

The LGBTQ Tools & Resources for Humber Faculty Study – Final Report

By

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**A Capstone Research Project in Partnership with The LGBTQ+ Resource Centre
and the Community Development Degree, FCSC**

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1. Abstract

This project addresses the ability for faculty at Humber College to ensure inclusion of gender and sexual diversity within their classroom, and curriculum for their students. The objectives include an understanding of what the current level of access, process, and variety of resources available for faculty, what new or additional tools or process would further serve demands. Also addressing the current mandate of the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre whose mission is to support students though is often considered a resource hub to faculty members.

To evaluate the current reality and needs of faculty, an online survey was posted to the Humber Communique and broadcasted to faculties. The self-selected 87 participants responded to 10 questions with opportunity to elaborate on their experiences and needs. The team also conducted five key informant interviews with various Humber College stakeholders ranging from faculty to administrative members to discover more about the reality, possible barriers, gaps, and possible recommendations.

The key findings from the research methods indicate that most participants believe they would benefit from having access to tools and resources with almost half never have accessed any before. Faculty indicated that almost 40% currently do not have access to tools or resources to ensure inclusivity. The overall theme has shown that awareness, capacity, access, and leadership are some of the key reasons why there are current gaps and barriers to having gender and sexual diversity within the classroom and curriculum at Humber College.

2. Acknowledgements

Capstone Partner

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3. Introduction

The Research Team has conducted a study of the current processes and or tools in place which aim to support knowledge and resource sharing for faculty on LGBTQ+ education and inclusion within the Humber College campuses. This research will contribute to the efforts and importance of making post-secondary institutions more inclusive and enhancing knowledge of gender identity and sexual orientation within courses and campus practices. The research team has been advised that the institution, faculty, and staff have relied on the Resource Centre staff to lecture, facilitate community speakers, and representation which goes beyond their mandate.

4. Research Context

The project focuses mainly on Humber College's Lakeshore and North Campuses, both in Etobicoke, ON. The population within the self-selected sample are faculty, staff, and key stakeholders working at Humber College, Institute of Technology, and Advanced Learning.

The partner organization is the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre. Its mission is: "The LGBTQ+ Resource Centre works to promote safer, braver, positive spaces at Humber College and offers a dedicated space at both the North and Lakeshore Campuses for folks to connect with one another, access resources, and build community". (The LGBTQ Resource Centre, Humber College).

5. Project Focus

The project findings identify any possible gaps and available resources provided to the resource centre in supporting their services not only to students but faculty. The team has conducted a survey and key informant interviews as quantitative and qualitative research methods. Faculty, and interested stakeholders, were recruited to participate in the research. The team has evaluated the state of the current system and provide recommendations through consultation with the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre and other stakeholders to address any existing gaps.

6. Situating yourself as a researcher

The team is comprised of one team member, Luc Blanchard. He identifies as a cisgender pansexual man and Humber College graduating student. The member's identities impact the research as his identities are of interest to the project scope and focus. Given Luc's lived experiences, he can relate to the importance and impact educational institutions have on a person's personal and professional development. He has witnessed and understands why institutions have a moral leadership role in ensuring equity, diversity, and inclusion practices are in place at a system level within the college.

7. Research Questions

1. What are the current processes for faculty and departments to access LGBTQ+ resources, training, community, and tools to support their instruction?
2. What new processes or tools need to be created to support faculty in queering the curriculum and better supporting LGBTQ+ students in their classrooms?
3. Is there a need or capacity to adapt the current mandate of the centre to take on additional responsibilities of supporting access to LGBTQ+ resources, training, community, and tools for faculty and departments? And if so, what resources need to be allocated for the additional workload and efforts of the staff? If not, what is recommended?

8. Literature Review

The investigator searched for literature connecting the experiences of gender and sexually diverse students within their educational environments. That is further linked by understanding the impacts and role of institutions, in ensuring the faculty and administration can provide a setting and learning experience that is inclusive of gender and sexual identities and through the curriculum. Rayside (2014) addressed the systemic issues that are intertwined within the social structure of the school environment that cause and allow discrimination and harassment towards students identifying as gender or sexually diverse. Ecker et al (2015) highlighted the importance of the leadership capacity the institutions play in addressing the key issues. As well highlighted the impacts a student's experience at school has on their future. There were comparisons with cisgender heterosexual students to cis and trans queer folks.

DeWitt's literature identified LGBTQ students as minorities within the school system. Expressing that lack of leadership has shown later impacts on students' emotional and academic capacity. This information shows how impactful and influential and informative a student's time in school can be. Recommendations have suggested to include policy change, framework, and practiced inclusion within the institution. Della Rovere Proia (2016) speaks to the teachers who are inclusive and want to support their students but face barriers themselves experiencing "ignorance and lack of knowledge; and heteronormative practices...". (p12).

An article by Ecker et al. focusing on a national survey conducted of queer students gave insight into the lack of research on the impacts of resource and student centres in Canada. Having learned from international studies as references during this Canadian study, provided data on the impacts and benefits of resource and student centres having the focus on their mission of supporting and creating safe spaces for students. Campus libraries in the US are referenced as creating safe and inclusive spaces for students to access information and resources.

Supportive environments have been suggested throughout the literature. With known cases of discrimination, harassment, and forms of assault there are often experiences that aren't collected from students due to missing out on the collection sessions because of them not feeling safe. This gives importance to the roles that the centres play and ensuring they can fulfill their mission in supporting students.

The laws in Canada are clear of the rights expected to be upheld but within these institutions and it is their role to integrate those rights into their policies and practices. Even if policies are created, they must be evenly applied. The systemic issues that relate to the social structures within the schools allow for the negative impacts directly to LGBTQ students. Those social norms go from various levels of education and are reinforced as students progress.

The literature reviewed points to several systemic and structural key constructs that impact individual and collective futures. Intended or not. They encourage institutions to take a more inclusive and active stance on integrating policies and practices with legislated and constitutional mandates and foster equal implementation. We've learned how crucial school groups, organizations, and centres are in filling in the gaps even when not appreciated, supported with resources, or respected as they should be. Power and authority come with responsibility and trust embedded.

9. Project Design

The team worked from an empirical and logistical knowledge lens for the quantitative questions and a grounded theory lens for the qualitative components. Focusing on the facts of the current process and using logical reasoning to help discover if a new system or resources are needed. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected using an online survey and key informant interviews. The survey questions, focus group guide, and analysis tools were created by the team, reviewed by LGBTQ+ Resource Centre, and Capstone Supervisor before publishing. The self-selected sample audience will focus on faculty members recruited through email support of the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre, and Program Coordinator Bachelor of Community Development Program - Faculty of Community and Social Services.

The quantitative and qualitative methods were based on the following guiding questions:

1. What are the current processes for faculty and departments to access LGBTQ+ resources, training, community, and tools to support their instruction?
2. What new processes or tools need to be created to support faculty in queering the curriculum and better supporting LGBTQ+ students in their classrooms?
3. Is there a need or capacity to adapt the current mandate of the centre to take on additional responsibilities of supporting access to LGBTQ+ resources, training, community, and tools for faculty and departments? And if so, what resources need to be allocated for the additional workload and efforts of the staff? If not, what is recommended?

The 10 online survey questions focused on:

Quantitative:

- Level of ease with the current process of accessing tools, resources, or support
- Where faculty are reaching out to access tools, resources, or support
- Types of tools, resources, or support currently available or wanted by faculty

- The amount of faculty requesting resources
- Awareness of current sexual minority inclusion training, tools, and resources

Qualitative:

- The current experience in requesting and accessing resources
- Type of resources in need or wanted to support the population
- A process that would be recommended for implementation

The key informant guide focused on:

Qualitative:

- What tools, resources are currently available for faculty
- Do the current resources meet the needs of the learning process for students
- How do faculty access tools resources
- Are there any gaps or barriers in what is currently offered or the process itself
- If a new process should be needed, should the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre be mandated and funded to provide this additional support?
- Types of sexual and gender diverse, inclusion training required and offered to faculty

Data collection was completed by Luc Blanchard, a fourth-year Community Development student.

Data Collection and Analysis:

The data was collected using an online survey capturing data of the types of resources accessed, gauging access experiences, and the type of resources wanted from faculty, and the types of resources available. The data collected through key informant interviews have provided data on the in-depth current process in place and how/if access and or resources could be better accessible and engaged.

The quantitative data collected through the survey was imported into an excel database (password protected), combined, and sorted into categories. The data was analyzed using logical analysis, looking at patterns in practice, data graphing, and visual inspection. The data will be coded, frequencies, and percentages displayed. The cross-tabulations were conducted on correlating topics. The investigator reviewed and interpreted the patterns and presented them to the broader team.

Content analysis was used for the qualitative methods through the key informant interviews and open-ended questions in the survey. The interviews were audio-recorded and notes were taken during the sessions. After each session, a summary was created and sent to the participant for review and provide feedback. The data collected was coded by themes arising and the research questions. The data was filtered to the summarized coded themes while reporting any highlighted points. The data was formatted and presented to the broader team.

10. Ethical Considerations

Ethical Issues:

The investigator acknowledged his connection with the scope of this project. Identifying as a cisgender pansexual man acknowledged that his sexual diversity could be affected by the results or impacts of this project. During interviews or any interactions with faculty or staff, the interviewer kept professional with their opinions and ensure they were checking in with themselves, the community partner, and the seminar faculty if guidance or support is needed. This project aims to support the Resource Centre, and faculty members. Being objective and open to the data and information shared by participants has directed the results and recommendations of this research and not personal views or opinions. The team ensured that key informants had an opportunity to review and validate summarized data and a one-pager report will be distributed to participants who indicated an interest in reviewing the findings and recommendations.

Anticipated Ethical Considerations:

Through the consent and information forms, the participants were made aware of the voluntariness of this research and their participation. They had the right to withdraw their participation at any point and any collected data that they share with the team. Privacy and confidentiality were kept by ensuring limited access to information through password-protected documents and removing names from published materials. Data provided will not be made public without consent from participants and personal contact information will be kept secured and destroyed by the end of the project. Each participant will have completed the consent form and return it to the team to confirm their comprehension of what is entailed. This project is considered a minimal risk to participants. Personal information will be used to contact participants and not shared or published.

Humber Ethics & TCPS2 Policy:

This project has been designed and created with Humber's Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Policy as well as the TCPS 2 Ethics Framework policies. These policies will guide the team's research practices and be referred to throughout the process. The core principles of the TCPS 2 Ethics will focus on the Respect for Persons, Concern for Welfare, and Justice definitions and practices.

11. Key Findings

The analysis of the data collection had been thematically categorized into three categories based on the research questions.

The findings from the survey reaching 87 self-selected faculty members have indicated that 93% require or would benefit from access to external resources, training, and information related to gender identity and sexual orientation. Of the 87 participants 46% have never accessed resources, tools, and training related to LGBTQ+ topics and 39% of respondents have indicated

that they do not have access to resources such as a guide of LGBTQ+ issues, catalog of resources, guest speakers, etc. The overall theme has shown that awareness, capacity, access, and leadership are some of the key reasons why there are current gaps and barriers to having gender and sexual diversity within the classroom and curriculum at Humber College.

Training

Findings from key informant stakeholders have advised that Humber's Centre for Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion (CHRED) has in the past year started offering 3-4 times per year, a non-mandatory Introduction to Gender Diversity training course through an external organization EGALE Human Rights Trust. This training is promoted through Humber's Communique platform and faculty can register for courses through a portal. Faculty have indicated that 52% believe they are provided with the appropriate awareness and inclusion training to foster a gender-inclusive classroom.

The Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion advises they conduct mandatory training focusing on supporting LGBTQ+ students and peers through faculty professional development that is related to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). One participant had shared that Adam Benn and Sacha Ally are "very knowledgeable and great facilitators". In terms of accessing resources or training through CHRED, 24% of survey participants have indicated having accessed through the centre, and 23% of faculty have claimed to not have accessed any through any source. Key informants advise that faculties and departments can access as needed or on requested basis training from the Centre such as a "Gender 2.0" facilitated by a guest speaker.

Some respondents have elaborated that they have received a small amount of training, don't feel they were provided with specific training, or can't recall. One recipient indicated the topic was discussed during the Teacher's Excellence Program (TEP). A participant has indicated that they participate in training as an individual, another has completed it on their own time, and another knows that the information is available. Also, there has been mention of not enough time to participate in available training and that it isn't built into departmental meetings or professional development requirements.

Some respondents have shared that they have complete Human Diversity training which focuses on race-related issues. A participant has shared that this training hasn't been offered authentically but in a performative way. There have been specifications made of part-time faculty not having clear access or is scarce.

The LGBTQ+ Resource Centre has delivered a Pride Speakers Series which is open to faculty and staff. As well they had provided some resources. Other departments on Lakeshore Campus take on additional work to address identity. A collaborative event with the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre and Indigenous Education Engagement focused on gender and sexually diverse identity and Indigenous experiences bringing in guest speakers from the Amazing Race.

Quotes:

“As a faculty member who identifies as LGBTQ and teaches incoming first-year students, I was informed by a first-year student that I was the first professor to speak openly on LGBTQ issues in the classroom.”

“I haven't had it enough in my awareness in so far as I thought that my personally inclusive attitude was 'enough.' I am now aware that more education is necessary for me to actively foster a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ students and am interested in access more materials”.

“Creating inclusive environments is an important part of this work too. Faculty development falls to CTL for capacity building. Some of the training I do isn't my job, but no one else is doing it”.

Accessing Resources

The findings indicate that there isn't a formal or specified process for faculty to access resources related to the topic. Some participants have never tried, had limited experience, or were directed by students. Respondents have shared that they have a contact person, external resources such as Planned Parenthood Toronto (TEACH) or do their own research.

CHRED does not direct faculty during training to the Centre for Teaching and Learning for access to resources as the awareness. There is not a familiarity with the offerings. Faculty have advised the need for a list of guest speakers and resources. 39% of respondents have indicated that they do not have access to resources such as a guide of LGBTQ+ issues, catalog of resources, general info, etc., with 30% being able to access. There has been an indication of various informal access points to resources through the Humber Library, individual research or Googling, and the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre as a hub (21%). Individual participants who identify as gender and sexually diverse have been advised of doing their own work and often being approached directly by faculty or staff to access resources. One participant indicated that while feeling comfortable incorporating LGBTQ+ topics into the curriculum that during co-teaching efforts, slides are deleted by other faculty.

Quotes:

“I imagine there's a lot of accessible community resources out there, but not the awareness”.

“I am currently pursuing my master's degree and dedicating my research on LGBTQ issues in post-secondary education and have reached out to the LGBTQ Resource Centre, Human Rights and CTL for their support of my work to date and all have been very helpful and supportive towards my work to date”.

Accessing Guest Speaker(s)

Faculty have shown interest in having a specific list of accessible guest speakers with 20% have shared that they have been able to access guest speakers. Some participants have indicated connecting with speakers through their own sources, community organizations directly, asking fellow faculty members, and staff at the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre to speak to their classes. Participants have indicated there an internal faculty process to ensure speakers are compensated

though some have expressed concern over being able to provide an adequate amount estimating at \$150 per speaker. It was advised that this is a barrier in access, disrespectful, and concern that people aren't being valued in the academic setting.

Quote:

“Are teachers speaking from lived experience? Are they speaking more broadly in platitudes? Are they bringing speakers from the communities with those lived identities? Or are we just talking about them?”.

Inclusivity and Adaptation Within Curriculum

Informants have advised that self-identifying as gender or sexually diverse has led to other faculty members reaching out to support diversity and inclusion insight for developing their courses. 57% of faculty would benefit from resources in “queering” the curriculum. Some members who are currently doing their own work have also been approached for support as there is no formal process to access support. The LGBTQ+ Resource Centre is working with Humber Library on inclusivity and representation within the curriculum.

A participant has shared that there are conversations about equity, diversity, and inclusion within the curriculum. Also, that the Centre for Teach and Learning (CTL) focuses on pedagogy and curriculum development. CTL has set out learning outcomes and objectives that have been developed institution-wide focusing on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Though the perception has been that it cannot just be included but objectives created with that lens integrated.

There are pilot projects ongoing that are not reflected in the calendar of offerings. 23% of respondents have indicated being familiar with awareness and visibility initiatives. The Faculty of Social and Community Services is one of the testers of embedding themes of EDI into the curriculum. There is an ongoing task force that is leading this five-year term to build out recommendations, faculties-wide.

Quote:

“Faculty who are already doing the work have their own resources. It's about how to integrate this into the actual curriculum and not just one person doing it. The queer people are those who are bringing in these pieces”.

Strategy and Planning

There are two volunteer-based Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) launched through the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Task Force. The ERGs are employees who are offering their passion and or lived experience to inform the efforts. Two gender and sexually diverse facilitators and an individual consultant were invited to consult on the strategic planning process on embedding EDI inclusion, and creating safer spaces across Humber College. The Centre for Teaching and Learning, Humber Libraries, Program Planning Development & Renewal participated in capacity building this year.

The Centre for Human Rights reports to Human Resources and is also responsible for equity-related training for employees. Nancy, the director of that office has folks do investigations and training. The challenge is that the office is small for an institution the size of Humber. Their ability to do the training would take them five days a week.

Humber's administration does not actively lead organizing efforts around Pride festivities, and it relies on the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre to conduct the Pride flag raising, speaker series and marching in the Pride parade.

The Mandate of the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre

The Resource Centre doesn't focus on staff and faculty. Though 60% of respondents believe that the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre supports students, faculty, and staff through their mandate is only for students. Last year the Centre decided to focus our Pride Speaker Series on staff and faculty as there are fewer students on campus during the summer. The goal was to uplift queer and trans voices in a post-secondary environment. The topics had varied and lead sessions for faculty and staff. The audiences are academics, community members, and former students. Centre staff has been the main contact for faculty who are looking for support in curriculum development, guest speakers, and accessing resources for their classes and students. 64% of faculty had believed that the Centre offers counseling services and 25% financial aid though that is not the case. Our advisor has shared that the Resource Centre could improve on engaging with faculty and creating awareness of tools and resources available. Though because the Centre is mandated to students, capacity is very limited. Currently, only one full-time staff member is overseeing both centres at two campuses.

From a student perspective, the Resource Centre is doing all the human rights work. The Centre is providing programming for students but also advocating for student concerns, wants, and rights. But there's no one doing that at a faculty or staff level. According to our advisor, expanding someone's mandate like Human Rights or the Resource Centre's is not going to have changed unless you hire people to go along with that.

Quotes:

“The needs or wants from faculty aren't provided by any departments and that's what we hear at the Resource Centre”.

“I have never accessed resources through LGBTQ+ Centre. My understanding has always been that this is a resource centre for students. I have yet to receive faculty orientation on how to use this resource centre - and if it came up as part of my first-year faculty orientation, it hasn't been brought up adequately again.”.

“Because I'm not very savvy with social media, I'm not actually sure how to access resources at the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre. I have looked at the website, but I suspect there is more current

information than what is presented? I can contact the person who runs the Service via email, but if I'm referring a student, I'm unfortunately not familiar with what is available at this time - and besides me emailing the person who runs the service, I'm not sure how else to get this info, or where to refer students, particularly now that we're all remote.”.

“I was unfairly targeted by an individual from the centre. I was sent an aggressive e-mail that I was promoting a binary-centric agenda, that was I using transphobic language, and that I was saying that non-binary people did not exist. This is furthest from the truth. I say unfairly targeted because I was only one who was sent the e-mail. I was told an anonymous student had come forward, but there was no official complaint.”.

12. Contributions of this Research/Recommendations

Training

Through the survey results, 55% of faculty want regular training and information for educators on gender and sexual orientation. A participant has advised that discrimination and harassment issues are still occurring based on pronouns used. There is a perception that respecting pronouns is just a rule and that's why they're being used. 49% of faculty are interested in participating in workshops on the impact of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia on students' success and performance, and 54% on strategies in creating safer schools.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning could provide professional development to faculty, by offering tailored asynchronous or passive courses on gender identity and sexual orientation both learning methods available to ensure faculty are reflective and accountable.

A mandatory course focusing on gender identity and sexual orientation. And using an intersectional lens addressing diversity within the curriculum. The administration would need to create buy-in or tiered mandated policy to ensure a safe learning environment for faculty and accessible knowledge in new hire onboarding and throughout employment.

Accessing Resources

Participants have suggested a central hub would be encouraged for faculty to access knowledge, tools, and resources. Specific tools on how to support a student during a name change process or related components to gender identity. How to safely support students and not cause harm. A guide to appropriately refer students to supports based on their needs and what options are available. 54% of faculty respondents have indicated an interest in accessing resources and a referral guide for gender and sexually affirming services and support on and off-campus.

Accessing Guest Speaker(s)

With there not being a broadly accessible process or method to access guest speakers, it is recommended that the Centre for Teaching and Learning provide a vetted bank or database of industry subject matter experts identifying as gender or sexually diverse for faculties to access. 54% of faculty have interest in a directory of guest speakers and 36% wanting an electronic system to request and book speakers.

Inclusivity and Adaptation Within Curriculum

Recommendations from participants have emphasized the importance of decolonizing the curriculum. Ensuring there is more representation of different perspectives and voices to ensure history being presented is more accurate. 39% of faculty would like support in findings support in finding readings and resources written in the queer voice. 53% of faculty respondents want access to comprehensive resources to support inclusive classroom teaching. 57% are interesting in resources for “queering” the curriculum. Ensuring dedicated paid time is available for faculty to redesign their course. Faculty could reach out to CTL for professional development and support in incorporating inclusivity within their courses.

Strategy and Planning

Queer folks in positions of authority can help ensure things aren't missed and reduce the opportunity for harm. The administration can encourage conversation and discussion within faculty meetings to discuss student's holistic experiences, inclusivity, and access to resources.

A designated staff member or administrative level employee should be hired focusing on equity-based efforts. With HR's mandate to ensure basic human rights are met, this role would take it a step further and ensure integration and active practice beyond legal compliance. Referencing Ryerson University where they have a Vice President of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. They were focused on ensuring the rights of people were being respected. They were the accountability arm of that office and were a whole separate group that reported to that Vice President that did education, training, and development.

Students completing placement must be able to feel comfortable and safe navigating opportunities to work in the industry. Program and Placement Coordinators can ensure that partners are vetted to ensure inclusivity and safer spaces. An indication can be used on a list of confirmed practices that offer this environment for students.

The Mandate of the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre

Participants have recommended that the current part-time position within the LGBTQ+ Resource Centre should be made full-time. Two coordinators should be available one for each campus. These roles would benefit in creating more solid connections with faculties. Having more capacity would allow things to be more tailored and adapted to each campus. The two campuses are very specific in environment and culture. At each Centre, one coordinator could support programming and operations, the other on outreach and education which could involve guest speaking.

Ensuring that the various student centres can be successful in their mandates by connecting EDI with health, well-being, and overall student success. Integrating new resources, representation, and diversity within the spaces that aim to support students.

13. Limitations of research

One of the recruitment methods for the survey relied on faculty accessing a posting on Humber's Communique platform. This would allow potential participants to choose to participate or not based on the scope of the survey. Individuals biased against gender and sexually diversity would presumably not opt-in to participate. The sampling would be considered self-selected. Faculty who may not have seen the posting or don't check it regularly may have missed this opportunity to participate. Some faculty may limit the amount of digital time online or would have preferred a verbal or written survey in-person or on the phone. Given that the data collection occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, capacity, and mental interest to participate in an online survey may have been limited.

14. Directions for future research

Through the qualitative and quantitative methods conducted, there was the opportunity to explore further probing topics within the key informant sessions and an online survey. We did not ask identifying information such as which faculty, gender, or sexual identity to identify lived experience or understanding of the importance of this research from that perspective. Through the key informant sessions, various insights arose around the importance of systemic issues around historical oppressive framework practices within educational institutions that lead into the various industries students are aiming to be a part of. Future research could also focus on the impact of an institution's role to create safer and braver classrooms and integrating equity, diversity, and inclusion within the curriculum.

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