Super et al., 1996). Only six of the ten participants anticipated experiences that reflect this terminal phase of vocational redirection. After teaching for 27 years, for example, Participant Three admitted that "I'm getting tired . . . I'm at the end of my career. I'm starting to look at retirement with relish" (P3.1.164).

As he explores the early stages of gay identity formation described in the following section, Participant Four acknowledged that "I'm close enough to retirement that . . . I could step out at any particular point if I felt that it [i.e., coming out or being gay] was . . .

[too] painful for me or perhaps getting in the way of my teaching” (P4.1.124). Anticipating the loss of his vocational identity, Participant Seven predicted that “I’m going to retire . . . in a few years” and admitted struggling that “I won’t be a teacher at some point in my life” (P7.1.328). After disclosing the probability of his career advancement into educational administration which he described as “a natural offshoot of having years of . . . classroom experience,” Participant Eight further expressed his vocational satisfaction but nonetheless acknowledged his career alternatives: “I really enjoy the position I hold now . . . I could easily sit where I’m at and retire” (P8.1.260). Finally, Participant Ten likewise anticipated that “I’ve got six more years until I retire” but also affirmed that “I’m doing the best work of my career right now” (P10.1.236).

### Sexual Identity

Another factor that seemed to influence the career choice and development of most participants in this study was an experience of sexual identity formation. Cass (1979) proposed that sexual identity develops in a succession of six stages: Identity Confusion, Identity Comparison, Identity Tolerance, Identity Acceptance, Identity Pride, and Identity Synthesis. Comparable to the phases of vocational identity formation discussed and described above, these developmental

stages also are reflected in transcriptions of the audiotaped interviews and therefore provide a conceptual framework for discourse.

Identity confusion. As summarized in Chapter Two, the process of gay identity development begins when male children, adolescents, or adults become consciously aware that information regarding homosexuality acquired directly or indirectly somehow applies to them. As they continue to personalize this information, the heterosexual self-concepts to which they have been conforming begin to feel discordant. This discrepancy leads to emotional conflict, often in the form of anxiety or confusion (Cass, 1990). All ten participants described experiences that reflect this pre-coming out phase of disorientation. Participant Two, for example, reported: "In my childhood I was pretty confused . . . because I knew but I denied [my sexual feelings]" (P2.1.56).

According to Troiden (1979, 1989), the first stage of gay identity formation occurs before puberty and is characterized by feelings of social difference and gender nonconformity. Prior to gay self-identification, for example, young boys often describe themselves as being more interested in the arts and less interested in sports than other pre-adolescent males. Participant One exemplified Troiden's assertion, admitting that "I always thought I was different but I wasn't sure what the reason was" (P1.1.24). He recalled that "I remember crying a lot alone and not really understanding why, just feeling sad

and depressed and crying . . . I felt so alone all the time and so different than everybody else” (P1.2.326). He further remembered that “I got along really well with the girls, and we used to do things together. I never wanted to be a girl, but I liked having them as friends” (1.1.72). Finally, he concluded that “I was not a really good athlete . . . I must have been somewhat effeminate” (P1.1.72).

Similarly, Participant Three described experiences of gender role diversity:

I enjoyed some of the more quiet, sedentary type activities that girls did more than what all the boys did, and I got teased . . . a lot . . . in elementary school and middle school and high school of being a sissy, or a girl. (P3.1.92)

Participant Six further admitted that “I always knew I was different and I think that difference was perceived by some kids in school” (P6.1.187). Finally, Participant Ten acknowledged that “I knew as an adolescent that something was different about me” (P10.1.60).

Identity comparison. The second stage of the process occurs when these boys or men can accept the possibility that they might not be heterosexual. Their ability to admit that they might be gay reflects a significant decrease in the confusion they sought to reduce during the first stage of identity formation (Cass, 1979), and marks a first step toward committing to a gay self-image (Cass, 1990). This preliminary self-comparison and peer-identification feels less confusing but more alienating from heterosexual others.

Eight of the ten participants described experiences that reflect this conditional stage of developing a gay self-concept. As children and adolescents, however, some of these teachers recalled lacking gay peers with whom to identify and compare themselves. Participant Three, for example, reported that "I knew no gay people when I grew up. I had no idea until I really left home and met gay men when I was in the service . . . that there was a gay lifestyle" (P3.1.28). Reflecting on his college years, Participant Nine acknowledged that "there were other gay people in the music program but I was really tuned out to recognizing them" and attributed this lack of recognition to growing up in a small town: "I didn't know what to look for. I didn't understand the cues that a lot of gay men just automatically give out once they become part of the subculture" (P9.1.112). Participant Ten likewise reported that "I didn't have any models. I didn't have any friends that were gay. I didn't start making those contacts until my 30s" (P10.1.156).

Identity tolerance. The third stage of the process occurs when these boys or men can admit that they are probably gay. Although they only tolerate rather than fully accept a gay identity, this further identification enables them to acknowledge their social, emotional, and sexual needs. Conversely, this self-tolerance highlights the discrepancy between the way they see themselves (i.e., probably gay)

and the way they perceive others seeing them (i.e., probably heterosexual).

Six of the ten participants described experiences that reflect this phase of tolerating a gay self-image. Participant One, for example, recalled playing “the whole macho innocent part” (P1.1.28) during his first visit to a gay bar with a friend. As he gradually grew more tolerant of his same-sex feelings, however, he started to explore them on his own.

Eventually, I went without him by myself and started living out my fantasies . . . I would meet guys there, and then I wouldn’t even dance for a long time, and then finally I would dance with guys, and then finally I would go home with guys. (P1.1.28)

Two of the teachers reported tolerating a bisexual identity before accepting a gay identity. At the time of his career choice, for instance, Participant Six recalled that “I had a good idea that I pretty much was gay or at the very least bisexual” (P6.1.104). Between having graduated from high school and being drafted into military service, Participant Seven remembered that “I considered myself bisexual . . . because I did have a sexual encounter with a woman when I was 18” (P7.1.168).

Identity acceptance. The fourth stage of gay identity formation is characterized by increasing and ongoing contacts with other sexual

minority individuals and groups. These validating and "normalizing" encounters empower self-tolerant persons to fully accept a gay self-image. As their contacts with others increase in frequency and regularity, individuals discover preferences for same-sex social contexts and start to form friendships within these situations.

Nine of the ten participants described experiences that reflect this self-accepting phase of gay identity development. Participant Four, for example, referred to his sexual orientation when he admitted that "it's something that I'm just now really accepting" (P4.1.60). He further acknowledged having become "more open to who I am" and drawing support "from expanding gay relationships around me" (P.4.1.112).

According to Cass (1979), the kinds of gay subgroups within which adolescent and adult males socialize strongly influence the way they progress through the remaining stages of the coming out process. While some groups affirm that being gay is valid both publicly and privately, others advocate that a gay self-image is valid as a private identity but is "nobody else's business." In order to explore full legitimacy, Participant Nine recalled "driving to San Francisco" to fraternize "in the heyday of the Castro [Street] era" (P9.1.220). Conversely, Participant One reported that only now "all of a sudden, I'm starting to meet people" within the social boundaries of "a [fully] legitimate gay community" (P1.1.160).

Identity pride. Gay males enter the fifth stage of identity formation with a strong sense of the incongruency between personal acceptance and social disapproval. In order to manage these discordant feelings, they tend to discriminate between people based on sexual orientation and identification. They now not only accept but also prefer their new identities to a heterosexual self-image. A strong commitment to the gay community generates feelings of group identity, belonging, and pride (Cass, 1979).

Eight of the ten participants described experiences that reflect this phase of ego strength and group solidarity. Participant Three, for example, referred to being gay when he proudly affirmed that "I think it's a blessing . . . I think it's been a wonderful aspect of my life . . . I think I'm real different from, oh, the average American male" (P3.1.152). Participant Seven proudly recalled "the first time I got up in front of . . . a hundred and ten teachers that go to the NEA [convention]" on which occasion "I came out to them by asking them to become a member of GLC [gay and lesbian caucus]." He further remembered that "we were wearing pink T-shirts and there was a lot of empathy towards being gay . . . and I felt like I could change something at that [national] level and it could trickle down" (P7.1.220). Participant Ten acknowledged that "I'm proud to be who I am but it's not a big issue for me." Nonetheless, he admitted that "it would just

be wonderful to come out to the whole school . . . and give these kids a positive role model" (P10.1.216).

Identity synthesis. Gay males enter this final phase of identity development with a sense that a "them vs. us" philosophy no longer applies. As this "heterosexual vs. homosexual" dichotomy is relinquished, they acknowledge their potential similarities with heterosexual counterparts, as well as possible differences with sexual minority peers. Public and private aspects of self become synthesized into an integrated identity which includes sexual orientation among many other dimensions of personhood (Cass, 1979, 1990).

Only two of the ten participants described experiences that seem to reflect this final stage of the coming out process. In reference to his sexual orientation, for example, Participant Six reported that "it's been like a companion to me" and that "it's kind of blended in my life" before admitting that "it's a small part of the pie" (P6.1.116).

Participant Ten similarly acknowledged that "sexuality is just one little piece of who we are . . . it's a big piece but it's not the whole thing" (P10.1.216).

Based on the lack of collateral data collected from other participants in this study, the theme of identity synthesis lacks theoretical saturation for the sample population of gay male school teachers. Qualitative evidence nonetheless supports the other five phases of gay identity formation and thus suggests that the

participants acquire (if not integrate) gay identity through a developmental process (Cass, 1979) comparable to the sequence of vocational identity formation discussed and described in the previous section.

### Identity Integration

As introduced in Chapter One, my personal experiences have influenced my assumptions about career choice and development for gay men. Prior to this investigation, for example, I assumed that a gay man who self-identified before choosing a career would select a vocation which allowed him to further disclose his sexual orientation and develop a positive gay identity. I likewise assumed that a gay man who self-identified after choosing a career would select another vocation if his initial choice oppressed sexual minority workers or suppressed self-disclosure and identity formation. Otherwise, I assumed that his process of career development would reflect a pattern of attempts to reconcile or integrate his vocational and sexual self-concepts.

Regardless of whether a participant chose to develop his vocational identity as a school teacher before or after forming his sexual identity as a gay man, I presumed that somehow he would blend or merge these primary self-concepts on his path toward career

maturity. From initial data collection and analysis, two theoretical categories emerged which reflect expressions of vocational and sexual identity integration among the sample population: advocacy and activism and gender role flexibility. During the second round of personal interviews, I explored relationships between these emerging constructs with each participant. These associations are discussed and described below.

Advocacy and activism. Since sexual minority school teachers have experienced a prolonged history of heterosexist oppression in the American workplace (Harbeck, 1992) and because 33% to 40% of Americans still think gay men should not work as secondary or elementary school teachers (Saad, 1996), I assumed that each participant would encounter the integration of his vocational and sexual identities as a significant developmental challenge. One of the ways, however, that most participants seem to blend or merge these primary self-concepts is through social advocacy, political activism, or both. Accordingly, nine of the ten teachers participating in this study described experiences that reflect a relationship between the conceptual theme of identity integration and the theoretical category of advocacy and activism.

In terms of social advocacy, for example, Participant One reported that Oregon Ballot Measures 9 and 13 provided opportunities for him to blend or merge his vocational and sexual self-concepts

within the career-specific forum of discussing gay issues with his more mature students in the middle school: "When the issues came up and I was teaching Social Studies to older kids . . . we would actually have debates about being a homosexual and about homosexual rights." During these discussions, he experienced "a lot of support [for gays] from kids that really surprised me" (P1.1.120) and that further allowed him to integrate his career and gay identities. Consequently, he claimed that "I'm not afraid [now] to say that I'm a strong advocate for gay rights where before I used to be afraid . . . because I didn't want anybody to think that I was gay" (P1.2.84).

Conversely, Participant Two admitted that "addressing gay issues is not something that . . . school society really wants me to be doing" (P2.1.52). As a social advocate, however, he acknowledged that "students who are gay are going to have a sense that I am, and maybe I can be a role model for them" (P2.1.116). Participant Four associated identity integration with social advocacy when he reported that "I think, as I'm more open to who I am, that if I hear homosexual slurs in the classroom I now tend to make issues of them with a student" whereas "I probably would not have ten years ago" (P4.1.144). In regard to blending or merging his vocational and sexual self-concepts, he related that "I am concerned . . . about gay students in the classroom" (P4.2.84). Similarly, Participant Eight acknowledged that

“teaching tolerance” (P8.2.276) in an expression of himself both as a school teacher and as a gay man.

In terms of political activism, Oregon Ballot Measures 9 and 13 additionally provided Participant Five with opportunities to reveal and more fully integrate his sexual identity as a gay man with his vocational identity as a school teacher:

[For] Ballot Measure 9, I passed out bumper stickers and stuff at school and [for] Ballot Measure 13, I was the major sign maker and . . . passed out literature and even found myself standing on the street corner waving the signs on election night. Now that’s really coming out because . . . all the teachers at school knew I wasn’t married and probably suspected I was gay when I was passing out all the literature, [and] that confirmed it for them. (P5.1.204)

As discussed and described earlier, Participant Seven further combined political activism with professional advocacy when he established his membership in the gay and lesbian caucus of the National Education Association. Moreover, he identified his efforts “to help gay and lesbian students and teachers . . . on a national level” (P7.2.280) as the single factor that has the most positive influence on his career development as a sexual minority educator.

According to Dewey (1916) and the critical-social perspective introduced in Chapter One:

The fundamental purpose of education must be to empower people with the knowledge and disposition required to pose questions that reflect everyday experience and then to work responsibly to improve the quality of life

in their communities. (Professional Teacher and Counselor Education Licensure Program, 1994, pp. 1-2)

In other words, school teachers as well as career counselors are called to be advocates and activists for social and political justice. As reflected in the qualitative data, advocacy and activism for sexual minority citizens, students, and teachers seem to allow most of the research participants career-specific contexts in which to integrate their vocational identities as school teachers and their sexual identities as gay men.

Gender role flexibility. In addition to social advocacy and political activism, the practical application of flexible gender roles required of an effective educator seems to be another way that most participants blend or merge their vocational and sexual self-concepts. Accordingly, eight of the ten teachers participating in this study described experiences that reflect a relationship between the conceptual theme of identity integration and the theoretical category of gender role flexibility.

As cited earlier in reference to identity confusion, for example, Participants One and Three recalled memories of childhood and adolescent gender nonconformity. During his second interview, however, Participant One acknowledged that “the feminine qualities that I may have are not necessarily bad qualities” (P1.2.264). In regard to blending or merging his vocational and sexual self-concepts,

moreover, Participant Three admitted feeling that “being a gay man, I had a stronger female side of my personality which seemed to fit with being a school teacher” (P3.2.20).

Participant Four further drew an association between his non-masculine character and his vocational self-efficacy:

There were certain aspects of me that were perhaps more feminine and that this may indeed be some reasons why I ended up in teaching: a career where caring I think plays an important aspect and adds to a person's effectiveness. (P4.2.184)

Participant Five similarly admitted that “being gay . . . probably makes me a better teacher in the elementary [school]” (P5.1.120) because “I can get down and be silly and make women’s voices if I need to” (P5.1.124) whereas “I think some of . . . the macho heterosexual men wouldn’t even consider doing that” (P5.1.128).

Likewise, Participant Nine observed that gay men “make ideal elementary school teachers” because “they are very caring, very sensitive, [and] . . . willing to take on a role that some men just could not take on” (P9.1.132). In regard to factors that shaped his career choice, Participant Ten admitted thinking that “I probably was influenced by the women in the family [working] as teachers, which probably made it difficult for my father, who saw teaching more as a women’s role or women’s occupation” (P10.1.36). He specified accordingly that “my role as a teacher is to show them [i.e., my

students] . . . a healthy man who is not afraid to . . . bring out parts of himself that maybe other men in their lives haven't." However, he admitted that "I have to be careful and not just show my feminine side" and thus acknowledged that "I also have a masculine side . . . that I'm exploring now" (P10.1.240).

As summarized in Chapter Two, Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise (1981, 1996) may be applicable and relevant for gay men as well as for lesbian women (Morgan & Brown, 1991). According to Gottfredson (1996), vocational alternatives are circumscribed on the basis of internal factors (e.g., vocational interests) and external variables (e.g., social prestige and occupational sex-type). Between the ages of six and eight, children begin to comprehend the idea of gender roles. During this developmental phase, their vocational aspirations reflect their focus on acceptable gender-specific alternatives.

Numerous researchers, however, have found significant relationships between childhood gender nonconformity and adult homosexuality (Bailey & Zucker, 1995; Billingham & Hockenberry, 1987; Green, 1986, 1987; Green, Williams, & Goodman, 1982; Whitam, 1977; Whitam & Mathy, 1991; Zucker, 1997; Zuger, 1984, 1988). According to Bailey and Zucker (1995), for example, almost 90% of gay male participants in 32 retrospective studies scored higher than the average heterosexual man on measures of childhood gender

nonconformity (e.g., cross-dressing, lack of interest in rough play or sports, preference for female peers, and interest in feminine activities and toys).

In regard to Gottfredson's theory, these retrospective data suggest that pre-adolescent homosexual boys may develop vocational aspirations that reflect their focus on ego-syntonic gender-relative alternatives. These data further support speculation that gay men may adopt broader definitions of gender-appropriate work (Chung, 1995). Gender role flexibility may have influenced eight of the ten participants in this investigation to choose a more feminine than masculine occupation. Regardless of its influence on career choice, it seems to be another expression of vocational and sexual identity integration for gay male school teachers.

### Social and Family Attitudes

In addition to the core category of identity development discussed and described in the previous section, social and family attitudes emerged from data collection as a another primary classification of factors that influence career choice and development among the sample population of gay male school teachers. As subcategories of this core classification, attitudes toward teaching and attitudes toward homosexuality emerge from additional data analysis.

These subordinate constructs designate the subheadings for the following discussions and descriptions of qualitative findings related to societal and familial bias. The major discoveries emerging from these written reflections are summarized further in terms of social and family influences.

### Attitudes Toward Teaching

Three of the most influential career choice and development theories summarized in Chapter Two consider the effects of occupational status or prestige on vocational selection and advancement (Gottfredson, 1996; Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996; Super et al., 1996). Gottfredson's theory, for example, assumes that children circumscribe their vocational aspirations based on their orientation to social valuation (ages 9 to 13) as well as to sex roles (ages six to eight). Accordingly, pre-adolescents become very sensitive to social appraisal, either by their peer group or by the larger community. By fourth grade (age nine), children evaluate low-status occupations more severely and stop mentioning them among their vocational aspirations. By eighth grade (age 13), most early adolescents appraise occupational prestige the same way adults do, and comprehend the close connection among income, education, and vocation (Gottfredson, 1996).

Similarly, the basic theory of status attainment assumes that the attitudes of significant others about appropriate educational and occupational levels affect the vocational status of workers (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996). The life-span, life-space approach to careers likewise presumes that the structure of the career pattern is established by the person's parental socioeconomic status, intelligence, education, talents, personality traits, and career maturity, as well as by the opportunities to which he or she is introduced (Super et al., 1996). Clearly, these parental variables affect familial bias toward career choice and development. The following discussions thus describe the influence of social attitudes as well as family attitudes toward teaching on the vocational selection and advancement of the research participants.

Social attitudes. During their initial interviews, nine of the ten participants described experiences that reflected the potential influence of social attitudes toward teaching on their career choice and development. These social attitudes included those of their peers and colleagues, as well as those of the general public. During the second round of data collection, therefore, I specifically asked each of them to consider the influence of social attitudes toward school teachers on their vocational selection and advancement.

In regard to career choice, four of the ten participants described the influence of positive social attitudes toward teaching. Participant

One, for example, recalled that “I felt like society . . . accepted teachers pretty much . . . so I felt pretty good about going into that [occupation]” (P1.2.120). Similarly, Participant Three remembered that “I felt that it was an honorable profession” and “seemed to be an honorable thing for me to do” (P3.2.315). Participant Five likewise reminisced that, “back when I went into it, teachers were somebody.” He further acknowledged that “I liked that prestige, so that was one of the draws” (P5.2.140). Regarding his career development as well as his career choice, Participant Six admitted that “I like the idea of being respected. I like the idea of being involved in an honorable profession” (P6.2.96).

Conversely, one participant reported that negative social attitudes toward teaching did not discourage his career choice to become a school teacher. Participant Four accordingly described “the social attitudes that I saw growing up in the 1950s” as public opinions that assumed public education (a) “was not a profession for really red-blooded achieving American men,” (b) “was a profession that didn't perhaps deserve a whole lot of money,” and (c) “was a profession that was not as respected as much as a lot of other professions, perhaps particularly for men as opposed to women” (P4.2.160). Moreover, he reported thinking that “I went into education in spite of some of those attitudes” (P4.2.160).

Five participants otherwise denied, minimized, or qualified the influence of social attitudes toward teaching on their vocational selection. Participant Nine, for example, acknowledged that "I'm not sure I was aware of other people's social values" (P9.2.88). Participant Ten likewise admitted that, "because I was 24, I'm not so sure I was all that aware of the social attitudes towards teachers" (P10.2.66). Nonetheless, he conceded that "I always thought that . . . it was a respected profession" (P10.2.70).

Participant Eight admitted thinking that school teachers "had moderate standing . . . in the community" but nonetheless declared that "I had no illusions about being put on some pedestal" (P8.2.76). Although Participant Seven recalled imagining that school teachers had "not very much" social respectability, he associated "getting a college diploma" with social prestige (P7.2.128). At the time of his mid-life career transition, Participant Two reported knowing that, "generally speaking, teachers are not treated with a lot of respect . . . so it wasn't really a consideration one way or another for going into it [i.e., the teaching profession]" (P2.2.68).

In regard to career development, eight of the ten participants described the influence of negative social attitudes toward teaching. Due to a decrease in positive public opinion toward school teachers, for example, Participant One reported feeling "more and more . . . that I have to work harder and harder to prove myself" (P1.2.132).

Considering all “the budget cuts” and “the safety issues,” Participant Seven likewise reported that “it’s harder to be a teacher right now” (P7.2.228).

Participant Three generally acknowledged a shift in social attitudes toward “less respect for teachers” (P3.2.319). Similarly, Participant Five complained that “we don’t get any respect anymore” (P5.2.144) and confessed that negative public opinion and a general lack of support demoralize and discourage his occupational performance:

I know when they took tenure away and when they raised the class size and when they want to take benefits away rather than to give benefits, I see it in myself as well as my colleagues, we then do less than our best. (P5.2.148)

Participant Two expressed frustration with negative social attitudes toward teaching that assume (a) the problem is “education is so expensive,” and (b) the solution is “lowering teacher’s salaries” (P2.2.100). Participant Eight likewise expressed anger toward the negative assaults from advocates for tax credits and voucher systems: “You get so tired of responding to the attacks that you get pissed off” (P8.2.88). Finally, Participant Ten expressed thinking that “today there is less trust in the school districts . . . the system is falling apart in many ways and it’s depressing” (P10.2.74).

In addition to Participant Six who admitted liking the idea of being “respected” and “involved in an honorable profession” (P6.2.96),

only Participant Four acknowledged that other positive (i.e., less restrictive and more permissive) social attitudes toward school teachers influence his teaching career: “I think there's much more freedom [now] for teachers to . . . live a more private life and society doesn't feel that they [sic] have the right to tell you how to live” (P4.2.164). Regarding social attitudes toward teaching, then, only 40% of the participants described a positive influence on career choice whereas 80% of the teachers described a negative influence on career development.

Family attitudes. During their initial interviews, nine of the ten participants described experiences that reflected the potential influence of family attitudes toward teaching on their career choice. This factor of familial bias emerged from discussions of family expectations and family role models. During the second round of data collection, therefore, I specifically asked each of them to consider the influence of family attitudes toward school teachers on their vocational selection.

Accordingly, nine of the ten participants reported that positive family attitudes toward teaching influenced their career choice. Seven of these nine educators associated favorable familial opinions of school teachers with the positive influence of family role models. Participant One, for example, reported that “my uncle was a teacher and . . . he was kind of my mentor” (P1.2.172). Similarly, Participant

Two recalled that “my grandmother was a teacher” (P2.2.108) and “she helped me study languages” (P2.2.112). Participant Five’s family description, however, exemplified (if not exaggerated) the relationship between the family role models and the positive family attitudes toward teaching that influenced his career choice:

Everybody was a school teacher in my family. My mother taught. We had a lot of relatives on both sides of the family that taught and . . . Mom always pointed them out, so she had a high respect for teachers . . . I guess it was just that love of learning, that love of books, and the joy of helping somebody else learn something. We always did that sort of thing. (P5.2.156)

Two of the seven teachers who acknowledged the influence of family role models on their vocational selection admitted having parents who were educators. Both of these participants, however, reported that their folks did not force them to follow in their footsteps. Referring to his mother and father, for example, Participant Six admitted that “they were pretty open to other areas I might have gone into” (P6.2.104) although “they were supportive of my decision to become a teacher” (P6.2.108). Referring to himself and his brothers, Participant Ten likewise reported that “my mom was a teacher” but “she was always . . . happy to see us happy with whatever we chose to do” (P10.2.90). Conversely, he nonetheless associated his career choice with defiance of paternalistic expectations:

I was very much of a rebel against my father's wishes to be a dentist, . . . make money, and have this prestigious job.

So, a part of it was me rebelling against his wishes and choosing a profession that I knew that he probably didn't think was as admirable for a son to have. In fact, he tried to talk me out of it five, six years into my career. I didn't listen to him. (P10.2.90)

Although no additional family role models were discussed, the other two (of nine) participants also described the influence of favorable familial bias toward teaching on their vocational selection. Participant Eight, for example, admitted "getting a lot of attention within the immediate family" (P8.2.120) for choosing to enter "a noble profession" (P8.2.116). Finally, Participant Nine acknowledged a positive association between maternal influence and career choice:

My mother always respected teachers a lot and the whole process of . . . education. She never went to college herself and . . . one of the dreams that she had for her children was entering college . . . I feel like she taught me that teachers were to be held in high esteem. (P9.2.92)

Only Participant Three otherwise denied the influence of positive family attitudes toward school teachers on his vocational selection and advancement: "Never, ever do I feel that my family looked up to me because I was a teacher" (P3.2.347). Regarding family attitudes toward teaching, then, 90% of the participants described a positive influence on career choice which 70% of the teachers further associated with their positive family role models in the teaching profession.

### Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

The recent Gallup poll data introduced in Chapter One and further cited above indicates that one third of Americans think gay men should not work as secondary school teachers and 40% think male homosexuals should not teach elementary school (Saad, 1996). Based on Allport's (1954) assertion that "no one can be indifferent to the abuse and expectations of others" (p. 143), it is reasonable to expect that these negative attitudes toward gay men influence their vocational selection and advancement in the fields of elementary and secondary education. The following discussions thus describe the influence of family as well as social attitudes toward homosexuality on the vocational selection and advancement of the research participants.

Social attitudes. During their initial interviews, all ten of the participants described experiences that reflected the potential influence of social attitudes toward homosexuality on their career choice and development. These social attitudes included those of peers and colleagues, those of students and their parents, and those of the general public. During the second round of data collection, therefore, I specifically asked each of them to consider the influence of social attitudes toward gay men on their vocational selection and advancement.

In regard to career choice, seven of the ten participants described various ways of circumventing the influence of negative social attitudes toward homosexuality which allowed them to select and pursue vocations in the teaching profession. During his discouraging first year in the middle school, for example, Participant Two reported that "I also worked with adults at the community college" (P2.1.8). He admitted thinking that the public opinion of gay men "being inappropriate [for classroom instruction] might be less at the college level than at the high school or even elementary level" (P2.2.164) and thus implied that a more tolerant social attitude among post-secondary administrators, colleagues, and students, as well as the general public, might have eased his mid-life career transition. Prior to developing an awareness of his vocational identity as a school teacher, Participant Three reported that "I was a confused gay man" (P3.2.8). Regarding the influence of social attitudes toward homosexuality on his vocational selection, however, he recalled that "I was married at the time" and acknowledged that marriage was "a buffer for me to fit into being a teacher or into society" (P3.2.176).

Participants Five and Six otherwise assumed that social attitudes toward gay men in populated urban communities would be more tolerant than those in isolated rural districts. Participants Five, Seven, and Eight further assumed that social attitudes toward gay men among well-educated and broad-minded professional colleagues

would be more tolerant than those among the general public. Finally, Participant Nine reported finding enough safety in his content specialty to offset the potential influence of negative social attitudes toward homosexuality on his career choice:

I was in music. I didn't even consider it a problem. I thought . . . if they fired all the gay music teachers, then half of us would be gone. And so I thought . . . as long as I don't do anything unreasonable, I'm relatively safe.  
(P9.2.192)

The other three participants clearly established their teaching careers prior to accepting their same-sex orientations and forming their gay identities. Accordingly, these three teachers did not describe the influence of social attitudes toward homosexuality on their vocational selection. Participant Ten, for example, reported that "I was a teacher at age 24" (P10.2.8) but "I didn't really come out until I was . . . [in my] late 30s" (P10.2.16). Consequently, he reported that "I made my career choice before I was aware of social attitudes toward gay men" (P10.2.102).

In regard to career development, two of the ten participants discussed the positive influence of an overall increase in social tolerance toward homosexuality despite the significant minority opinion that gay men should not work as school teachers (Saad, 1996). Participant One, for example, described the positive effect of changing social attitudes on his vocational maturity:

I think social attitudes are changing toward gay men so . . . that's positive in some respects. It [i.e., negative public opinion] doesn't influence me as far as much as it used to when I first went into it [i.e., the teaching profession] when I felt like I was really closeted. And so and I'm feeling okay about it [i.e., being gay]. And that's helped me, I think, even grow more professionally.  
(P1.2.180)

Similarly, Participant Three reported that shifting societal perspectives on homosexuality have “allowed me to be more and more comfortable in my role as a teacher, especially as I've gotten older.” Specifically, he added that “I can be myself more and more without fear” (P.3.223).

Although Participant Ten agreed that public opinion regarding gay men is “changing and high school kids are becoming more hip and more exposed and more aware . . . because of the media and the movies,” he nonetheless maintained that, “as far as me being more openly gay at the high school, I think it's such a slow [process].” Accordingly, he acknowledged that he will continue to exercise caution and discretion in terms of self-disclosure in order to maintain his career as a school teacher.

Five of the ten participants described the influence of social attitudes toward homosexuality on their career development in terms of advocacy and activism, as discussed earlier in this chapter. As social advocates for sexual minority students, for example, Participants Two and Four described their efforts to challenge homophobic and heterosexist behavior in their classrooms. As

professional advocates for sexual minority educators, Participants Six, Seven, and Eight discussed their efforts to confront social and political injustice as well as economic inequity through their teacher's unions.

On account of heterosexist expectations, Participant Five conversely admitted that "I don't get as politically active as I'd like. I guess I'd find I would rather be less controversial." For example, he disclosed that "I would love to run for the School Board . . . yet the first thing they would want to know is who do you live with, [or] why don't you have a wife, [and] . . . then it's bingo, I'm out." On the other hand, Participants Eight and Nine anticipated that negative social attitudes toward gay men will not outplay or outrank their positive vocational aptitudes in their occupational pursuit of administrative faculty positions. Regarding social attitudes toward homosexuality, then, 70% of the participants described ways of circumventing the influence of negative social bias against gay men in order to choose careers in public education. Only 20% of the teachers otherwise described inhibitory effects on their personal and professional development.

Family attitudes. During their initial interviews, all ten participants described experiences that reflected the potential influence of family attitudes toward homosexuality on their career choice and development. This factor of familial bias emerged from

discussions of family expectations. During the second round of data collection, therefore, I specifically asked each of them to consider the influence of family attitudes toward gay men on their vocational selection and advancement.

In regard to career choice, the gay identity of six participants had not been revealed to their families before these men became teachers. Otherwise, only three of the remaining four participants recalled family attitudes toward gay men and described their various effects on vocational selection. Participant Two, for example, remembered early emancipation from the difficult situation of "growing up with my stepfather" and thus reported that the attitudes of "my immediate family didn't have much influence" on either his coming out or his career choice (P2.2.196).

As for his gay identity, Participant Five admitted that "my brothers and sisters knew . . . shortly after I came out . . . when I was 22/23. They had already discussed it," in other words, prior to his vocational selection. Accordingly, he further acknowledged that "the whole family's attitude were real positive once we were adults" and that "none of them had any problems with it" (P5.2.348). Referring to his parents who themselves were professional educators, only Participant Six specifically described a direct influence of family attitudes on his occupational orientation to the teaching profession: "I remember they would caution me . . . 'don't ever touch a student'

. . . my family's attitudes weren't necessarily negative. They just wanted me to be sure that I was, in fact, gay and not confused" (P6.2.168).

In regard to career development, only four of the six participants whose gay identity had been concealed from their families prior to career choice referred to family attitudes toward homosexuality. Participant Four, for example, acknowledged that "I don't see how they [i.e., family attitudes] might tie to career development. I see that they tie to my . . . personal life and possible family rejection but I don't make a career connection" (P4.2.256). Incidentally, he previously conceded that "I have not been open [yet] to either or my children or my ex-wife" (P4.1.136).

Participant Ten likewise admitted that "I don't think that they [i.e., family attitudes] really affect my ongoing career development" (P10.2.130). He revealed, however, that "I feel very supported" by "my youngest brother, who's gay" and described the influence that he thinks his sibling's attitudes toward their common sexual identity has on his teaching career:

Yeah, he's sent me articles on gay . . . student alliance groups, and he is always curious to know what I'm doing, and I sent him information on the Opening Doors [conference at Oregon State University for professionals who serve sexual minority youth] . . . and he really thought that was cool. He was very supportive. (P10.2.130)

In addition to their shared gay identification, he attributed the fraternal support to his previous efforts to aid and assist his little brother:

He's always been supportive of me as a teacher because I basically helped him out. He's ten years younger and I really helped him out in college and . . . built his self esteem . . . so he's always thought of me as a teacher. (P10.2.134)

Referring to his family of origin, Participant One reported that "they still respect the teaching profession" (P1.2.224) and thus anticipated that his vocational advancement in public education eventually might facilitate their acceptance of his gay identity.

Similarly, Participant Eight acknowledged:

The negative aspects of what my family would have been exposed to as far as gay people . . . might have been tempered with the fact that I was working with . . . special education kids, so . . . I can't be as evil as what they've heard . . . all queers are supposed to be. (P8.2.188)

Regarding family attitudes toward homosexuality, then, only one of the participants described an inhibitory effect on his occupational orientation to the teaching profession. Otherwise, no negative influence on career choice was discussed. Only one of the teachers described a positive influence on his career development, which he further specified in terms of his gay brother's support of his teaching career.

### Social and Family Influences

Regarding the influence of social and family attitudes toward teaching and homosexuality on career choice and development, three major findings emerged from the previous written reflections on the qualitative data. In regard to social attitudes toward school teachers, 80% of the participants described a negative influence on maintaining and advancing their careers. Discussions of this social bias against public education included “budget cuts,” “safety issues,” “less respect for teachers,” and “less trust in the school districts,” as well as negative assaults from advocates for tax credits and voucher systems. Descriptions of these negative effects on occupational performance included the experience of working “harder” at being an educator, along with feelings of anger and frustration as well as depression and discouragement.

Regarding family attitudes toward teaching, 90% of the teachers described a positive influence on vocational selection which 70% of the participants further associated with positive family role models in the teaching profession. In regard to social attitudes toward gay men, 70% of the teachers described ways of circumventing the negative influence of exclusionary bias in order to choose careers in the field of education. Specifically, these special case strategies included

assumptions that (a) teaching adults or older students, (b) being married, (c) teaching in urban communities, (d) working with professional colleagues, and (e) teaching art or music would offset negative public opinion and thus facilitate career choice. Regarding family attitudes toward homosexuality, however, no major findings were discovered.

### Secrecy and Disclosure

Ten of the thirteen studies reviewed in Chapter Two reported findings related to the variability with which gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers disclose their sexual identities in the workplace (Boatwright, Gilbert, Forrest, & Ketzenberger, 1996; Croteau & Lark, 1995; Croteau & von Destinon, 1994; Driscoll, Kelley, & Fassinger, 1996;; Griffin, 1992; Hall, 1986; Levine & Leonard, 1984; Olson, 1987; Schneider, 1986; Woods & Harbeck, 1992). In line with these previous discoveries, another core category of factors that influence the career choice and development of gay male school teachers to emerge from this investigation is associated with secrecy and disclosure. As subcategories of this core classification, identity management and fear and apprehension emerged from additional data analysis. These subordinate constructs designate the subheadings for the following discussions and descriptions of qualitative findings related to

concealing and revealing sexual identity in the workplace. The major discoveries emerging from these written reflections are discussed and described further in terms of self-expression vs. self-disclosure.

### Identity Management

Among the researchers cited above, Griffin (1992) organized her qualitative data associated with secrecy and disclosure into a comprehensive model of identity management techniques and identified four main categories along a continuum (Croteau, 1996). On the “closeted” end of the scale, passing and covering strategies respectively involved (a) lying to be seen as heterosexual and (b) censoring to avoid being seen as gay or lesbian. On the “out” end of the continuum, implicit and explicit techniques respectively included (a) telling the truth without self-labeling to allow for being known as lesbian or gay and (b) directly self-disclosing to facilitate being known as gay or lesbian. These categories seem consistent not only with descriptive data from three other qualitative studies reviewed in Chapter Two (Boatwright et al., 1996; Hall, 1986; Woods & Harbeck, 1992), but also with information gathered during this investigation. In other words, these classifications are reflected in transcriptions of the audiotaped interviews and thus provide a theoretical framework for discussion.

Passing. Among Griffin's (1992) sample of 13 gay and lesbian educators, "passing strategies were used to lead others to believe that the participant was heterosexual" (p. 176). During their initial interviews, nine of the ten participants in the current study likewise described having used similar approaches to manage their gay identities in regard to their teaching careers. Participant One, for example, recalled a time when "I played the role of this really straight [i.e., heterosexual] macho guy" and "I taught P.E. for a while" (P1.1.112). He further remembered that "I used to feel like . . . I was too effeminate" and worry that "people would guess that I was gay." Consequently, he reported that "I would watch how 'men' [i.e., male heterosexuals] were supposed to act . . . because I wanted to make sure . . . that I knew how" so "that no one would ever guess" (P2.1.152). Similarly, Participant Eight recalled a time during his teaching career when others "still thought I was just a straight heterosexual male teacher, so I reaped all those benefits of their assumptions" (P8.1.140).

As cited earlier in regard to the influence of social attitudes toward homosexuality on his career choice, Participant Three acknowledged that heterosexual marriage was "a buffer for me to fit into being a teacher or into society" (P3.2.176). In terms of identity management, however, he had admitted initially that "being [heterosexually] married was very safe because I certainly didn't want

anybody to know” (P3.1.116) differently. Similarly, Participant Four reported that anti-gay discrimination has influenced his career development “relatively little, particularly as long as I was married” (P4.1.124). Participant Five likewise recalled that, “when I first became a teacher, I still was at the age that I . . . felt beyond suspicion because . . . I could bring a woman to a function” and “I could say that I was dating” (P5.1.212). Referring to the parents of his students who sometimes offer to introduce him to women, Participant Six recalled a time during his teaching career when “I probably would have said, ‘I’ll guess I’ll go out on a date because I don’t want to raise any eyebrows.’ I was . . . very fearful of being discovered” (P6.1.56).

Covering. When using covering strategies, Griffin (1992) reported that her “participants were not trying to lead others to believe that they were heterosexual” but rather were “trying to prevent others from seeing them as gay or lesbian” (p. 176). All ten participants in the current study likewise referred to similar approaches for managing their gay identities during their teaching careers. In order to prevent his students and their parents from examining his personal life, for example, Participant Two reported that he has chosen not to live in the rural community where he teaches high school.

Rather than pass for heterosexual, Participant Eight recalled a time during his teaching career when “I was forced to play diversion games because there were women . . . wanting to pursue relationships

that I would have to deflect or redefine without hurting their feelings but also without coming out to them” (P8.1.144). After exceeding the age of feeling “beyond suspicion” (P5.1.212) for being unmarried, Participant Five reported that “I don’t socialize with my colleagues . . . because I don’t want to have to get a date like a lot of gay teachers I know have done” (P5.1.156). Participant Seven acknowledged that, “when I am with . . . my lover now” and “when we go someplace and we run into a family or some of my students . . . we both go off instead of me introducing him to the kids” (P7.1.260). In order to conceal his gay identity, Participant Three admitted that, “if there are parents around, I probably would not say anything that would disclose my sexual orientation” (P3.1.216).

Implicitly out. Griffin’s (1992) “participants who were implicitly out to others did not lie or cover” (p. 176) but rather spoke openly about their lives “and their relationships and let others make whatever sense of this information they chose to” (p. 178). All ten participants in the current study likewise referred to similar approaches for managing their gay identities during their teaching careers. In regard to coming out, for example, Participant One revealed that “I’m taking a lot more risks.” Referring to a former student, he recalled that “I went to a local gay dance” and “I saw her there with her girlfriend.” Rather than resort to passing or covering strategies, however, he reported that “I danced with some of the guys” (P1.1.136).

Participant Four likewise acknowledged that he is taking some risks “of people wondering or discovering” his emerging gay identity. Accordingly, he admitted that “I did run into a situation at a play where two ex-students were there” and further revealed that “I was with several men” which “may have raised some questions.” Nonetheless, he concluded that “it didn’t particularly bother me” (P4.1.132). Similarly, Participant Three revealed that “I’ve been to the gay bar” and “in the last year, I have run into four parents [of students] there” (P3.1.224), two of whom he recognized as a heterosexual couple. Although “they sort of avoided me” at the gay bar, he reported that, “back at school . . . the mom actually came to me one day and . . . talked personally with me . . . and I felt like it was . . . a pat on the shoulder” (P3.1.232).

Explicitly out. Among Griffin’s (1992) participants, “being explicitly out meant directly disclosing their gay or lesbian identities to selected people at school” (p. 178). Only eight of the ten educators in the current study likewise referred to similar approaches for managing their gay identities during their teaching careers. As discussed in Chapter Two, however, the “friendship networks” or “snowballing” techniques (Croteau, 1996) used to select the sample population for the current study revealed that all ten participants were explicitly out to at least one other gay male school teacher.

“When I divorced” and was coming out, Participant Three recalled that “there were several teachers” with whom “I shared what was going on with me” (P3.1.144). Not long ago, Participant Five remembered that “it was just the two gay teachers that knew I was gay” but, of course, “we ran into each other all the time.” However, he added that “I’ve also told one of the women teachers” (P5.1.184). As far as teaching in an urban community, Participant Six admitted that “I’m more apt to disclose my sexual orientation to colleagues and I have several on my staff who know . . . because it came up, not because I felt the need to say, ‘I’m gay’” (P6.1.116). Participant Nine acknowledged that “I do have a couple of colleagues” with whom “I am out” but admitted that “I have only come out to one principal in my whole career” (P9.1.132). Finally, Participant Ten reported that “I have come out to most of my good friends on the staff and feel very safe” (P10.1.216).

### Fear and Apprehension

Seven of the studies reviewed in Chapter Two reported findings related to fear of employment discrimination among sexual minority workers (Boatwright et al., 1996; Croteau & Lark, 1995; Croteau & von Destinon, 1994; Griffin, 1992; Levine & Leonard, 1984; Olson, 1987; Woods & Harbeck, 1992). Specifically, Griffin’s participants reported

fearing that a public accusation of being gay, molesting children, or recruiting students to homosexuality would result in one of two negative consequences: loss of job or loss of effectiveness. All four of these feared outcomes are reflected to varying degrees in the data collected from the teachers in this study and thus provide a conceptual framework for further discourse.

Discrimination. As discussed in Chapter Two, Levine and Leonard (1984) distinguished between formal and informal discrimination in the workplace. Formal bias was defined as “institutionalized procedures to restrict officially conferred work rewards” (p. 706) and included (a) deciding to terminate or not employ individuals due to their sexual orientation; (b) passing over sexual minority employees for promotions, raises, or increased job responsibilities; and (c) excluding same-sex partners from employment benefits. Informal bias was defined as “harassment and other unofficial actions taken by supervisors or co-workers” (p. 706) and included verbal mistreatment and property vandalism, as well as loss of credibility, acceptance, or respect based on sexual orientation.

Eight of the ten participants in this study described experiences that reflect the influence of either formal or informal discrimination on their career choice and development. Participant Three, for example, recalled feeling like his career choice to be a first grade teacher would lay suspicion on him of being a gay man “because it was

usually a [vocational] role done by a woman” (P3.1.92). He further acknowledged, however, that being married provided him with a level of safety and security that he “wasn’t going to be discriminated against” (P3.1.120) either formally or informally in the workplace. As cited earlier in terms of a passing strategy for managing his gay identity, Participant Four likewise referred to heterosexual marriage as providing protection against employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. In his school district, Participant One admitted that gay and lesbian teachers “are accepted and there is no discrimination as far as [formal] discrimination is concerned but there are . . . little [informal] things that occur.” Regarding one of the gay teachers at his school, for example, he reported that “kids used to make remarks and say things about him, thinking I was straight” (P1.1.132). The associated fear of losing credibility as an educator is described further in the later discussion regarding loss of effectiveness.

Of all the teachers interviewed, Participant Eight recalled the most memorable experience of formal discrimination:

When I was [teaching] at the deaf school [in the South], there was [held] the World's Fair. I was out to the point to where I was going to the bars and . . . dating other guys and stuff. And there was a program of entrapment. They wanted to shut down all the gay bars . . . because the World's Fair was coming . . . I was gathered up in that net and given the option of either resigning or go[ing] to Nashville with a lawyer where I would probably lose my teaching certificate. (P8.1.176)

After his immediate resignation, which he described as an act of “self-preservation,” Participant Eight remembered having been to Oregon twice before and decided to move to one of the college towns where he “could be much more open because of the liberal bent of the community” (P8.1.176). He also described the powerful influence of his unforgettable encounter with formal discrimination on his teaching career:

When I did come here, I made sure that what happened to me in [the South] . . . would never happen again. I made sure that the people that I worked with from the get-go knew that I was a gay teacher . . . I became more of an activist because . . . that experience . . . really made me angry, so I got involved with the unions, and I helped put sexual orientation within our union charter. (P8.1.176)

Public accusation. Griffin’s (1992) participants admitted fearing public accusation of being gay, molesting children, or recruiting students to homosexuality. Five of the ten teachers in this study likewise disclosed similar fear of social incrimination and the influence of this apprehension on their teaching careers. Two of these five participants described the social attitudes that foster these popular allegations. Participant Six thus acknowledged that “a lot of people . . . equate homosexuality with pedophilia” (P6.1.112). According to Participant Eight, “the assumption is that you have some hidden agenda with the children, because they equate homosexuals with pedophilia” (P8.1.132).

Participant Five specifically admitted that "I've always been afraid that somebody would accuse me of . . . molesting a child" (P5.1.128). Therefore, he reported that "I have always taken extra precautions to make sure I was never alone in the [class]room with a child. I leave my door open all the time" (P5.1.148). Participant Three likewise acknowledged that "I have fears of being accused" and thus reported that "I try not to use the boy's bathroom, even though the teacher's bathroom is twice as far away" (P3.1.188). Referring to his middle school students, Participant One concluded that "they are in adolescence, in puberty, very sexual, everything is interpreted as sex. So if you're gay, you're automatically this predator" (P1.1.132). Accordingly, he reported that "I don't shake hands even" because, "if I was out and gay, it might all be interpreted in a different way" (P1.1.132).

Loss of job. In addition to Griffin's (1992) participants, five of the ten teachers in this study described the influence of fearing job loss on their career choice and development. Prior to his career choice, for example, Participant Five recalled knowing that his first same-sex partner "was kicked out of teaching elementary [school] because they discovered he was gay." Based on his partner's experience, he acknowledged that the potential threat of losing employment "scared me" and "could have deterred me from going into teaching" (P5.1.120). Although active in the gay and lesbian caucus of

the National Education Association, Participant Seven admitted that “I don’t feel comfortable” self-disclosing on the local level due to “my perceived fear of losing my job” (P7.1.352).

Loss of effectiveness. As a negative consequence of public accusation, Griffin’s (1992) participants admitted fearing “loss of credibility among student’s colleagues, and parents” (p. 171). Along with the educators in her study, six of the ten teachers in this investigation described the influence of fearing impaired credibility on their teaching careers. Participant One, for example, anticipated that “if I was ever to come out . . . it would change my relationship with my kids” at the middle school (P1.1.68). Similarly, Participant Five acknowledged that “there have been so many instances where people have come out and . . . think, ‘Oh, everything will be fine,’ and all of a sudden they find that nobody will put their children in that person’s class” (P5.1.128).

#### Self-Expression Vs. Self-Disclosure

During the first round of data collection and analysis, I developed a qualitative impression that most of the teachers interviewed rely primarily on implicitly out strategies to manage their identities as well as their fears of discrimination, public accusation, job loss, and impaired credibility. My subjective perception can be

grounded further in their initial interview data. Referring to the lesbian actress who came explicitly out to the media as well as in her television role, for example, Participant Six reported that "I certainly don't have the Ellen De Generes complex" (P6.1.116). Accordingly, Participant Two acknowledged that "I don't think I want to go around the school announcing, 'Hey, I'm gay,' . . . but then I don't feel that it's necessarily to my advantage to . . . deny it" (P2.1.108). Participant Three similarly admitted that "I think it's pretty arrogant to go around banging everyone over the head with it" (P8.1.228).

In regard to being implicitly out in the workplace, Participant Seven reported that "I've heard from . . . other teachers that . . . people there . . . know I'm gay. But I've never talked to anybody there about it" (P7.1.324). Participant Three further assumed that "if one family knows, everybody knows" (P3.1.144). Finally, Participant Ten likewise mused: "Who knows, maybe the kids and all the staff know that I'm gay" (P10.1.228).

Based on (a) their development of vocational self-concepts, as described earlier in this chapter, and (b) their primary reliance on implicitly out strategies for identity management, as discussed above, I formed an hypothesis that their need to self-disclose as gay men might vary with their ability to express themselves as school teachers.

During the second round of data collection, therefore, I specifically asked each of them to consider this hypothetical relationship between

vocational self-expression and gay self-disclosure. First of all, however, I asked how teaching school allows each participant to express himself. All ten teachers described various forms and levels of vocational self-expression.

Participant One, for example, acknowledged that, “when I'm in front of a classroom, I can be my own self” and “I can influence in a positive way attitudes towards other fellow human beings” (P1.2.260). He further admitted that “it's interesting because I'm able to express the part of me that I used to be afraid to, before I accepted myself for who I am” (P1.2.264). Participant Four likewise referred to the classroom as “a place I think where it is very appropriate for me to reveal who I am and some of the things that I value to my students” (P4.2.268) . . . “such as . . . care for people” (P4.2.272) . . . “as part of a learning process” (P4.2.276). Additionally, Participant Six acknowledged that “I can get up on my soapbox” (P6.2.240) and Participant Nine admitted that “I get to perform all the time” (P9.2.229). Finally, Participant Ten reported that, “once I shut the door, I can be myself with the kids” (P10.2.138).

After confirming the obvious assumption that teaching allows the participants a means of vocational self-expression, I asked them to describe how their need to self-disclose as gay men might vary with their ability to express themselves as school teachers. Six of the ten

participants acknowledged that vocational self-expression lessens their need for gay self-disclosure in the workplace.

For example, Participant One admitted that “the ways things are right now, I feel like I can just be who I am” (P1.2.286) without the need for gay self-disclosure. Participant Two further explained that “I don't see a need to disclose really” (P2.2.272) because “there's a lot of [other] connections [with students and colleagues] going on” (P2.2.276). Participant Nine, however, seemed to offer the most conclusive confirmation of the hypothetical relationship between vocational self-expression and gay self-disclosure:

The amount of expression I have fulfills a lot of basic needs . . . I would say I'm getting enough from my job that if someone came up to me and said, “From now on, you can no longer disclose to anyone that you're gay” . . . I'd still go, “Well, it's a little bit sad, but [it's] no problem.” (P9.2.265)

The four participants who did not validate my hypothesis were all elementary school teachers. Three of them teach first grade and one teaches special education. Both elementary educators who did validate my hypothesis teach third grade. While no speculation for this variance emerged from data collection and analysis, there is some qualitative evidence to suggest that the need for gay self-disclosure varies with the potential for vocational self-expression in the workplace.

## Career Motivation

Apart from the most influential theories of career choice and development summarized in Chapter Two, Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a conceptual framework for discussing and describing a final core category of factors that influence the vocational selection and advancement of the participants in this study. Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) is considered the father of modern humanistic psychology. According to his theory of motivation (1943), human "needs are arranged in hierarchical order such that the fulfillment of lower needs propels the organism on to the next highest level" (Crain, 1992, p. 320). Once physiological and safety needs are satisfied, for example, individuals seek to fulfill their higher level needs for belongingness, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization. As subcategories of career motivation, these four higher level needs that emerged from initial data collection and analysis designate subheadings for the following discussions and descriptions of qualitative findings. The major discoveries that emerged from subsequent data collection and analysis are discussed and described further in terms of developmental needs.

### Belongingness

The need for belongingness emerged as a factor that influenced career motivation for eight of the ten participants. This need was

reflected in initial interview data related to identification and affiliation.

Identification. In order to satisfy the need for belongingness, individuals often must establish some sense of identification with others. Accordingly, seven of the ten participants described experiences of identification with their students. Referring to his middle school students who feel different from their peers, for example, Participant One reported that “I really identify with those kids at school” since “I’m still a kid at heart in many ways” (P1.1.68). He further reflected on one of the motivating factors during his first hellish year as a school teacher.

I was working weekends and nights and doing a lot of work but I liked the kids. I got to understand them more and more and I got to identify with some of the things that were going on with them (P1.1.88)

Similarly, Participant Two remembered “I was sure that, when I decided to go into teaching, that there were . . . students like me [when I was their age]” (P2.1.40). Participant Three likewise reminisced about his first classroom assignment and the kindergarten students he taught there: “They were . . . real attentive and identified with me very quickly . . . I felt like I really belonged to this group” (P3.1.20).

Affiliation. Human relationships satisfy the basic need for belongingness and thus seem to influence career motivation among the sample population. During their initial interviews, six of the ten

participants described experiences of affiliation with their students, colleagues, or both. Referring to the group of teachers with whom he works, for example, Participant Three attributed his career satisfaction to a sense that "I've been appreciated, that they like me, and that I belong" (P3.1.248). Participant Two otherwise attributed his career satisfaction to developing relationships with students in the classroom.

Reflecting on factors that influenced his career choice, Participant Four recalled "the fact that there could be some kind of personal relationship [with teachers] . . . was important to me as a student" and "seemed be important to the teachers, as well." Therefore, he further assumed that "flipping roles and becoming the teacher would be interesting because there would be these personal connections and dialogues [with students]" (P4.1.120). When he chose to become a school teacher, Participant Four acknowledged that "I wanted to fit in, in the classroom" and thus admitted that "I didn't make friends with kids [i.e., students] but I made it a friendly atmosphere in the classroom." In other words, he explained that "I always tried to make everyone feel part of the group." In regard to motivating factors that influence his career development, he reported that "a big part of what I do now is . . . team building and building trust within groups" (P10.1.276).

## Love

Once identification and affiliation satisfy the need for belongingness, individuals seek affection from others to fulfill their need for love. Among the sample population of school teachers in this investigation, the need for love as well as for belongingness seems to influence career motivation. During their initial interviews, six of the ten participants further described experiences of affection in relation to their identification and affiliation with students. Participant One, for example, acknowledged that “kids really like me” (P1.1.68) and also admitted that his expectation to receive “unconditional love” from students, especially younger children, was a factor that influenced his career choice.

Prior to gay self-identification, a few of the participants reported that the mutual affection shared between student and teacher satisfied their need for love and thus seemed to influence their career motivation. Before dissolving his marriage, Participant Four recalled drawing “a great deal of emotional sustenance out of teaching” (P4.1.108). Prior to coming out, Participant Ten likewise remembered that “[I] fell in love with my students and . . . loved connecting them to nature and having these incredible experiences with them in the outdoors and in the class[room]” (P10.1.76).

## Self-Esteem

The fulfillment of needs for belongingness and love propel human organisms on to seek satisfaction of their need for self-esteem (Maslow, 1943; Crain, 1992). Family and social affirmation of individual competence and personal worthiness enhance self-esteem (Mruk, 1995). Accordingly, six of the ten participants in this study described experiences of affirmation that seem to influence their career motivation. Along with his expectation to receive “unconditional love” from students, for example, Participant One acknowledged that “I also knew that I could get respect” from “parents and from other adults” (P1.1.56). Before choosing his teaching career and accepting his gay identity, he recalled that “I was feeling really bad about myself” (P1.1.24). He thus admitted further “I thought that when I became a teacher . . . all these feelings of self-worth . . . would come back to me” (P1.1.64).

After relinquishing his teaching position in the South, Participant Eight recalled no thoughts of selecting another vocation because “I was convinced I was in the right profession” (P8.1.186). In regard to factors that convinced him to reestablish his teaching career in the Northwest, he explained (in the second person) that “accolades from your peers . . . when you do a good job” and “attention drawn to

you because of the quality of [your] work” motivated him to strive professionally “for even greater things” (P8.1.188).

### Self-Actualization

In his major writings, Maslow was most interested in the highest need on his theoretical hierarchy: the need for self-actualization. According to Crain (1992), self actualization “refers to the actualization of one’s potentials, capacities and talents” (p. 320). In order to examine the concept he borrowed from Goldstein (1939), Maslow explored the lives and experiences of the most creative people he could identify, including contemporaries and acquaintances as well as public and historical figures. Maslow’s fundamental discovery was that self-actualizing individuals maintain a certain autonomy from their society and are less conforming than most people. Their primary motivations are their own psychological and spiritual growth, the development of their abilities, and their individual purpose in life (Crain, 1992; Maslow, 1970).

During the process of gay identity formation introduced in Chapter Two, homosexual boys and men feel socially and sexually different from their heterosexual counterparts (Troiden, 1979). In order to develop a positive sexual identity, these nonconforming males must (a) challenge their own internalized homophobia as well as the

heterosexist bias of society and (b) actualize their sexual potential as human beings. Since most of the teachers in this study described experiences that reflect that developmental stages of identity acceptance and identity pride, it is reasonable to assume that these self-actualizing participants are more independent from society and less conventional than most people.

One of the criteria that Maslow used to select the sample population for his self-actualization research was creativity. According to Erikson (1982), creativity is an expression of generativity which refers to career productivity as well as to nurturing and mentoring the next generation. All of the participants described experiences related to self-actualization in terms of creativity, generativity, or both.

Creativity. Initial interview data collected from eight of the ten participants reflected the influence of creativity on their career choice and development. In addition to the need for belongingness that his first teaching assignment satisfied, for example, Participant Three also acknowledged that “being allowed to use my creativity with them [i.e., his kindergarten students] . . . was always a lot of fun” (P3.1.20). Referring to the academy where he now teaches first grade, he reported that “it’s an arts school, so it supports that whole creative part of us” (P3.1.172) and thus seems to influence his career motivation.

In regard to his vocational selection, Participant Four recalled choosing education over architecture and remembered thinking that teaching was “a better avenue” for his creativity (P4.1.52). In regard to his vocational aspiration and advancement, Participant Eight explained that “an effective administrator can define the tenor of the school” and “create the atmosphere” that allows people “to do their best” (P8.1.292).

Generativity. All of the participants described experiences related to generativity in terms of nurturing and mentoring the next generation. Regarding the factors that most influence his professional career, for example, Participant Three reported that “being an elementary school teacher allows me to do and be all that I love doing and being” and to assume the role of “the nurturer” (P3.1.124). As discussed earlier in terms of gender role flexibility, Participant Nine further referred to “the nurturing role” of the elementary school teacher as one that he and his gay male colleagues might be more willing to assume than heterosexual men (P9.1.132).

Similarly, Participant Ten admitted thinking that his career choice and his gay identity were “very compatible” because “I got to be nurturing and I got to . . . be myself once I closed the door of my [class]room” (P10.1.180). Participant Seven likewise associated his sexual orientation with his vocational selection. “At some point” during his gay identity formation, he recalled thinking that “I’ll never

have children.” He further admitted not knowing “if that influenced me [to become an elementary educator], because I wanted to have children” and “I wanted to nurture children” (P7.1.128). Finally, he anticipated that “be[com]ing a role model for . . . gay students . . . would be the next step” in his vocational and sexual identity integration (P7.1.256). Otherwise, Participant Five reported that “a lot of single moms . . . want me as their [first grade] child’s male role model because there is no man in the house” (P5.1.40).

### Developmental Needs

In addition to the paradigm outlined in Chapter Two (Cass, 1979), John Grace (1992) proposed a competence-based model of gay identity formation that examines “major life tasks and common developmental obstacles that retard or arrest positive stage movement” (p. 33). According to his theory of motivation, a homophobic (or heterosexist) environment effects a developmental lag among gay children, adolescents, and adults. Grace defined the concept of developmental lag as “significant and problematic discrepancies between chronological age and physical maturity that impedes successful identification and mastery of essential psychosocial milestones” (p. 33).

Considering both theories of motivation (Grace, 1992; Maslow, 1943) summarized above, as well as the findings related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, I developed a qualitative impression that participants might rely on their teaching careers to compensate for some developmental lag. During the second round of data collection, therefore, I specifically asked each of them to consider which developmental needs were involved and how these deficits are satisfied.

Five of the ten participants described how their careers compensate for some developmental lag or deficit experienced during childhood or adolescence. Participant One, for example, conceded that teaching is a second chance for him to redress developmental wounds of students that he likewise experienced at their age:

I think that there may be someone that I touched along the line that didn't have to go through the stuff that I went through . . . because I chose this profession as a job. I don't think I would have had that opportunity to influence people's attitudes and feelings as much in any other profession as much as [in] teaching. (P1.2.306)

He further acknowledged the influence of a developmental lag during adolescence on his career:

I'm kind of reliving the adolescence that I really never had . . . I kind of missed that whole part of my life . . . I think [I'm] . . . giving these kids the opportunity to live it [i.e., adolescence] the way that . . . I would have liked [to live it] if someone had come along and said, "It's okay [to be] who you are . . . you're still a good person," because I never really got that feeling ever. (P1.2.326).

Similarly, Participants Eight and Ten acknowledged that teaching allows them the opportunity to create more tolerant and inclusive learning communities than the elementary and secondary schools they attended. Participants Three and Four, however, admitted that teaching fulfills their developmental need in adulthood to express gender discordant or feminine traits and values that were suppressed during childhood and adolescence.

The remaining five teachers described how their careers partially satisfy their developmental need to father children. Four of these participants have no children of their own. Four years ago, however, Participant Seven, his male partner, and a lesbian couple became proud parents of a son. Three of the five gay men who otherwise described how their careers compensate for some developmental lag or deficit have adult children of their own from dissolved heterosexual marriages.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that influence career choice and development for gay men who pursue vocations as elementary and secondary school teachers. These factors were examined in order to elaborate and refine existing theories of career choice and development into a grounded theory that more specifically explains the vocational pursuits of gay male educators. The previous chapter described four emerging categories of factors that seem to influence the career choice and development of the gay male participants in this study. These primary classifications of qualitative data were related to (a) identity development, (b) social and family attitudes, (c) secrecy and disclosure, and (d) career motivation. This chapter summarizes the major findings associated with these core categories, discuss emerging theory and practical applications, acknowledge the limitations of this investigation, and suggest recommendations for additional research.

### Summary of Major Findings

The major findings reported in the previous chapter are related to four emerging categories of factors that seem to influence career

choice and development for gay male school teachers. These important discoveries are summarized under their respective subheadings

### Identity Development

Each of the ten participants in this study described experiences of forming a vocational identity as a school teacher and a sexual identity as a gay man. All of the educators interviewed further reported blending or merging these primary self-concepts through occupational expressions of advocacy and activism, gender role flexibility, or both.

### Social and Family Attitudes

Chapter Four reported three major findings related to the influence of social and family attitudes toward teaching and homosexuality on the career choice and development of the participants in this study:

1. Social bias against public education has a negative influence on career maintenance and performance. These negative social attitudes are reflected in "budget cuts," "safety issues," "less respect for teachers," and "less trust in the school districts," as well as negative assaults from advocates for tax credits and voucher systems. Negative effects on occupational performance are experienced as working

“harder” at being an educator, along with feelings of anger and frustration as well as depression and discouragement.

2. Family respect for school teachers has a positive influence on career choice. Generally, these positive family attitudes are associated with effective family role models in the teaching profession.

3. Special case strategies help gay men circumvent the negative influence of social bias against gay teachers. Special case strategies involve various assumptions that negative social attitudes toward gay teachers are reduced or minimized under certain conditions that further facilitate career choice. These circumstances include (a) teaching adults or older students, (b) being married, (c) teaching in urban communities, (d) working with professional colleagues, and (e) teaching art or music.

### Secrecy and Disclosure

Most of the participants in this study rely primarily on “implicitly out” strategies (Griffin, 1992) to manage their identities as well as their fears of discrimination, public accusation, job loss, and impaired credibility. Chapter Four further reported some qualitative evidence to suggest that the need for gay self-disclosure varies with the potential for vocational self-expression in the teaching profession.

### Career Motivation

In addition to satisfying needs for belongingness, love, self-esteem and self-actualization, each of the participants in this study described how their careers either (a) compensate for some developmental lag (Grace, 1992) or deficit experienced during childhood or adolescence, or (b) partially satisfy their developmental need to father children.

### Emerging Theory

The theoretical model outlined in Figure 5.1 on page 165 delineates hypothetical relationships between the major findings summarized above. These important discoveries are discussed further below in terms of identity integration, self-expression, and self-actualization. The following discussion describes speculative associations among these significant conclusions, as well as the reciprocal effects of these interacting influences on each other and on the teaching careers of the participants in this study. These reticulating elements form the trilateral foundation of an emerging theory that more specifically explains factors that influence the career choice and development of gay male school teachers.

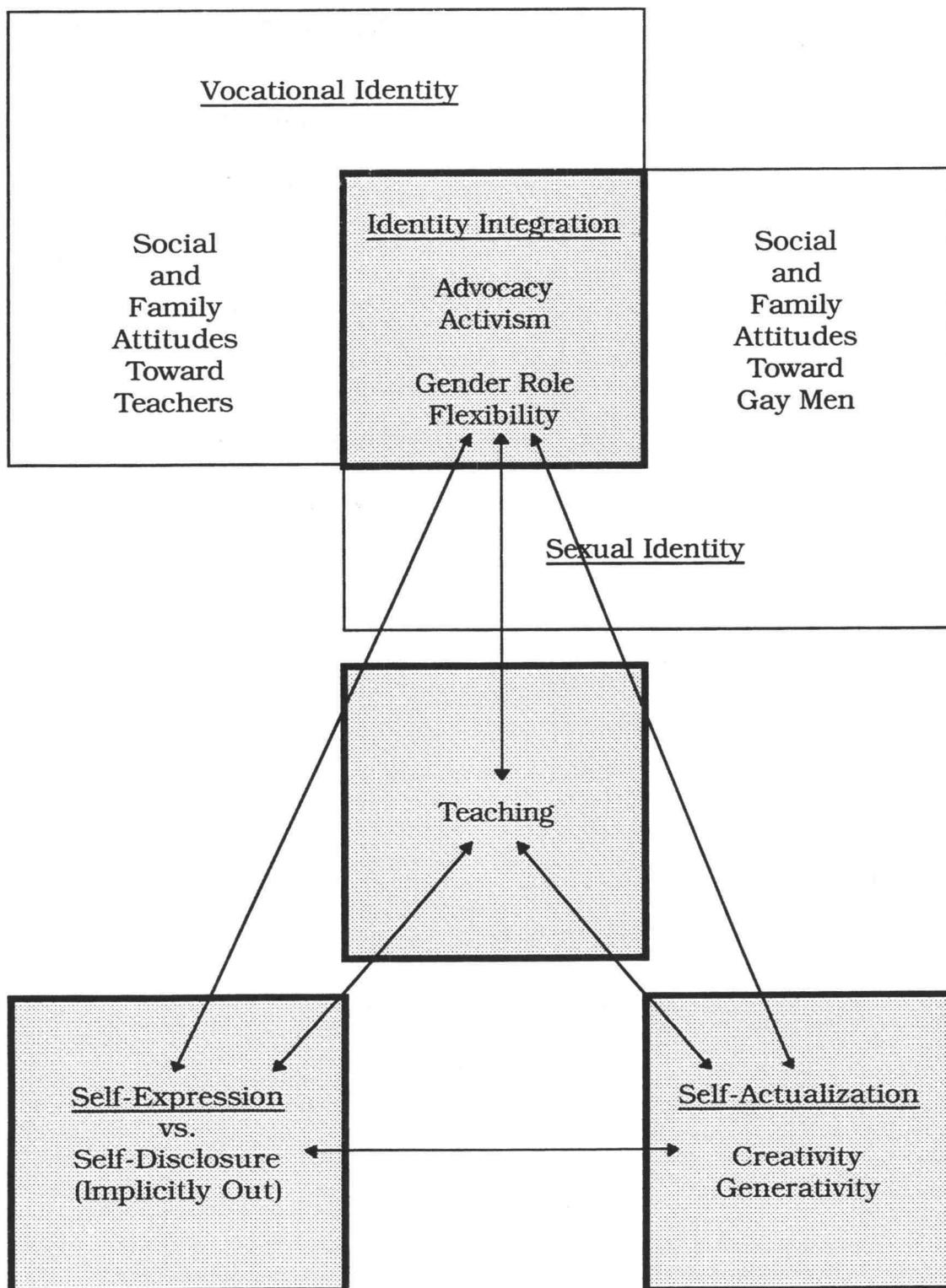


Figure 5.1. Factors that influence career choice and development for gay male school teachers.

### Identity Integration

Qualitative data from this investigation suggest that gay male school teachers implement and integrate their vocational self-concepts with their sexual identities in the process of choosing and developing their careers. Prior to career choice and development, however, social and family attitudes toward teachers influence the formation of their vocational self-concepts (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). Eventually, these same attitudes influence their vocational selection and advancement.

Social bias against public education, for example, has a negative influence on career maintenance and performance. It is reasonable to assume that this major finding applies to heterosexual teachers as well as to gay educators. In other words, "budget cuts," "safety issues," "less respect for teachers," "less trust in the school districts," and negative assaults from advocates for tax credits and voucher systems do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. All teachers are subject to experience similar effects of negative social attitudes toward their chosen profession.

Likewise, it is reasonable to assume that family respect for teachers has a positive influence on career choice for heterosexual applicants as well as gay male candidates. Nonetheless, special case strategies help gay men circumvent the negative influence of social

bias against them and thus facilitate vocational selection and advancement. Gay men assume variously that negative social attitudes toward homosexual teachers will be reduced or minimized if they (a) teach adults or older students, (b) are married, (c) teach in urban communities, (d) work with professional colleagues, and (e) teach art or music. Along with effective family role models and favorable family attitudes toward teachers, these special case strategies facilitate career choice and development for gay men in the teaching profession.

Gay male school teachers integrate their vocational and sexual identities as student advocates and social activists. The role of public educator seems to be expanding to include the demands of student advocacy and social activism. Accordingly, recent literature and research in counselor and teacher education have addressed these emerging concerns (Gatta, McCabe, & Edgar, 1997; Osborne et al., 1998). In regard to school counselors, for example, Osborne and her colleagues described a gay-affirming graduate training program based on a social advocacy model of counselor education. Along with the teacher education faculty, their purpose is "to prepare professional leaders who promote the social, psychological, and physical well being of individuals, families, communities, and organizations" as "proactive educators, change agents, and advocates" (School of Education, 1996, p. 5).

In regard to school teachers, Gatta and his colleagues described and evaluated a student advocacy program in a suburban high school district. According to their program description, the fundamental concept in advocacy programs is that each student becomes well known by at least one adult in the school (Ayres, 1994). Personal relationships between students and advocates are developed through routine contact comprised of both individual and group encounters. Adult advocates serve as individuals who can help students learn from their experiences and provide support in coping with the physical changes and social transitions of adolescence. According to their program evaluation, both participating and non-participating students believe that there is an adult in the school who cares for them and knows them well. Students in the advocacy program, however, believe that they face their problems more straightforwardly and that their ability to find solutions to problems has improved. The advocacy students also develop a better sense of control over their own performance and a better understanding of their responsibility for school success (Gatta et al., 1997).

During the later stages of sexual identity formation (Cass, 1979), gay men develop a strong commitment to their community based on feelings of group identity, belonging, and pride. Their increased awareness, sensitivity, and frequency of encounters with heterosexism and homophobia additionally generate "feelings of anger

born of frustration and alienation" (p. 233). These angry emotions (a) blend or merge with their feelings of group unity, loyalty, and dignity; and (b) motivate many gay men to become activists and advocates for sexual minority adolescents and adults. While student advocacy and social activism emerge as role demands for school teachers and counselors, these necessary functions provide self-identified gay educators with career-specific duties that allow them to integrate as well as implement their vocational and sexual self-concepts. As social advocates and community activists, self-accepting gay men who experience and express pride in their identities are well-prepared to assume and appreciate these emerging responsibilities.

Gay male school teachers further integrate their vocational and sexual identities through occupational expressions of gender role flexibility. During the last decade, several researchers have investigated gender-related issues in teaching and learning outcomes (Gabriel & Smithson, 1990; Hilke, 1994; Weis & Fine, 1993). Based on their review of this literature, Benton DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) concluded that "a balanced participation of male and female teachers may lead to curricular activities and classroom atmospheres that enrich the lives of both girls and boys in schooling" (p. 39).

In lieu of gender parity among elementary and secondary educators, however, a gay male school teacher's integration and implementation of flexible gender roles also may result in teaching

exercises and learning environments that enhance the educational experiences of both his male and female students. Gay men who integrate and implement masculine and feminine attributes become persuasive role models of human wholeness as well as effective educators in the classroom. Furthermore, gender role flexibility provides gay educators with another career-specific medium through which to blend or merge, and engage their vocational and sexual identities.

### Self-Expression

While they integrate their sexual identities with their vocational self-concepts, gay male school teachers rely primarily on implicitly out strategies (Griffin, 1992) for managing their sexual minority status. These educators often assume that others already know their gay identities but otherwise are not sure. Some of the teachers participating in this study compared these identity management strategies to the "don't ask, don't tell" policy toward gays in the military.

Further evidence suggests that the need for gay self-disclosure varies with the potential for vocational self-expression in the workplace. Student advocacy, social activism, and gender role flexibility increase the possibility for gay men to implement and

integrate their vocational and sexual self-concepts as effective educators and thus might decrease their reliance on explicitly out strategies (Griffin, 1992) for identity management at school. As student advocates, social activists, persuasive role models, and effective school teachers who demonstrate flexible gender roles, gay men in the later phases of sexual identity formation seem more willing to "show" rather than "tell" students and colleagues who they are and what they value.

### Self-Actualization

In addition to providing career-specific contexts for identity integration and self-expression, professional relationships with students and colleagues satisfy the needs of gay male school teachers for belongingness, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization. As they integrate their identities and express themselves vocationally, these educators actualize themselves and their potentials for creativity and generativity.

During the process of self-actualization, some gay men teach school to compensate for a developmental lag (Grace, 1992) or deficit experienced during childhood or adolescence. This developmental lag or deficit often results from painful encounters with heterosexism and homophobia and results in "very serious consequences" (p. 37) for gay

minors. For example, sexual minority youth frequently (a) devote large amounts of time and energy to survival and defense rather than to intimacy and growth; (b) develop a generalized view of the world as threatening and dangerous; (c) establish a public self that conceals and protects a private self from the rest of the world; and (d) feel alienated and isolated, as well as ashamed of their authentic selves and basic needs (Grace, 1992). As gay teachers confront and challenge heterosexism and homophobia in order to create safer classrooms, schools, and communities for their students, they likewise redress the developmental wounds of their own schoolboy years.

In the course of self-actualization, other gay men teach school to partially satisfy their developmental need to father children. While only half of the participating teachers acknowledged this alternate source of paternal needs satisfaction, all of them described experiences related to creativity or generativity in terms of nurturing and mentoring the next generation. Generativity is the developmental challenge of adulthood (Erikson, 1982) and refers to procreation as well as to productivity (Crain, 1992). Erikson (in Evans, 1969) admitted that some people develop generativity without having children of their own. These creative persons nurture and mentor the next generation "by working with other people's children or helping to create a better world for them" (p. 51).

Of the five participants who described how their careers partially satisfy their developmental need to father children, four have no children of their own. Three of the five teachers who described how their careers compensate for some developmental lag or deficit, however, have adult children of their own from dissolved heterosexual marriages. Regardless of paternal status, all of the gay men involved in this study clearly were interested in helping other people's children and working to create a better society for them.

### Interacting Influences

Identity integration, self-expression, and self-actualization interact to influence the career choice and development of gay male school teachers. The more they integrate their vocational and sexual identities, for example, the better they implement their self-concepts, express themselves vocationally, and actualize their creative and generative potentials in service of education. Conversely, the teaching profession enhances the identity integration, self-expression, and self-actualization of gay male school teachers. Emerging role demands for student advocacy and social activism enable and enjoin them to support gay youth as well as other socially different and culturally diverse students, to teach tolerance, and to create a better world for the next generation. Gender disparity among elementary and

secondary educators allows and appoints them to model flexible gender roles as they nurture their students through childhood and mentor them through adolescence. This constellation of interacting factors may explain the vocational pursuits of gay male school teachers who circumvent social bias against them to choose and develop their careers in education.

### Practical Applications

The grounded theory emerging from this study has usefulness for counselor and teacher education, as well as for career counseling. The following discussions describe these practical applications.

#### Counselor Education

Counselor educators are being challenged to infuse multicultural and diversity issues into an already crowded curriculum (Buhrke, 1989; D'Andrea & Daniels, 1991; Davis & Rubin, 1996; Harting, 1996; Iasenza, 1989; Norton, 1982). While counseling faculties strive and struggle to teach "so many theories" in "so little time," this emerging paradigm provides them with a practical model for integrating theoretical principles of career development (Super et al., 1996), sexual identity formation (Cass, 1979; Grace, 1992), psychosocial development (Erikson, 1982), and human motivation

(Maslow, 1943) for classroom and clinical purposes. Generally, counselor educators can use this integrated application to help counseling students consolidate their conceptual learning from various core content areas in the course of their studies (e.g., career counseling, social and cultural foundations, human sexuality, human development). Specifically, counseling faculties can apply the practical model to help counselor trainees assess and address the developmental experiences, outcomes, and needs of gay male clients.

### Teacher Education

As the role of public educator expands to include demands of gender role flexibility, as well as duties of student advocacy and social activism (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Gatta, McCabe, & Edgar, 1997; Osborne et al., 1998), the grounded theory emerging from this study suggests that gay men have developmental potentials to integrate, implement, and invest in the field of public education. Accordingly, this theoretical model further suggests and supports efforts of university faculty (a) to recruit gay men for admission and retention in teacher education programs and (b) to advocate for their employment, promotion, and tenure in the public schools. Additionally, the model helps them to identify and encourage the

reciprocal relationships between interacting factors that mutually enhance the development of gay men and the teaching profession.

### Career Counseling

In addition to counselor educators, this emerging paradigm provides career counselors with a practical model for integrating and applying theories of career development (Super et al., 1996), sexual identity formation (Cass, 1979; Grace, 1992), psychosocial development (Erikson, 1982), and human motivation (Maslow, 1943) to their clinical practice with gay clients. Contrary to my previous assumption based on personal experience, careers in the teaching profession need not require a compromise or foreclosure in gay identity formation. In other words, gay men need neither compartmentalize nor dichotomize their vocational and sexual self-concepts in order to become and be school teachers. Conversely, the teaching profession provides gay men with career-specific roles and responsibilities in which to implement and integrate their vocational and sexual identities. Despite recent Gallup poll data (Saad, 1996) indicating that 33% to 40% of Americans think gay men should not work as high school or elementary school teachers, qualitative data from this study further indicate that gay men develop and demonstrate traits that match factors required of effective educators. Career counselors can

reflect and reinforce these trait-and-factor (Parsons, 1909) associations in order to facilitate career choice and development for gay male clients who aspire to teach children and adolescents.

Additionally, these data suggest strategies for circumventing negative social attitudes toward gay men in the teaching profession. Apart from the unethical practice of counseling a gay man to marry a woman in order to pass for heterosexual and become a teacher, a career counselor otherwise might explore with a gay client the risk and benefits of teaching at various grade levels (i.e., elementary vs. secondary), for various school districts (i.e., urban vs. rural), and in various content areas (e.g., fine arts vs. physical education). Those who choose to challenge rather than to circumvent social bias against them might be encouraged to seek the peer support of well-educated and open-minded professional colleagues whose attitudes toward homosexuality may be more tolerant and accepting than those of the general population.

### Limitations of Investigation

The following discussions review three methodological aspects applied in this study: sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Each commentary examines the procedures used in the current research and suggests recommendations for future inquiry.

### Sampling

Historically, sampling problems have hindered research on sexual minority populations (Lonborg & Phillips, 1996). Selection difficulties thus impact studies on the vocational pursuits of gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers. These investigations often rely on small convenience samples which threaten the validity of their conclusions. Many of the data collected about sexual minority career development are gathered from research participants who are readily available and freely willing to self-identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Frequently, these individuals are recruited from sexual minority student associations, community organizations, or social systems. This reliance on convenience sampling typically reduces the degree to which the sample is representative of the larger gay, lesbian, and bisexual population. The issue of self-disclosure further confounds these data and prohibits generalizing conclusions to closeted sexual minority persons (Lonborg & Phillips, 1996).

This study relied on convenience sampling which restricted the diversity and representativeness of the research participants. All of these individuals belonged to "friendship networks" accessible to "snowballing" techniques, and identified as White/Caucasian. All but two were between the ages of 46 and 57. Consequently, the results of

this investigation may apply to a limited range of gay male school teachers.

The main feature of sampling that needs improvement involves the lack of diversity and representativeness found in the sample population. Lonborg and Phillips (1996) recommended four general strategies for recruiting diverse samples of gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers in order to increase the generalizability of research findings:

(a) routinely include questions about sexual orientation as part of the demographic data collected in most career research; (b) identify resources (e.g., community organizations, support groups, professional organizations) that may have access to samples of gay, lesbian, or bisexual individuals; (c) ensure anonymity rather than confidentiality when collecting data; and (d) utilize longitudinal research methods with probability samples, thereby increasing the likelihood of identifying more representative samples of gay, lesbian, and bisexual research participants at different stages of identity development. (p. 185)

### Data Collection

All of the data analyzed for this investigation were collected through individual interviews, conducted either in person or over the telephone. Although a single method of data collection was used, the sample size and plurality of data collection cycles enhanced the credibility of the research findings. Nonetheless, “convergence among multiple methods of data collection is widely accepted as one form of evidence of validity, a necessary consideration in sound qualitative

design” (Croteau, 1996, p. 205). Accordingly, Croteau (1996) recommended that qualitative investigators should supplement their interview or survey techniques with naturalistic fieldwork procedures in actual or simulated occupational environments.

Lonborg and Phillips (1996) similarly concluded that “there is value in the use of multiple methods” (p. 187) and consequently described two other qualitative techniques for conducting research on the career development of sexual minority persons: focus-group interviews and critical-incident technique (CIT). For example, focus-groups could be used to generate questionnaire items for semi-structured interviews, or to check the accuracy of data analysis procedures and qualitative research outcomes. Although CIT is most often used in industrial or organizational settings for improving the content validity of performance evaluation instruments (Latham & Wexley, 1994), this procedure could be useful for developing a more impartial appraisal of the effective and ineffective ways in which gay male school teachers manage issues of sexual orientation to establish or maintain their teaching careers (Lonborg & Phillips, 1996).

### Data Analysis

Qualitative investigators must explain their data analysis procedures in sufficient detail in order to facilitate critical evaluation

of these analytic methods. For example, procedural explanations must address the following questions (Croteau, 1996, p. 206): (a) "How systematic was the process?" and (b) "What checks were made for the accuracy of the results in capturing the experience of participants?"

As described in Chapter Four, the data analysis procedures were quite methodical. Initial interview data was processed at least seven times: (a) twice through listening, while conducting the interviews and reviewing the audiotapes; (b) once through reading, while inspecting, editing, and highlighting the transcriptions; and (c) four times electronically as well as visually, once while formatting the transcriptions for the data management software system and thrice while browsing these documents and coding their text units to classify emerging factors into theoretical categories.

In order to capture the experience of the participants in this study, each was sent and received a duplicate transcription of his initial interview prior to his second interview. Participants were asked to review these documents respectively in order to check the confidentiality and accuracy of their disclosures. The minimal feedback received from them was restricted to comments reflecting their self-consciousness of extraneous expressions in their verbal communications (e.g., "kind of" and "you know"). Many referred to their initial interview, however, during the second round of data

collection. Questions framed for the second interview double-checked for accuracy since these items additionally examined factors emerging from the first round of data collection and their influence on career choice and development. Nonetheless, the data analysis procedures applied in this investigation are limited by the missed opportunity for participants to review and qualify the final summary of findings.

### Recommendations for Additional Research

The “friendship networks” and “snowballing” techniques used to recruit gay male participants for this study generated a convenience sample of six elementary, two middle school, and two high school teachers. Further analysis of data collected for this investigation (a) might explore similarities and differences between and among these three subsamples of gay male educators; or (b) focus exclusively on the six elementary school teachers. In the latter case, I recommend recoding their initial interview data in order to generate qualitative impressions and follow-up questions based exclusively on their preliminary responses. Results emerging from additional data analysis could be compared with the findings of other recent studies that investigated career choices of men in elementary education (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Galbraith, 1992).

Although the results of this investigation may apply only to a limited sample of gay male school teachers, I recommend that additional qualitative research explore the transferability of these findings to younger gay educators (i.e., ages 25 to 45) and gay teachers of color. Based on age and racial/ethnic differences in the coming out process (Greene, 1997; Savin-Williams, 1990), I suspect that their experiences of vocational and sexual identity integration might vary from those of middle-aged White men. Lesbian women were excluded from this grounded theory study in order to increase the demographic homogeneity of the sample and thus minimize the number of sampling units recommended to generate persuasive and meaningful discoveries. Specific elements of the theory emerging from this inquiry, nonetheless, also might be examined among lesbian educators.

Accordingly, I recommend the follow qualitative research questions:

1. Does teaching allow lesbian educators to implement and integrate their vocational self-concepts with their sexual identities?
2. Does the need for lesbian self-disclosure likewise vary with the potential for vocational self-expression in the teaching profession?
3. Does teaching satisfy the needs of lesbian educators for belongingness, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization?
4. Does teaching allow lesbian women to either (a) compensate for some developmental lag or deficit experienced during childhood or

adolescence, or (b) partially satisfy their developmental need to mother children?

Finally, one of the major findings of this study suggests that gay men need neither compartmentalize nor dichotomize their vocational and sexual identities in order to become and be effective educators. Whether or not they can “come out” to their students, in other words, gay men seem to be able to “live out” as school teachers. Additional qualitative research might further explore how “living out” rather than “coming out” influences their teaching careers.

### Conclusion

This study investigated factors that influence career choice and development for gay male school teachers. Ten gay educators participated in the investigation. Data collection methods involved two semi-structured personal interviews and one structured telephone interview for a total of 30 sampling units. Data analysis procedures included reviewing audiotapes, reading transcriptions, browsing documents, coding text units, consulting with mentors and peers, comparing coding categories with previous literature and research, and reflecting on emerging relationships among the data.

Major findings relate to identity development, social and family attitudes, secrecy and disclosure, and career motivation. All of the

participants described experiences of (a) forming a vocational identity as a school teacher and a sexual identity as a gay man, and (b) blending or merging these primary self-concepts through occupational expressions of advocacy and activism, gender role flexibility, or both. The data further indicate that (a) social bias against public education has a negative influence on career maintenance and performance, (b) family respect for school teachers has a positive influence on career choice, and (c) special case strategies help gay men circumvent the negative influence of social bias against them to enter the teaching profession.

Most of the participating teachers revealed their primary reliance on “implicitly out” identity management strategies (Griffin, 1992) to alleviate fears of discrimination, public accusation, job loss, and impaired credibility. Additional qualitative evidence suggests that the need for gay self-disclosure varies with the potential for vocational self-expression in the teaching profession. In the course of their teaching careers, all of the participants reported either (a) compensating for some developmental lag or deficit experienced during childhood or adolescence, or (b) partially satisfying their developmental need to father children.

Hypothetical associations among these major findings form the trilateral foundation of an emerging theory that more specifically explains factors that influence the career choice and development of

gay male school teachers. This three-part framework reflects the interacting influences of identity integration, self-expression, and self-actualization and reciprocal effects of and on the teaching profession. The theory emerging from this investigation has practical applications for counselor and teacher education, as well as for career counseling.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:  
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

A. Title of the Research Project.

Career Choice and Development of Gay Male School Teachers

B. Investigators.

Reese House, Ed.D., Professor,  
Counseling, School of Education

Anthony Terndrup, M.S., Ph.D. Candidate,  
Counseling, School of Education

C. Purpose of the Research Project.

The purpose of this project is to investigate factors that influence career choice and development for gay men who pursue vocations to teach elementary and secondary school. These factors will be examined in order to elaborate and refine existing theories of career choice and development into a grounded theory that more specifically explains the vocational pursuits of gay male school teachers.

D. Procedures. I have received an oral and a written explanation of this study and I understand that as a participant in this study the following things will happen:

1. What participants will do during the study. Research procedures will involve a series of audiotaped individual interviews with the researcher. I understand that I will be

interviewed at least once and at most four times. Each interview will be scheduled for one hour (60 minutes) at a mutually convenient time and place. Interviews will focus on identifying and investigating factors that influence career choice and development for gay men who pursue vocations to teach elementary and secondary school.

During the initial interview, for example, I will be asked to name and describe the factors that have influenced me, or that influence me, to choose and develop a career as an elementary or secondary school teacher. I further understand that I will be provided informal feedback on my previous responses if I am interviewed more than once. Subsequent interviews will ask me to verbally express my thoughts, associations, and identifications in regard to categories or themes that emerge during the initial interviews, and to validate relationships between them. Finally, I am encouraged to review the research summaries to ensure the anonymity of my disclosures.

2. Foreseeable risks or discomforts. The foreseeable discomforts to the me as a participant involved in this project might include (a) fears of disclosure and discrimination, and (b) increased self-awareness of vocational dissatisfaction. The methods by which

confidentiality will be maintained (See Section E) will function to minimize my risk of disclosure. The statement of voluntary participation (see Section G) informs me of my right to refuse participation or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

3. Benefits to be expected from the research. Benefits of my participation in this project will include a) informal feedback during follow-up interviews, and b) the empathic attention, response, and sensitivity of a researcher with advanced training in counseling procedures. Although the researcher will not provide me with direct counseling services, I may request and benefit further from information and referral services. For example, I may benefit from a referral to the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network-Oregon Chapter (GLSEN): a group of teachers, parents, students, and concerned citizens working together to end homophobia in schools. Finally, less direct, long-term benefits to me as a participant in this project may include an increase in my vocational self-awareness as well as the personal and professional satisfaction of contributing to the development of a grounded theory with potential implications for improving career counseling practice.

- E. Confidentiality. Any information obtained from me will be kept confidential. The only persons who will have access to this information will be the investigators and a professional transcriptionist. All interviews will be audiotaped for the purpose of data collection, storage, and retrieval. All audiotapes will be labeled with a code number used to identify any information that I provide. The professional transcriptionist will transcribe these recordings. No names will be used in any data summaries or publications. After transcription and data analysis, all audiotapes and data summaries used during the course of this project will be erased or destroyed.
- F. Compensation for Injury. I understand that the University does not provide me with compensation or treatment in the event that I am injured as a result of my participation in this research project. I further understand that I may request a referral from the researcher to a professional counselor or psychotherapist if I experience distressing fears of disclosure and discrimination, increased self-awareness of vocational dissatisfaction, or both.
- G. Voluntary Participation Statement. I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary and that I may either refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

- H. If You Have Questions. I understand that any questions I have about the research study and/or specific procedures should be directed to Anthony Terndrup, 558 SW Jefferson Avenue, Room 1, Corvallis, OR 97333, (541) 753-6074. Any other questions that I have should be directed to Mary Nunn, Sponsored Programs Officer, OSU Research Office, (541) 737-0670.
- I. Understanding and Compliance. My signature below indicates that I have read and that I understand the procedures described above and give my informed and voluntary consent to participate in this study. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

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Signature of Subject

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Name of Subject

---

Date Signed

---

Subject's Present Address

---

Subject's Phone Number

APPENDIX B:  
QUESTIONS FOR INITIAL INTERVIEW

1. What factors have influenced you to choose and develop a career as an elementary or secondary school teacher?
2. How have these factors influenced you to choose and develop a career as an elementary or secondary school teacher?
3. Which of these factors seem most important to you? Why?
4. Which of these factors seem least important to you? Why?
5. How do you think these factors relate to each other?
6. How has your sexual orientation influenced your career choice and development as an elementary or secondary school teacher?
7. How has concealment or disclosure of your sexual orientation influenced your career choice and development as an elementary or secondary school teacher?
8. How has anti-gay discrimination influenced your career choice and development as an elementary or secondary school teacher?
9. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your career choice and development as an elementary or secondary school teacher?
10. What factors influence your career satisfaction or dissatisfaction as an elementary or secondary school teacher?

11. How does your sexual orientation influence your career satisfaction or dissatisfaction as an elementary or secondary school teacher?

APPENDIX C:  
QUESTIONS FOR SECOND INTERVIEW

1. In order to participate in this study, you self-identified as both a school teacher and a gay man. Of which identity did you first develop an awareness? In other words, did you develop an awareness of your vocational identity as a school teacher before your sexual identity as a gay man OR did you develop an awareness of your sexual identity as a gay man before your vocational identity as a school teacher?
2. How did/do you blend or merge your sexual and vocational identities in the process of choosing/developing a career as a school teacher?
3. How did/do social attitudes toward school teachers influence your career choice/development?
4. How did/do family attitudes toward school teachers influence your career choice/development?
5. How did/do social attitudes toward gay men influence your career choice/development?
6. How did/do family attitudes toward gay men influence your career choice/development?
7. How does teaching school allow you to express yourself?

8. How does your ability to express yourself in the workplace influence your choice to disclose/conceal your sexual identity in the workplace?
9. How has/does teaching school met/meet your developmental needs as a gay man?
10. In conclusion, what single factor has most influenced your career choice and development as a gay male school teacher?

APPENDIX D:  
QUESTIONS FOR DEMOGRAPHIC INTERVIEW

1. How old are you?
2. What is your racial/ethnic identification?
3. What is the highest academic degree that you have earned?
4. What professional credentials have you earned?
5. How many years have you been employed as school teacher?