

Internship Journal

Odyssey Youth Center

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[PSYC395] Internship
Dr. Dalley
Spring 2004

Week One:

I met with the Odyssey (one of Spokane's GLBT youth centers) coordinators, Shannon and Elizabeth, to discuss what I will be doing for the internship this quarter. We decided that part of bringing the scientific aspect of the course to the chosen site is combining psychology and the social atmosphere that Odyssey tries to sustain for the GLBT community, which is why I will be primarily in charge of giving presentations about various aspects of homosexuality to those who regularly show up at the center. The following are subjects that I will be tackling in five separate presentations:

- Homosexual History 101: Ancient civilizations vs. present-day cultures' views on homosexuality; social activism and notable homosexuals throughout the ages.
- Homosexuality: A Scientific Phenomenon – the nature vs. nurture controversy.
- Bisexuality & Trans-Sexuality: Under-represented/misunderstood aspects of the GLBT community.
- Homosexuality & Religion: Controversies & Confusions.
- Homosexuality & the media's portrayal of the GLBT community in movies, TV, books and music.

Additionally, I will be assisting Shannon and Elizabeth with collecting "data" from people who come to Odyssey, and basically trying to organize and get a broader scope of why/when people show up. This will allow me to get a feel for what Odyssey gives back to the community by providing a safe haven for GLBT youth in the Spokane area.

Since the internship is only for one credit, I'm only obligated to spend four hours a week on-site, which I do on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3-5 PM. This does not count the time I will spend doing the presentations or any extra time I take to work on visual aids for them elsewhere. However, the bulk of my progress will be within that four-hour period.

Week Two:

I began cobbling together information for my first presentation on the history of homosexuality. Some information I already had collected for projects and papers in previous classes – the stuff on social activism was something I expected to use during a

Children's Lit presentation on GLBT lit for K-12 graders but never did, and the notes on ancient civilizations vs. present-day cultures' views on homosexuality came directly from that presentation.

I also was inspired to include a section on various "famous" homosexuals throughout history by a poster that Odyssey has hanging on its walls, as well as a website that I found with the specific purpose of cataloguing such a thing. The entire point of this addition, of course, is to show that, despite their sexuality, there have been many contributions in various fields from various countries by people who may or may not have been publicly associated with the GLBT community during their lifetime.

I suspect the presentation will be more or less an hour in length. I also plan to include a hand-out of additional Internet resources for people to take with them, because I feel that will give them something to take with them, both literally and metaphorically.

Week Three:

I plan to present the Homosexuality History 101 report on the 27th, and to have the rest of my presentations come subsequently after that. As such, this week was spent preparing the visual aids for the first one, of which there will be three. I plan to hang the triad of large-sized posters on the wall behind me when I present, so they can be seen and referenced easily.

I also plan to spend successive weeks putting materials for the other presentations together early, so the majority of the second half of the quarter can be spent helping Odyssey with collecting data/doing interviews. In this sense, I will have brought knowledge to the site and also taken away information concerning what it takes to keep such a place up and running.

Week Four:

I spent the majority of this week plotting out and researching the second presentation, Homosexuality: A Scientific Phenomenon. When I was a Running Start student enrolled in Psychology 101, my term paper was essentially detailing the various biological and environmental theories pertaining to the etiology of homosexuality, and this is the baseline for what I'm going to present.

Theories such as Simon LeVay's work with the INAH-3 will be incorporated, as well as some more recent information that may well have cropped up since my writing the paper four years ago. For the visual aid, I plan to make either a chart or a Venn diagram that illustrates how the biological and environmental factors compare. Overall, however, what I want the kids to take away from this presentation is the idea that there are biological *and* environmental factors involved and stigmas attached to each, and that sexuality is a very complex thing.

Week Five:

I finally gave my first presentation, “Homosexual History 101”. It took me a while to get the posters tacked up and for the coordinators to gather everyone up and explain what I was going to be talking about, but once everyone got settled in, I got started with little additional hassle.

I was a little unsure if I’d be able to hold everyone’s interest, which is probably why I allowed for so much discussion in between points being made – I was just so happy that there were people interested enough to want to talk about what I was saying. Most people found it particularly interesting how homosexual history was integrated into things that had been heavily pronounced upon in school, like World War II giving rise to more lesbian bars and gathering places because, with the men in other countries, females were free to pursue such interests without consequence. This helped to instill the idea that homosexuality exists in any circumstance, despite possible negative regard of its practice.

Week Six:

I met with Dr. Dalley to catch him up at the mid-quarter with what I’m doing, where my internship is going, et cetera, since Dr. Taylor’s untimely death has rendered him unable, obviously, to continue providing assistance with anything having to do with the internship program.

Also, I continued working on my second presentation, using a paper I wrote for my Psychology 101 course a few years back on the nature/nurture controversy and how it pertains to homosexuality as my main resource.

Week Seven:

I gave my second presentation, “Homosexuality: A Scientific Phenomenon”; I was originally going to make a poster for it, but decided that people might get more out of what ended up being a lot of complex theories if I gave them something to take with them. Thus, along with my usual “additional online resources” page, I put together an additional hand-out summarizing some of the main points of the presentation.

I also worked on my third presentation, which will be about bisexuality and transsexuality, collaboratively. This is probably one of the only presentations that I haven’t done at least SOME previous research on before taking on an internship, so it will be interesting to cobble resources together.

Week Eight:

I had my third presentation this week, which involved only one poster, but quite a lot of information, nonetheless. I think the difference between this and the extensive number of visuals for my first presentation is that the latter has a lot more that can be illustrated; bisexuality and transsexuality are a lot more intangible than specific names and dates.

While all of my presentations are meant to speak *to* the GLBT youth at Odyssey, I felt like this one was more an admonishment than the others, because bisexuals and transsexuals *are* separated from and discriminated against in the GLBT community as well as the heterosexual one, and I felt it was necessary to point that out to them, at least. Perhaps acknowledging it, and explaining the fallacies involved in such discrimination will prevent future occurrence of it, at least amongst the people who saw the presentation.

Week Nine:

Since the quarter is winding down, I agreed to do my fourth presentation a mere five days after the third one. Shannon and Elizabeth were expecting an out-of-town guest who would be in charge of evaluating Odyssey for a possible grant to stick around for said presentation, so I wanted to do an especially astounding job. And even though he didn't stay past 7 PM (the presentations don't usually start until at least 7:30 and usually around 7:45), I felt that this one (on "Homosexuality and Religion") went really well.

My emphasis for this presentation was to focus on the fact that most GLBT youth are no strangers to prejudice from one denomination of faith or another. And I used this platform to point out that *they*, too, were probably discriminatory against the church. I touched heavily on tenets of the Christian Bible, refuting some commonly held interpretations that assumed that it considered homosexuality "immoral", and also talked about non-Christian religion and their stance on gay people/behavior. There was an extremely thoughtful discussion afterwards, and I prided myself on not offending anyone, despite the potential for it given the nature of the discussion. It was probably my most successful presentation yet.

Week Ten:

My final presentation, "Homosexuality and the Media" was this week. Instead of posters or hand-outs (aside from the usual online resources sheet), I decided to bring actual examples of gay-themed media, which included GLBT literature and a clip from the popular TV show, "Queer as Folk". I took special pains to ensure that it was not sexually explicit, of course, given the fact that some of the youth are only 14-15 years old.

I felt that the kids were a lot chattier (and not always on-task chatting, either) during this presentation than any of the others, be it because they could sense that it was the last one, or because the topic was so much more light-hearted than the one for the previous

presentation, so it took longer to get through everything. Nonetheless, everyone thanked me for coming in and the people who stayed throughout the presentation were appreciative of the hard work I did putting everything together.

Week Eleven:

During finals week, I cobbled together my final paper summarizing what I did during my internship and how it applied to my academic career and made sure I had copies of everything turned in to both Dr. Dalley and Odyssey. Also, all paperwork that the EWU internship office needed was filled out and turned in to them on time. This has been one of the most enjoyable and thought-provoking “classes” I have ever participated in, and I’ll miss it.