



## Becoming Queerly Responsive: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Black and Latino Urban Queer Youth

### Key Details

#### KEY WORDS

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Urban Youth, Queer Youth, Black Youth, Latino Youth, Pedagogy, Education, Homophobia, Safe Space

#### POPULATION GROUP

LGBTQ youth, Racialized youth

#### STEPPING UP THEMES

Health and Wellness; Diversity, Social Inclusion & Safety

#### RESEARCH ORIGIN

USA

#### SOURCE

Academic

**“While the current focus on safe schools is crucial for ensuring educational access for all students, it falls short of addressing a much wider gamut of issues facing queer youth. This is particularly true for urban queer youth of color whose multiple marginalized positionalities in urban social and educational contexts force them to contend with complex intersections of oppressions that cannot be fully remedied by safe spaces focused solely on combatting homophobia”**

### 1. What is the research about?

This research addresses the urgent need for safer spaces for Black and Latino Urban Queer Youth (BLUQY) who are frequently survivors of targeted bullying. Unfortunately, much of the research available fails to address queer youth of colour and their multiple marginalized identities. Many LGBTQ spaces created in schools and within communities do not take into account multiple identities, and therefore fail to provide safer spaces for queer youth of colour. It is important to acknowledge the unique needs of BLUQY.

### 2. Where did the research take place?

This research took place at a community centre in a mid-sized city located in a northeastern US state. The researcher selected the community centre because it was the only local organization that provides health and wellness programming specifically for queer youth of colour in the city. The study focuses on the way the centre has adopted a culturally responsive approach to their work with BLUQY.

### 3. Who is this research about?

This research focuses on youth and adult staff members and volunteers at a community centre. The study involved 10 youth and 7 adult staff members and volunteers. 8 queer males and 2 transgender females, with 8 identifying as Black and 2 identifying as Black and Latino, aged 16-22 years old, participated in the study.

### 4. How was the research done?

This research used ethnographic methods; the researchers spent 1 year immersing themselves within the community at the centre, attending events and taking field notes. After a relationship was built between themselves and the youth/staff, one-on-one interviews were conducted with the participants. Youth were asked about their life histories, schooling experiences, and their involvement at the centre as BLUQY. Staff and volunteer participants were asked to expand on their personal/professional histories as well as their connection to the centre.

### 5. What are the key findings?

Three themes emerged that highlight how the centre was able to incorporate a culturally responsive approach in its work.

1. The centre’s culturally responsive approach involved a sensitivity and

respect for BLUQY cultures, something that was missing from many other community-based organizations.

2. The centre provided relevant sexual health workshops tailored specifically for BLUQY. The purpose of these workshops was to get youth comfortable with understanding their bodies and educated about how to be safe while engaging in sexual relationships with their partners.
3. The centre engaged the youth in a “House Ball Culture”. House Ball originated from Harlem in the 1960s from Black and Latino queers. The House Balls involved the community getting together and competing in extravagant performances like “best Vogue performance or prettiest face” by walking down a makeshift runway and making exaggerated poses for the audience. The centre held a weekly mini-ball called Vogue Review, which many youth participated in. The Balls had a positive impact because they brought community together and created culturally relevant social support networks.

### **6. Why does this research matter for youth work?**

This research recognizes BLUQY as a unique cultural group and highlights the importance of designing programs and services that respond effectively and sensitively to their particular needs. In this study, youth experienced both racist and anti-queer oppressions, isolating them from their biological families, school, and access to culturally relevant sexual health education. The centre was able to offer programming that was sex-positive and queer-positive. Youth workers should work to understand the impact of intersecting oppressions and engage with community members to develop responsive interventions.



Brockenbrough, E. (2016). *Becoming Queerly Responsive Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Black and Latino Urban Queer Youth*. *Urban Education*, 51(2), 170-196.