

12-2021

Queer Generational Connection Panel

Sam Hoffman
California State University, Monterey Bay

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all

Recommended Citation

Hoffman, Sam, "Queer Generational Connection Panel" (2021). *Capstone Projects and Master's Theses*. 1190.

https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all/1190

This Capstone Project (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ CSUMB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Capstone Projects and Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ CSUMB. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csumb.edu.

Queer Generational Connection Panel

Sam Hoffman (They/Them, She/Her)

Sam Gomez, Jacob Amagao

Collaborative Health & Human Services

Department of Health Human Services and Public Policy

California State University Monterey Bay

3/18/21

Author Note

Sam Hoffman, Department of Health Human Services and Public Policy, California State University Monterey Bay. This research was supported by Epicenter. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Name, California State University Monterey Bay, 100 Campus Center, Seaside, CA, 93955. Contact: shoffman@csumb.edu.

Abstract

This project was completed during my time working with the Epicenter in Salinas in their Our Gente program. Just as the program is designed to strengthen and support the LGBTQ+ youth and community in the area, this project seeks to address a growing gap between generations within the LGBTQ+ community. This gap grows due to a lack of both technological literacy, social in-person isolation, and a lack of accessible LGBTQ+ elders to provide information and oral history to those younger generations within the community. This project aims to address this with the Queer Generational Connection Panel. The Queer Generational Connection Panel is a panel of volunteers who are members of the LGBTQ+ community ranging in age from oldest to youngest generations. The idea behind this project is to allow both speakers and observers to listen to the stories of those older members of the community and obtain both a social connection and learn from an oral history that is rarely written in books. The findings of such a project were that such a panel, if held weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly could slowly mold back together this growing gap and produce a firmer community. With proper scheduling and marketing, this panel could easily be reproduced in any setting, online or otherwise.

Keywords: LGBTQ+, Community, Generational

Agency & Communities Served

This capstone project will be centered at the Epicenter in Salinas. “The Epicenter exists to empower at risk and a system involving youth ages 16-24 to flourish by connecting them to community resources that provide opportunities for equity and hope in order to improve youth outcomes in Monterey County” (Epicenter). The Epicenter is a community resource outlet providing food delivery services, clothing access, educational opportunities, career, and resume building for members of the community. The Epicenter also partners with other organizations such as Behavioral Health services and Friday Night Live. The Epicenter is a part of a large resource web helping connect youth to services they need to live stable, fulfilled, and happy lives. To meet this vision they run a specific program called Our Gente catering towards the care and living needs of queer youth. I serve this program with my mentors Sam Gomez and Jacob Agamao. My responsibilities include attending and overseeing: online resources, support groups, seminars, and presentations to the local queer youth of the Monterey Bay and Santa Cruz County. I also partner with other Epicenter staff to discuss the ongoing growth of the organization And help form strategies for future endeavors.

Problem Description

The social and connection gap between generations of the Queer community as a whole.

Contributing Factors

As many people are finding all over even outside of the community, COVID has become an isolating force between the generations. Technology and the general casual use of it is very much locked to those of more recent generations. The skills used to not only obtain but use these technologies of communication are more easily learned by younger generations and more easily

implemented normally. For earlier generations adapting to “quick shifts” in technology might prove difficult. This quick shift does not take into account the online-rooted Queer spaces created by younger generations not extending into physical spaces due to the distances between many group members. Many of the Baby Boomer and Traditionalist generation do not have access to these spaces, or are unaware of them.

In the same way many physical spaces, while accessible to all ages, can tend to be socially constructed and limited to a specific age range due to the already present age group. Many young people of the Queer community might not want to frequent spaces where many traditionalist and baby boomers are meeting as they might feel their interests are not shared or understood, and vice-versa.

Consequences

With the lack of understanding of online spaces for many of the members of the Traditionalist and Baby Boomer generations, and the physical isolation driven by the current pandemic herding people online for community. The gap spawned by technology is expanding. As well, this limits the knowledge and understanding and even the presence of more senior members online and cuts down on the potential connection and learning for younger members. As mentioned in an article on intergenerational connections, “A society that cuts off older people from meaningful contact with children . . . is greatly endangered” (Dimana and Spudich 2010).

In the same way the socially constructed groupings of youth and senior members in physical spaces also erases potential understanding and socialization of the generations. An uncommunicated shared interest in hobbies leads to more space and distance between groups, and removes growth and connections.

Problem Model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
Lack of Technological Understanding of Online Queer Spaces	The generational gap will grow between older and younger LGBTQ members.	Distanced Online Relationships
Lack of Connections and Socially Constructed Gaps of Interest		Distanced In Person Relationships
Lack of Personal-Sphere LGBTQ Elders		Lack of Oral History and Understanding of LGBTQ History

Capstone Project Description and Justification

Capstone Project

To tackle this problem, it has been proposed that a panel of members of the local Queer community be brought together to give their own accounts of their experiences with their identities through their lives. The panel would consist of a range of ages from each generation to ensure a diverse view on the Queer experience.

Project Purpose

This capstone project will address the lack of connection and understanding between generations within the Queer community to begin to bring them together more often and close the generational social gap.

Project Justification

This project's goals are based on the fact that many members of the Queer community are finding themselves more isolated right now with the limitations of COVID. As stated in an

article detailing the importance and impact of urban LGBTQ+ activism, “Covid-19 has profoundly altered our relationship to public assembly, to travel within and across national borders, to home, to neighborhood and to community” (Spruce 2021). All ages are being forced into isolation for others and their own health, enunciating the need for both physical and online spaces of community connection to keep our communities strong.

Assessment Plan

My plan to assess the effectiveness of these panels is to run a small survey before and after the panel. This survey will measure for understanding of each observer of LGBTQ+ Community connectedness as well as understanding of LGBTQ+ historical experiences.

Expected Outcomes

The best outcome for this situation would be the local community interest of Queer folk of all ages to attend hybrid (physical and online) panels. This will boost morale overall and create a stronger community bond between us all as we all try to continue forward in these trying times.

Project Results

After the completion of the Generational Connection Panel, and resulting finishing surveys, the results left were positive yet puzzling. The initial turnout of the event itself was smaller, and so more people had to be contacted post-panel to watch a recording and fill out surveys before and after watching for comparison. In total the project received 26 participants filling out surveys. Surveys measured community awareness, connection, and generational understanding. From the survey findings most who watched and attended the panel shifted

slightly towards collecting more understanding and connection. At the same time however, at some points the numbers representing lack of understanding and connection stayed the same or just barely lowered. This might just be because of the singular-happening nature of this panel, or possibly the lack of initial turnout. Given these results it is believed that, given more instances of panels possibly on a weekly or monthly basis, these panels could end up closing the gap between generations within the community.

Conclusion & Recommendations

In conclusion, here is what is recommended for the implementation of this project. Start searching for volunteer panelists a month beforehand and figure the best time and date for at least five or six of them. Be sure the age range is equally distributed among volunteers to gain the most diverse viewpoints. Once this date is settled, start marketing the event right away anywhere you find appropriate. It should be marketed both to volunteers and attendants as an all-ages event so that everyone is aware of the best sort of content of topics spoken on. Prepare a number of questions to send to the volunteers that will be asked of them on the panel. Make sure to just prepare around six to ten questions, as ideally there should be enough time left over for questions from the audience. Have on hand at least one moderator for the chat if done online, or one or two for live audience questions. With these recommendations and more panels like these should be easily replicated and done more often.

Personal Reflection

Through my time researching and hearing the reactions to my doing this project, I've learned how much something like this means to other people in my community. Thinking of all the people we've lost over the decades, and how the fact we've lost so many over the decades is so prevalent to many people of the LGBTQ+ community really makes seeing living examples necessary. To actually hear stories, learn histories, and see proof that we can live long enough to be old and do the same for younger generations of Queer youth is powerful.

Now to say that things went perfectly and that I am 100% happy with how this came out would be far from the truth. I don't think that I am the best person to have tried to get this panel going, but it was something I wanted to see done and possibly reproduced better, so I went through with it. I could have driven a lot harder on marketing the event than I did. I should have gotten started working on it earlier than I did. I was still very flustered while mediating the panel itself, and possibly didn't react as well to some things as I should have. All that said, I did do things well in my eyes. I was able to collaborate with another organization on my own and organize the event. I communicated well with all the volunteers and made sure that everyone had the information they needed for the event. Most importantly being that I got it done and got the information written up to be reproduced. Now someone more organized with more time can pull it off and make it more successful. I took the first step, which means the most to me.

References

Auxier, B., & Anderson, M. (2020, July 27). *As schools close due to the coronavirus, some U.S. students face a digital 'homework gap'*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/16/as-schools-close-due-to-the-coronavirus-some-u-s-students-face-a-digital-homework-gap/>.

COVID-19 in the United States. (n.d.). Retrieved March 29, 2021, from

<https://datausa.io/coronavirus>

Epicenter. (n.d.). *Welcome To The Epicenter*. The Epicenter. Retrieved February 11, 2021, from

<https://epicentermonterey.org/#:~:text=We%20are%20a%20youth%20led,a%20one%2Dstop%20resource%20center.&text=We%20provide%20the%20connection%20to,mental%2Fphysical%20health%20and%20wellness.>

Gao, N., & Hayes, J. (2021, February 18). California's digital divide. Retrieved March 27, 2021, from <https://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-digital-divide/>

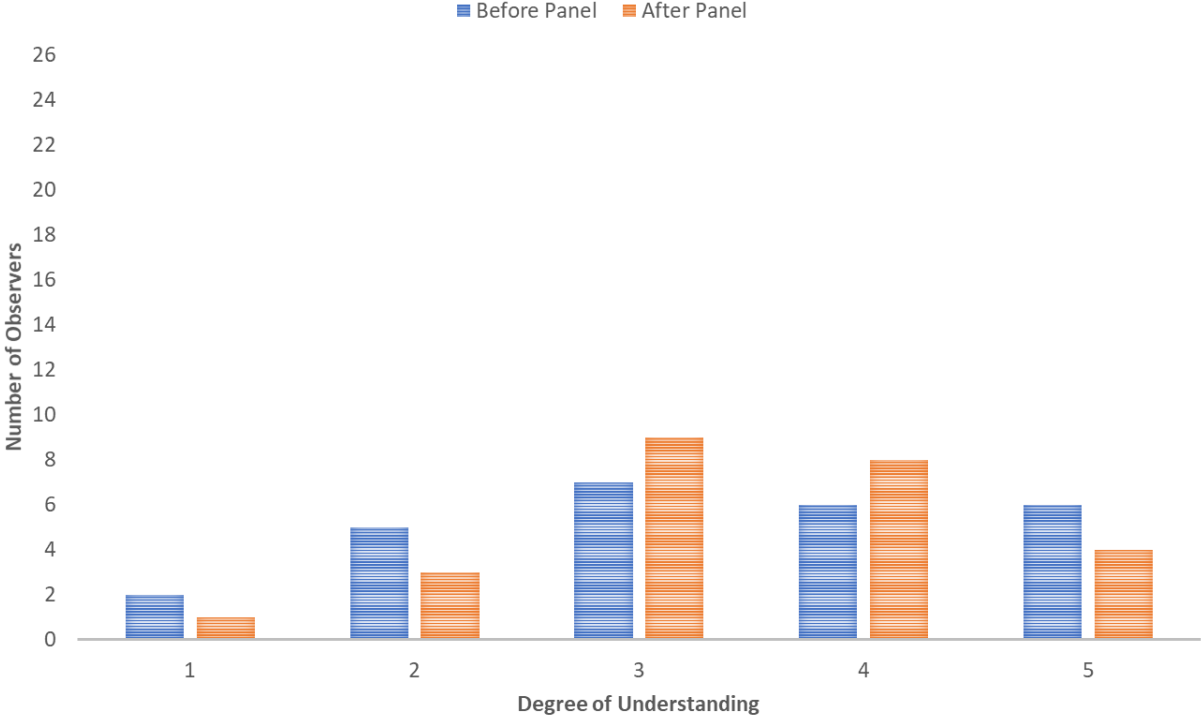
Spruce, E. (2021). The place of transversal LGBTQ+ urban activisms. *Urban Studies*, 58(7), 1520–1528. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098020986063>

Stelitano, L., Doan, S., Woo, A., Diliberti, M., Kaufman, J., & Henry, D. (2020, September 24). The digital divide and COVID-19. Retrieved March 29, 2021, from

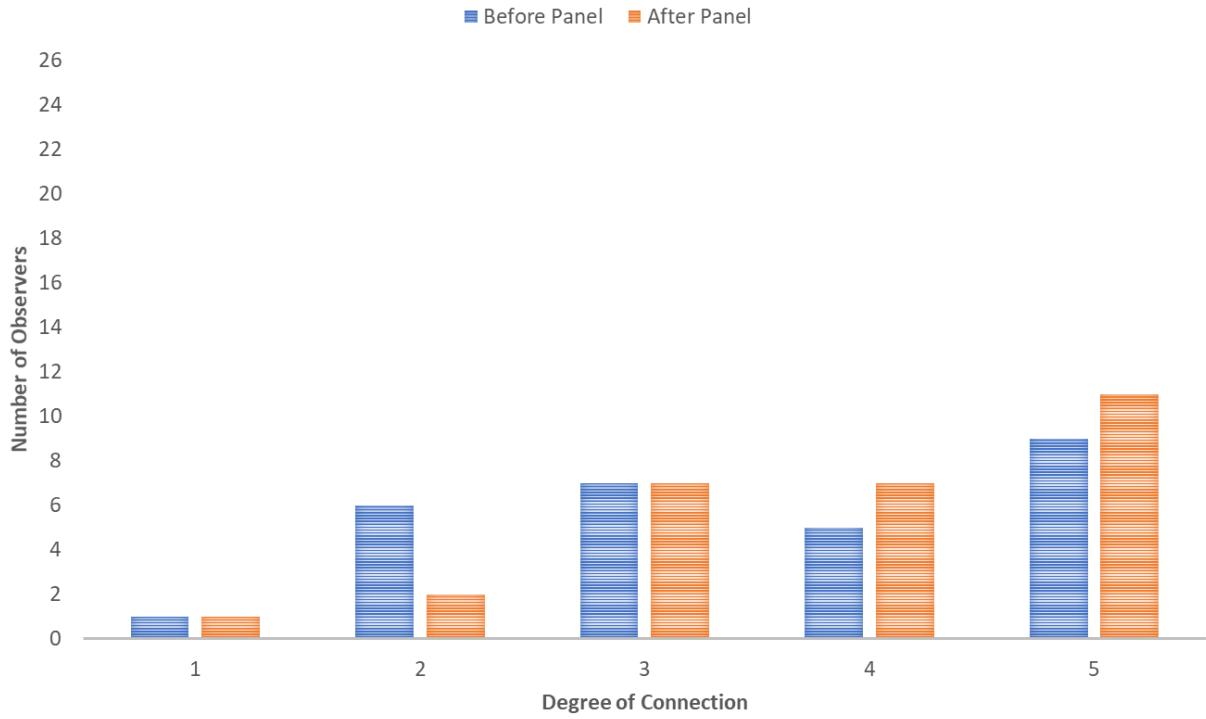
https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA134-3.html

Appendix A

UNDERSTANDING OF LGBTQ+ HISTORY



LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY CONNECTION



LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY GENERATIONAL CONNECTION

