Queer(ing) Environments:
Creating an inclusive library space

BIBLIO CON '23

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Land Acknowledgement

Although we are participating in a virtual presentation, it is important for us to situate ourselves and our research within the context of Turtle Island, or North America. Our university is in Oshawa, Ontario, Canada.

We are thankful to be welcome on these lands in friendship. The lands we are situated on are covered by the Williams Treaties and are the traditional territory of the Mississaugas, a branch of the greater Anishinaabeg Nation, including Algonquin, Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawatomi. These lands remain home to many Indigenous nations and peoples.

Agenda

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1. Context
2. Queering?
3. Intersectionality
4. Policy
5. Collections
6. Spaces
7. Programs

Context

Situating Myself

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- I am a white settler to Turtle Island
- Scottish, Finnish, and Irish background
- Queer, non-binary, lesbian
- EdD Student and Researcher

- Former programmer at Pickering Public Library
- Former Support Specialist at BiblioCommons

Queering?

When we “queer” something, whether it be spaces, history, or literature, we are viewing our understandings of something through a deconstructive lens, that critique the heteronormative power structure (Guerrero et al, 2017).

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Intersectionality - Kimberlé Crenshaw

Queer issues are fundamentally tied to the heteronormative and patriarchal power structures that society practices. These uphold colonial and racist power structures.

Current Climate

PROTECT CHILDREN

QUEER & TRANS
BLOOD
WILL BE
ON YOUR
HANDS
W/ THESE LAWS

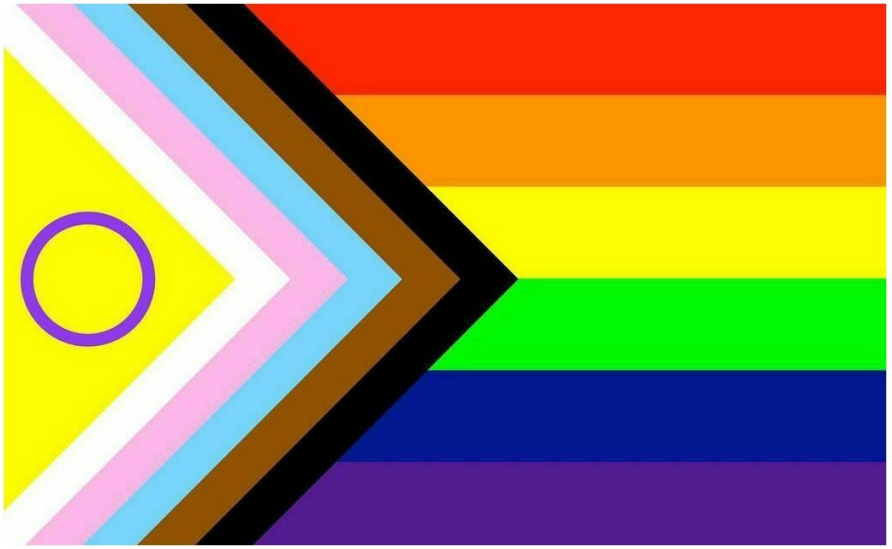
#1MillionMarch4Children
September 20, 2023
DURHAM REGION
9AM
DDSB RALLY
400 TAUNTON RD
WHITBY
1030AM
CAR RALLY
DDSB TO PICKERING
CITY HALL
11AM
Protest at
Pickering City Hall
1 Esplanade St
Pickering
NOON
MARCH FROM
PICKERING
CITY HALL
Let Kids Be Kids
My Child MY Choice
#1MillionMarch4Children
#LeaveOurKidsAlone
Parents Rights Matter

TRUST
THE
SCIENCE
♂BOY OR GIRL♀
LEAVE
THE KIDS
ALONE
SHAME

Policy

Policy Recommendations

- Policies should be used in conjunction with queer theory to increase opportunities for representation of queer communities.
- It must be noted that queer theory needs to be intersectional and informed by anti-colonial practices.
- Collection policies need to be investigated to ensure libraries are able to make collection decisions that are inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all



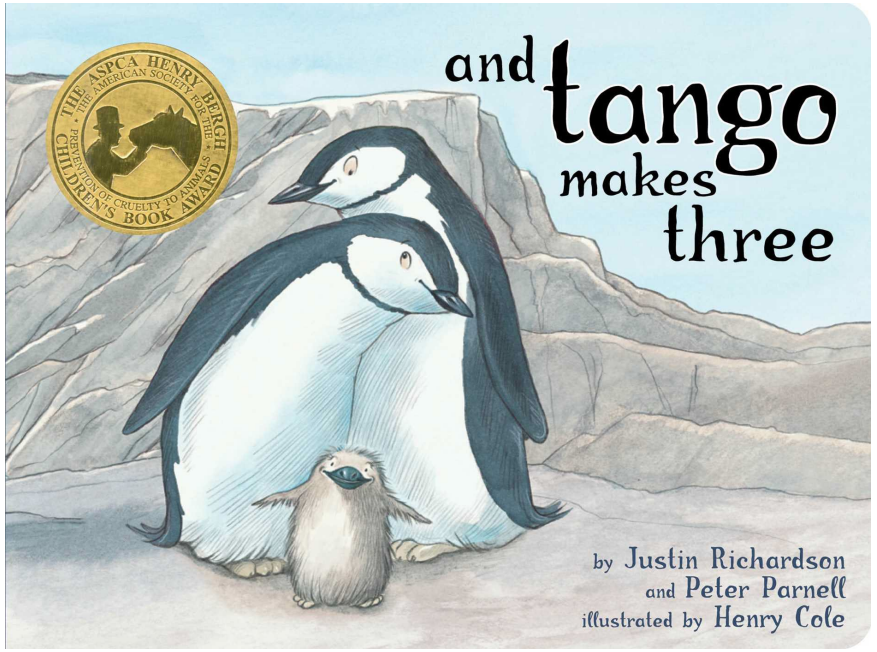
How can you create inclusive policies within your library space?

Who are the policies including?
Who are the the policies benefiting?
Who are writing these policies?

Collections

Collections

- Resources in library collections also need to be intentionally displayed to ensure that queer resources are being accessed by the community and not just accumulated in collections.
- However, other studies have shown that as student input indicated that, while they wanted queer resources to be visible, they did not want them separated into their own section (Perez, 2019).
- Perez (2019) also spoke about including queer resources in other themed displays in the library space, such as Black History Month displays, and ensuring that 2SLGBTQIA+ titles are visible even on regular shelf displays.



What does your 2SLGBTQIA+ collection look like?

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How did you make these decisions?
What resources did you use?
Is your collection intersectional?

Spaces

Spaces

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- Spaces need to be safe and inclusive to all
- This includes all who are oppressed by heteronormative society

SAFER SPACES

How do patrons navigate your library space?

Who is represented in your space?
Who is accommodated in your space?
How has this been determined?

Programs

Programs

- Libraries can make spaces accessible to queer programs like Drag Queen Storytime
- This means safe access to these programs
- Radis et al. conducted an exploratory study on drag queen reading programs. They found that these programs increased knowledge of gender expression and identity, acceptance, and difference, such as diverse family structures and ways of being (2021).

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What voices are being elevated in your programming?

Are you compensating fairly for diverse programming?

Does inclusive programming occur outside of Pride Month?

Do your policies support inclusive programs?

Importance of strong and ethical policies

Queer theory and anti-colonial practices need to influence policy

Needs to be informed by queer voices, researchers, librarians, or authors

References

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Radis, B., Wenocur, K., Jin, J., Keeler, C. (2022). A rainbow for reading: A mixed-methods exploratory study on drag queen reading programs. Journal of Creativity in Mental Health, 17(3), 332-349.

Thank you!

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