**The Legacy Project: Chicago’s LGBT Community Builds a Real and Virtual Space to Counter Hetero-normativity and to Make History**

This paper introduces and examines The Legacy Project (TLP), a community-based, multicultural, educational resource that transforms the commercial heart of Chicago’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community into a physical and virtual space commemorating ethnically and racially diverse LGBT historical figures. The duality represented by physical and virtual TLP components is key to understanding the origin, current configuration and the long-term goals of TLP. This paper begins with a brief description of these components and their basic relationship to one another. Then there is a short history of TLP, followed by a description of groups who used TLP through structured visits. These visits have changed over time, as has the way data is collected about the participants. Ultimately this paper builds to an examination of this data and the way it is collected to see how TLP might grow and develop through the use of exit surveys.

Data from four distinct sets of Legacy Project Education Initiative (LPEI) participants will be examined from the following populations: two sets of early childhood college students, one high school gay/lesbian support group, and one high school gay straight alliance.

**The Legacy Project and its Components, The Legacy Walk (TLW), The Legacy Project Webpage, and The Legacy Project Education Initiative (LPEI)**

At the heart of TLP is The Legacy Walk (TLW), an outdoor installation presently comprised of biographies etched onto bronze plaques set on a series of pylons. The first set of plaques was dedicated on National Coming Out Day, October 11, 2012. These plaques contain biographies about important figures in history that can be seen as forerunners or members of contemporary LGBT communities. The actual plaques and pylons are on North Halsted Street in Chicago, Illinois though a virtual version of the plaques can be seen at anytime on the website (<http://www.legacyprojectchicago.org/>), an important point that will be elaborated on in this section.

Originally, the pylons were part of a streetscape renovation meant to mark and honor this commercial strip as the center of Chicago’s LGBT community (Baldas, 1997). TLW reconfigures these largely symbolic pillars (symbolic of an LGBT community) into a series of totemic monuments honoring notable LGBT figures in a space known primarily for LGBT nightlife, and to a lesser extent, LGBT shopping. As a result a commercial space with symbolic meaning gains a new civic purpose. Significantly, the symbolic nature of this street as the center of Chicago’s LGBT community attracted a diverse group of young people with limited economic resources even before the inception of the streetscape (Elliott, 2011). TLW’s creation of a physical resource on this street could potentially serve these youth as an affirmation of this place for a racially and ethnically diverse LGBT community. This is especially important, as anyone under 21 is generally not allowed into most nightlife venues across the entire geographic region.

Today, the Center on Halsted (COH), the LGBT community center for Chicago, hosts programs for these youth (Center on Halsted, n.d.) and in fact, small groups of these youth can be seen at the center socializing or just ‘hanging out’ throughout most of the time the center is open. Some nearby residents, patrons visiting the street, and business owners, have viewed these youth as a ‘problem’ and as a result, this concern has been expressed to the local alderman, the elected neighborhood representative to the City of Chicago’s chief legislative body (Elliott, 2011). Conversely some others, including notably COH professionals, recognize these youth as part of the LGBT community as can be recognized by the services they offer these youth. As we write this paper, TLP organizers and COH employees are investigating ways to utilize TLP resources for these youth and even seniors who use COH. In fact, this paper is a tool for determining how to expand the reach of TLP for the benefit of different groups in Chicago’s LGBT community.

While TLW represents the original focus of TLP and was in fact the original goal behind the founders’ efforts (The Legacy Project, “History,” 2010), TLW’s development was from the start, organically tied to the online components of TLP. In fact, before TWL could become a reality, a website had to be developed as a central resource for those who wanted to understand and participate in the development of TLW. From early 2009, biographies of possible TLW inductees were drafted for the website, which was only developed and built in August and September of 2010. The TLP website official launch was held in the first week of October 2010 that is 10-10-10, one day before National Coming Out Day in the US, a launch that also preceded TLW by two full years on October 11, 2012. Of course organizational activities and an official Legacy Project Prospectus (Salvo, 2010) preceded even the website. This progression from organizing activities to a prospectus, then to a TLP website, and finally to TLW itself is a series of steps that illustrates a central aspect of TLP overall. Namely TLP is developing over time, and this growth is directly tied to community input and interaction as outlined on the TLP webpage, “Nominations, Candidate Selection and Induction” (2011). Such growth is a central aim of TLP and also the rationale for collecting data from TLP visitors that is used in this paper. Overall, TLP hopes to foster a growing awareness of LGBT history as part of an ongoing yet changing community expression that exists both in the real world, that is with TLW, and online on-line through a significant web presence, see The Legacy Project “FAQS” webpage (2012).

In contrast to this evolution, the bronze plaques of TLW might appear static, but neither these objects nor TLP are fixed. Simply put, TLP is the outgrowth of the founders’ ideas with input from the LGBT community represented by historians, academics, politicians, activists, sponsors and volunteers who at different stages suggest, vet, vote on, and pay for inductee plaques in a process facilitated in part by the TLP website (“Nominations, Candidate Selection and Induction,” 2011). Of course there is a great deal more to this process, more in fact than can be facilitated on the website, and though this is quite significant, this paper will focus on the role the website fulfills for TLP and real world visits to TLW. There will be more on the process and background of TLP later in the section, The Growth and Aims of TLP.

Ultimately TLP’s website facilitates the nomination of inductees and publicizes TLP goals. For 2012 and 2013 two sets of inductees were suggested, vetted, voted on, and sponsored in a process directly tied to the website (The Legacy Project, “Inductees,” 2012). After this initial phase, the plan is to continue the installation of more plaques by adding new inductees annually. This will involve expanding beyond the use of existing pylons by installing new structures that can support additional TLP plaques and donor names (The Legacy Project, “Proposed Gateway Marker Donor Board,” 2012). Then, when those spaces are filled, there will be a rotation of plaques on all the existing installation sites ensuring an ever-changing installation that memorializes important LGBT historical figures. Older plaques will be moved to a new museum, a space that is currently only in an initial planning stage (The Legacy Project, “FAQS,” 2011).

Currently, the central TLP website (2010), <http://legacyprojectchicago.org>, displays information about TLW such as it’s location, logistics, goals, and history, etc., as well as information about those figures who are nominated for plaques and those who eventually become the subjects of plaques. In addition, the current TLP home page can serve as a central point of entry for those who wish to participate in the ongoing development of TLP or support its various events and fundraising efforts (The Legacy Project, “Donate/Volunteer,” 2012). Just as significantly, the website elements can be used as a virtual experience for those who cannot visit TLW itself. This is particularly evident from the “Explore the Legacy Walk’ page at, <http://www.legacyprojectchicago.org/Explore_the_Legacy_Walk.html> (2012). While an online presence is presently key to most contemporary institutions, for TLP this is particularly significant. The website allows anyone to learn about LGBT historical contributions documented by TLW and TLP, even if they can’t come to North Halsted Street for simple logistical reasons or more importantly, for more complex cultural or religious reasons. Inhibiting cultural or religious reasons are especially pertinent to many youth, a group TLP actively seeks to address in a responsible, educational fashion.

This last goal, an outreach to youth through education is behind the third basic TLP component, that is the Legacy Project Education Initiative (LPEI). Though LPEI was officially launched in April 2013, many of its materials have been under construction from 2011. Nearly all LPEI components can be accessed from an extensive research-based website, <http://www.legacyprojectchicago.org/Education_Initiative.html>. This page begins by addressing youth, parents and teachers directly before channeling visitors to lesson plans for all inductees and other resources including: a “Question Bank,” (Gomez, G. Maxwell, C. Salvo, V. & Spinella G., 2012) an “Instructor’s Manual,” (Gomez, G. Salvo V. & Spinella, 2012) a “Field Trip Guide,” (Gomez, et al. 2012) an “Interactive Map,” (The Legacy Project, 2013) and a “Legacy Plaque Slide Show,” (The Legacy Project, 2013). These elements will be further explored in the section, LPEI, Goals and Tasks. Significantly, the LPEI page also provides a link to the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (ISSA), <http://www.illinoissafeschools.org/>. Their mission is below:

The mission of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) is to promote safety, support and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, in Illinois schools and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing and research (The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, 2007).

TLP hopes to become an educational and research resource especially through the development of LPEI materials that can be used by the ISSA and anyone interested in reaching out to and educating LGBT youth.

**Understanding the Background: The Creation of The Legacy Project**

TLP was inspired through the inaugural display of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt in Washington, D. C. in 1987 during the March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights (The NAMES Project Foundation, 2011). This memorial to those who died of AIDS underscored for TLP creators the importance of honoring LGBT contributions to history. This pivotal event inspired TLP creators to see LGBT history, and to experience firsthand a memorial honoring that history (Savlo, V., Hayes, A. & Morales-Salazar, M

2012), a legacy that will hopefully be continued by commemorating inductees in The Legacy Walk.

Essentially, TLP creators returned from Washington to Chicago with just the idea of a walk. This early stage of development was dominated by research into the current state of LGBT history. From this research a more clear understanding emerged about the diversity and complexity of LGBT figures in history. Any effort to honor those who lived with and expressed same-sex desires or dealt with gender identity matters in often inhospitable environments would require not only research, but significant assistance from the larger LGBT community, especially historians and other recognized experts (The Legacy Project, “Legacy Independent Academic Advisory Consultants,” 2012). Next, a stage of intense organizing brought these experts together with notable local LGBT figures and interested parties who could make TLP and TLW a reality, a stage that included the development of a TLP board (The Legacy Project, The Legacy Project Board of Directors, 2013). This stage of development also witnessed outreach to other community organizers and local politicians, particularly from the Lakeview neighborhood and the City of Chicago, as well as business owners from the proposed site of TLW, a group represented by the civic organization, the Northalsted Business Alliance (The Legacy Project, “FAQS,” 2012).

A prospectus, The Legacy Project “Prospectus,” (Salvo, 2010) was developed to describe both the ideas and goals behind TLP as well as the complex logistical and legal matters that needed to be addressed for the creation of a new public exhibition. Notably, this prospectus included detailed drawings and specifications about the physical alteration of the existing pylons, political as well as bureaucratic arrangements that would define legal responsibility and ownership of the plaques, and a rationale that encouraged business owners to accept changes to the pylons on North Halsted Street. This rationale essentially states that a new attraction along this business streetscape can encourage foot traffic and therefore business activity. Ultimately this stage of development led to agreements from all the interested parties that gives sole responsibility for the content and upkeep of the plaques to TLP contingent upon City of Chicago approval for each plaque as well as the totality of the exhibition (Bielarz, 2012). This is key as Chicago is not responsible for TLP content that is, the wording on the plaques is not official city sponsored speech. If this content were sponsored speech from the city, other groups possibly hostile to LGBT persons could conceivably demand a chance to rebut TLP content. Also, since the city can vet all TLW plaques, the city is assured that diversity representative of the multicultural reality of Chicago is apparent throughout the totality of the exhibit.

The final years between the launching of the TLP website on Oct. 10, 2010 and the installation of the plaques on Oct. 11, 2012, saw a continuation of all these efforts as numerous details and other unforeseen matters had to be continually addressed, but there is one major additional effort that must be described here. Essentially each plaque requires sponsorship so sponsors ranging from interested individuals, to groups or businesses had to be found for each plaque. Along the way there were other organizing and fundraising efforts too numerous to list here. Since the first phase of the walk has been installed, efforts to develop the next set of plaques to be installed on Oct. 11, 2013 have continued while the development of LPEI saw the growth of TLP as an education resource.

**LPEI, Goals and Tasks**

LPEI overarching concepts include the following:

1. Participants will learn about the contributions of a diverse population of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgendered individuals who played a significant role in history.
2. Participants will understand the experiences, values, and successes of LGBT people in our society.
3. Participants will develop respect for this non-dominant culture in a socially acceptable and politically inclusive manner.
4. Participants will integrate their knowledge of The Legacy Project into their professional and/or personal development.

**The LPEI Components**

The form and content of the LPEI components encapsulate a systematic approach for the development of multicultural, research-based educational resources. Briefly, concerning LGBT history, three major figures in LGBT history must be listed here regarding the current state of TLP and LPEI, namely Michel Foucault, George Chauncey and John D’Emilio. While Foucault (1990) is central to a larger, overarching understanding of the historical development of contemporary LGBT identities, Chauncey, Vicinus and D’Emilio (1989) are especially vital for detailing how contemporary LGBT persons can engage with what they perceive to be ‘their’ history. As to the structure and underlying approach of LPEI resources, two key figures in education serve as the touchstone for the form and nature of LPEI materials. These are Benjamin Bloom (1982), whose theories about how we learn helped in the formulation of LPEI , while James A. Bank’s (2006) theories about multicultural education show how multicultural materials can grow and develop along with societal awareness over time and specifically within educational institutions. For more information about the intellectual shaping of TLP see, “The Legacy Project: Connecting Museum Advocacy to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Role Models,” (Gomez, G., Spinella, G., Salvo, V., and Keehnen, O. 2013).

There are numerous LPEI resources most of which are available from the website, “LPEI Resources,” (2013) <http://legacyprojectchicago.org/LPEI_Guides_and_Lesson_Plans.html>. These include a “Question Bank,” (Gomez, G. Maxwell, C. Salvo, V. & Spinella G., 2012) an “Instructor’s Manual,” (Gomez, G. Salvo V. & Spinella, 2012), an “Interactive Map,” (The Legacy Project, 2013) and a “Legacy Plaque Slide Show,” (The Legacy Project, 2013) as well as lesson plans for each current inductee. Other resources often used by LPEI are available from TLP’s website. These include a video introduction called, “Bringing GLBT History Home,” (Savlo, V., Hayes, A., & Morales-Salazar, M. 2012), a TLP index called “2012 Inductees” (2012), and TLP’s “The Legacy Walk Plaque Slideshow,” (2012), all at <http://legacyprojectchicago.org/Explore_the_Legacy_Walk.html>.

The “Instructor’s Manual” ,” (Gomez, G. Salvo V. & Spinella, 2012) describes how LPEI resources can be used and also explains how a visit to TLW can be developed and utilized, either in real time on North Halsted street, or online. TLP’s “Question Bank” (Gomez, G. Maxwell, C. Salvo, V. & Spinella G., 2012), offers study or discussions prompts for anyone. These questions progress along a range from simple content, such as, “what did an inductee do?” to more complex questions that attempt to help an LPEI user situate the larger social and cultural implications of an inductee’s life work in regards to both the inductee, the larger society, and the LPEI user. A virtual TLW visit can be experienced with TLP’s “Interactive Map” (2013) and “The Legacy Plaque Slide Show,” (2013). Of course these two items can also be used to prepare for and facilitate a real TLW visit. Similarly, TLP’s introductory video, “Bringing GLBT History Home,” (Salvo, et. al, 2012) and TLP’s “2012 Inductee Index” (2012) can be used to prepare for a real visit or be part of a virtual visit as the former explains the development of the installation/exhibition, while the latter displays the actual content found on the plaques.

**LPEI Presentations and TLW Visits**

LPEI led presentations or visits to TLW incorporate the goals found in LPEI component materials listed in the previous section but have changed over time and are developed for each specific group (Gomez, et. al, “Field Trip Guide, 2012). Input from various group facilitators is key to the success of presentations and visits. Such facilitators have included college class instructors, and facilitators for two types of high school student groups, namely a general student support group for all types of students interested in counseling supported activities and two Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) groups. The first type of group is a basic social and emotional support group, while the second type of group specifically addresses LGBT issues in a school setting.

LPEI Presentations and Sponsored Legacy Walk Visits

| No | Group | Date | Population Subset | No. Of Participants | No. of Participant Responses |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Class group from: CD262-1 Childhood, Family, Community Relations, Truman College, Professor Karen Roth | Oct. 11, 2012 | College Students  (Did not visit TLW) | 1 instructor  21 students | 20 responses to informal questions |
| 2 | Lyons Township High School GSA, LaGrange, Illinois. | Dec. 15, 2012 | High School Students | 2 advisors  12 students | No data collected |
| 3 | Sterling Illinois GSA Alliance, Facilitator Joplin James Crossland-Sell | April 5, 2013 | High School Students | 1 sponsor  7 students | 8 completed survey |
| 4 | Combined class group from: ECE 262 -1 Childhood, Family, Community Relations, National Louis University and CD262 Child, Family and Community Relations, Truman College, Professor Karen Roth, National Louis University | April 5, 2013 | Graduate Students | 18 Truman College  20 National Louis University | 14 completed survey  8 Truman College  6 National Louis University |
| 5 | Homewood Flossmoor Support Group, Advisor Phillip Baker | April 17, 2013 | High School Students | 1 sponsor  7 students | 7 completed survey |

As LPEI has developed, not just the nature of the LPEI presentations and visits has changed, but also the content. For example, in October 2012, shortly after the inception of LPEI,a presentation was held entirely in a university classroom setting for group number two which consisted of early childhood pre-service college students and included components specific to their needs. This means the group used LPEI materials without a visit to TLW. Instead this group viewed TLP’s online video, “Bringing GLBT History Home,” (Salvo, et. al, 2012) as an introduction, and they used the TLP’s index of “2012 Inductees” (2012) for a virtual experience. They also learned from the LPEI presenter about professional responsibilities in addressing the needs of LGBT youth from a PPT developed specifically for this group in collaboration with the classroom instructor. Finally, an interactive, cooperative group activity explored the 2012 inductees’ contributions by creating a lesson. Such components may reappear in later LPEI presentations, but many of these would only be suitable for similar groups of nascent educators.

In 2013, all LPEI led visits to TLW (groups three, four and five) were expanded to include the Center On Halsted (COH), Chicago’s independent, community-supported, LGBT community center, as a central facility. Now all groups who visit TLW utilize COH resources like meeting rooms and support staff, and many also tour the COH to learn about its resources and programs. In fact the last three groups who visited TLW began their visit with this COH tour. These three groups then viewed TLP’s video, “Bringing GLBT History Home” (Salvo, et. al, 2012), to learn about the historical background of TLP as well as the inspiration and aims of TLP, again this is on the website, <http://www.legacyprojectchicago.org/Bringing_GLBT_History_Home.html>. Then at this stage in the visit, the high school groups took a one-hour tour of the plaques on the street. TLP founder and director, Victor Salvo, always leads this component as he expounds not only on the person honored in each plaque, but also the way this person came to be on a plaque. Notably, much of this stage of information gathering can also be conducted online at the TLP website though the online resources do not include all the information about the selection process discussed by Salvo. Indeed visiting college students had a different experience from the high school students at this point because instead of a tour, they were expected to familiarize themselves with the plaques online before they came to the COH. Then at the COH they were given questions from TLP’s “Question Bank” (2012) that they needed to answer by looking at a smaller subset of plaques on Halsted Street. In either case, after viewing the plaques, there is break. The two high school groups convened at a restaurant on North Halsted Street. Incidentally, these meal breaks are an excellent example of the increased business activity that TLP said would occur in the Prospectus (Salvo, 2010) once TLW was in place. After the break all groups reconvene for discussion.

**Collaborative Inquiry Group Work**

LPEI participants are then encouraged to respond to critical thinking questions selected from TLP’s “Question Bank,” (2012). This is done to encourage discussions about the important facets of an inductee’s biography. Each LPEI facilitator, working with the organizers of a particular group, determines which questions address the interests or needs of that specific group. This process is dependent on the depth of understanding that the facilitator, organizer and participants are seeking about LGBT history. TLP’s “Question Bank” progresses from questions focused on literal comprehension regarding the inductee’s contribution to history, to the “bigger picture” of the impact the inductee’s contribution made. For example, LPEI participants are able to investigate what personal challenges the inductee faced, and eventually overcame to transform her/his situation, a process of development that ultimately affected the larger world beyond various LGBT communities. As a result, LPEI participants receive an individualized set of guiding questions that focus on the history, contribution, and facts about each TLP inductee. The following are examples of guiding questions:

* “What was a memorable contribution of the LGBT inductee?”
* “What were any surprises that you found in the biographies?”

Discussing and affirming a TLP inductee’s historical significance is vital to helping participants develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the lives and contributions of an inductee’s contribution to LGBT history and history at large. Each participant can then in turn become an “ambassador” for TLP’s larger aims, namely to increase knowledge of LGBT history in the larger world.

**Assessing Data and the Need for an Exit Survey**

Assessing the effect of LPEI presentations and visits on students can help demonstrate the accountability of LPEI work towards the institutions and individuals from the LGBT community and the local community who helped make TLP possible. Developing comprehensive exit surveys has been an ongoing process in TLP. The first group from October, 2012 did not respond to a survey but simply reflected on the following questions:

1. How has The Legacy Project informed your knowledge about GLBT issues?

2. How have you been changed by this presentation?

Participants wrote their responses on index cards, which were collected at the end of the presentation (See Appendix A). While the data offered useful feedback, a growing list of new LPEI visits to TLW in 2013 offered a chance for more systematic data collection. Just as importantly, without a standardized survey, comparisons of group reactions would be difficult. Even more importantly, less formal visits may not supply feedback if a simple, effective and convenient assessment tool is not available. This was the reason no feedback was collected from Group Two who visited TLW on Dec. 15, 2012 and as a result, LPEI decided an exit survey would be needed in the future.

**Online Exit Survey**

Between November 2012 and March 2013, LPEI discussed the development of an exit survey, which would gather data from future participants in the LPEI. Participants would be given the choice of completing the online survey using Survey Monkey, or taking the survey manually.

The exit survey was developed to give qualitative and quantitative data on the participants’ response to the LPEI presentation. Below is a standardized version of the existing survey.

1. Name your group and location.

2. What was the important contribution of The Legacy Project?

3. How has this impacted your personal beliefs and attitudes towards gay and lesbian issues?

4. Describe any type of GLBTQ resources or information that you would like to use in advocating for adolescents and families

5. What other information would you like to know about The Legacy Education Project?

6. Please rate the following components, which are most appealing to you. The rating system is Excellent (5), Good (4), Satisfactory (3), Marginal (2), and Poor (1).

a. The Legacy Walk Website

b. The Legacy Walk

c. Discussion

d. PowerPoint Presentation

e. Multimedia Presentation

f. Overall Presentation

7. Please rate the effect of today’s training on your knowledge for the following. The rating system is Excellent (5), Good (4), Satisfactory (3), Marginal (2), and Poor (1).

a. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) historical figures

b. Attitudes towards GLBT history

c. Strategies to counter anti-bullying and harassment

d. Affirmation of legal protection of GLBT individuals

e. Inclusive curriculum for GLBT history

8. How would you rate the presentation? The rating system is Exceptional and Worthwhile (5), Definitely would like more information (4), Satisfactory (3), Needs to be improved (2), and Poor (1)

a. Overall experience of The Legacy Project

b. Knowledge of Content

c. Development of activities, discussion, and lesson approaches

d. Development personal goals

9. Please share your personal information (Optional)

10. Demographic Information

a. Age

b. Sex

c. Race

d. Living Location

e. Sexual Orientation

11. Other Comments

The survey takes about 15-20 minutes to complete.

**Group One, College Class Group, October 11, 2012**

On October 11, 2012, two LPEI facilitators, the Director of LPEI and the TLP Executive Director presented a program about TLP to college students in a classroom setting. These were 21 pre-teacher, early childhood college students from the class, CD262-1 Childhood, Family, Community Relations, at Truman College, a college in an urban setting in Chicago. Professor Karen Roth was the instructor.There was no actual visit to TLW. Twenty students completed written responses to two questions on index cards from a total of 21 students.

1. How has the Legacy Project informed your knowledge about GLBT issues?

2. How have you been changed by this presentation?

The written responses were transcribed into an online database, so these could be recorded.

Responses

Question 1, How has the Legacy Project informed your knowledge about GLBT issues?

Seven responses referenced that they had no previous information about GLBT issues or The Legacy Project.

Three responses discussed planning lessons using resources from LPEI.

Twelve responses discussed LGBT history and contributions to society.

Question 2, How have you been changed by this Legacy Project presentation?

Four responses indicated there was no change.

Seven responses referenced learning how to teach respect and acceptance.

Four responses discussed the importance of the “past in preparing and changing the pathway for future children.”

Analysis of Findings:

In Appendix A, the responses from these questions are documented for these college students. There were college students who discussed aspects of LGBT historical contributions, and these responses demonstrate an expansion of their previous knowledge and a better state of readiness in regards to teaching this material. There were eleven responses that discussed the importance of respect and acceptance for LGBT persons as well as helping teach others such respect and acceptance among children. Ultimately the data from these questions was useful in a preliminary examination of the effectiveness of an LPEI presentation but LPEI determined that more systematic data collection would be even more helpful in determining the effectiveness of LPEI events and materials. Just as importantly, data reflecting demographic information would be useful for showing LPEI outreach to diverse communities.

**Group Two, Lyons Township High School Gay Straight Alliance, LaGrange, Illinois, Dec. 15, 2012.**

No data was collected, an outcome that proved pivotal to the development of an exit survey.

**Group Three, Sterling Illinois Gay Straight Alliance, Facilitator Joplin James Crossland-Sell, April 5, 2013.**

On April 5, 2013, two LPEI facilitators, the Director of LPEI and the TLP Executive Director presented a program about TLP to high school students in a meeting room at the COH and conducted a visit to TLW. This GSA group was from a rural community in western Illinois.

Though TLP facilitators gave the exit survey to these participants via access to the computer lab at the COH and via personal SmartPhones, there were some technical difficulties with the survey.

In Appendix B, the data is presented for the participants from Group 3. The following analysis of the findings indicated there was a positive response to the presentation, TLW, and COH. Comments like “I thought the experience was wonderful and really helped me out with information with LGBT Community” affirmed the 100% rating of the overall experience being “exceptional and worthwhile.” Additionally, there were responses that indicated that this impacted their personal beliefs and attitudes towards gay and lesbian issues. Comments like “this strengthened feelings of pride and understanding of treatment of others and an appreciation of the hardships and struggles experienced by TLP inductees,” were also mentioned. On the other hand, participants requested more information about activities that could be used in schools, upcoming activities, and information on the origin of TLW.

After analyzing the data, the facilitators made the following recommendations:

1. Continued outreach to gay straight alliance groups would increase the sampling size.

2. Monitoring participant exit survey completion through online computer access (survey monkey) would help avert technical glitches and an inability to respond.

3. Analysis of general trends for The Legacy Project indicate more open-ended items for discussion would be helpful for participants.

4. More interactive and engaging discussion methods during the presentation and visit as well as continued contact with the participants would be helpful.

**Group Four, Combined College Class Group from Two Classes, April 5, 2013.**

On April 5, 2013, college students from two different urban universities visited TLW under the direction of the LPEI Executive Director. The classes Were ECE 262 -1 Childhood, Family, and Community Relations from National Louis University and CD262 Child, Family and Community Relations from Truman College. Professor Karen Roth from National Louis University taught both classes.

The following responses represent an aggregation of both university classes as these classes were treated as one group by LPEI.

In Appendix C, the data is presented for the participants from Group 4. 9 out of 14 participants completed the survey on the computer(s) or iPad(s) that were available in the presentation hall. Positive responses were written in the comment section like, “The Legacy Project will absolutely be a positive contribution to the LGBT community…,” and “Educators need to know how to work with issues brought to school by LGBT parents.” The experience received an “exceptional rating from 55% of the participants while 11.11% rated it as satisfactory.

The development of activities and lessons plans was rated as excellent by 40% of respondents but 20% rated it as good and another 40% rated it only as satisfactory. Additionally, participants requested materials for educators to work with LGBT parents and children.

After analyzing the data, the facilitators made the following recommendations:

1. Continued outreach to pre-service education college students would increase the sampling size.
2. Monitoring that all participants complete the exit survey through online computer access (survey monkey) would help avert technical glitches and an inability to respond.
3. Examining data reveals that this presentation builds knowledge and leaves an impact on pre-service teachers.
4. Develop and provide more material for educators who work with LGBT parents and children.

**Group Five, Homewood Flossmoor Support Group, Advisor Phillip Baker, April 17, 2013.**

On April 17, 2013, two LPEI facilitators, the Director of LPEI and the TLP Executive Director presented a program about TLP to high school students in a meeting room at the COH and conducted a visit to TLW. This support group on GLBT issues was from a south-suburban Chicago community.

In Appendix D, the data is presented for the participants from Group 5. The findings indicate a high positive rating as 85% or respondents chose excellent while only one participant chose a rating of poor. Similarly the LPEI presentation components were rated as excellent by 85% of respondents; however, the ratings for the specific components of The Legacy Walk and Website had a range from, excellent (71%), to good (14%) and marginal (14%).

Participants’ responses indicated areas that needed improvement as well as positive aspects. For example one participant stated, “Overall, I think the idea and content is amazing. I think the website is a little “busy” and isn’t being utilized to its full capacity. Perhaps it was because we didn’t have tons of extra time, but I would’ve like to have participated in more discussions about anti-bullying and legislative initiatives and slowed down on some of the slides at the end of the presentation.” Another response stated, “It was very nice to learn about such a strong and prominent support center full of people who are passionate in human rights and its history.”

After analyzing the data, the facilitators made the following recommendations:

1. Continued outreach to other support groups in educational settings would increase the sampling size and different populations.

2. Monitor that all participants complete the exit survey through online computer access (survey monkey).

3. Analysis of general trends for The Legacy Project would include more open-ended items and quantitative findings for participants

4. Pace the presentation to include exploration of websites and more discussion using interactive and engaging methods on antibullying and legal issues.

**Summary and Conclusions**

The exit survey data from LPEI presentations and TLW visits compiles responses from college and high school students to questions about LGBT history, and its integration in the educational system. Responses from four distinct groups of participants included demographic information documenting sex, gender, age, and sexual orientation. LPEI components included a presentation, a tour of TLW, and use of TLP’s website. The LPEI creates a foundation for understanding and respecting diversity, and these are key issues for building a climate of respect and understanding in schools today.

The following conclusions were drawn from the collected data:

1. The data collection of The Legacy Project Education Initiative from 2012-2013 is a process that began with the collection of qualitative responses on index cards and then progressed to an online exit survey featuring eleven questions incorporating quantitative and qualitative responses. These new survey instruments were not tested for validity and/or reliability; however, the preliminary data provided a backdrop for future development and testing which will be helpful for the facilitators of the LPEI.

2. The data collection process required using computers and close supervision by facilitators to monitor participants taking the survey following the presentation. Data showed that three of the participating groups did not fully complete this survey because of technical difficulties.

3. Based upon the participant responses in the four groups, there was enthusiasm and support for TLP, and increased knowledge of the LGBT history that TLP promotes. Significantly, numerous participants participated in LPEI presentations and visits to TLW without prior knowledge about the historical figures described by TLP. Subsequent to their introduction to the historical biographies of LGBT role models, many participants were able to reflect on LGBT issues in professional and/or personal contexts.

4. The participants shared in conversations and critical discourse with facilitators as they delved into “coming-out” issues, discussed strategies to address bullying and harassment, and shared information about personal encounters at school. One participant candidly described the abuse and harassment she experienced due to the fact that her mother was a lesbian.

5. The pacing of the presentations and the TLW tours varied according to instructional needs set out by the different facilitators. Similarly different strategies and components were also used. Nevertheless, despite this variety, a significant number of participants wanted more time to discuss “what they saw” while touring TLW and more time to fully investigate TLP’s website.

6. Most importantly, the data revealed that the LPEI experience had a profound impact on the majority of the participants, who learned about the accomplishments and rights of a non-dominant LGBT culture and LGBT individuals. The positive responses clearly revealed enthusiasm and satisfaction with TLP overall.

**Implications**

There are several implications of this research:

1. Educators need to consider the processes of communication and dialogue regarding the teaching of LBGT history among their college and high school students. Participants reported the need for educators to create ways to use curriculum in dealing with gay and lesbian issues.
2. The acquired knowledge from TLP can impact attitudes and professional behaviors. This can be further improved using TLP and LPEI content for professional development activities in regards to pre-service teachers.
3. High school and college students displayed a willingness to discuss LGBT history on many levels, from gaining knowledge to delving deeply into understanding and integrating concepts of social and personal development.

**Recommendations:**

1. A larger sample size is necessary to expand the implications of the research. Broader representation from different socio-economic backgrounds, and from urban, rural, and suburban areas across the country might better reflect the diverse norms and beliefs of a national LGBT community. For this reason, LPEI should actively promote joint efforts with the COH to address youth currently in their program.
2. Instruments like the LPEI exit survey can be designed to reflect needs that have been determined through this preliminary data collection. To fulfill one such need, there should be more time for more discussion or dialog. In addition, participants could use more practical training in how to use existing LPEI lesson plans on TLP inductees. Finally, further design and testing of the exit survey are needed.
3. Funding resources should be obtained through grants, to enable LPEI to expand curriculum development, sample size, and the hiring of personnel.
4. In order to reach other populations such as the disadvantaged youth who utilize numerous COH services or simply need a place in the local LGBT community to feel welcome and safe, the survey instrument has demonstrated that we can reach out to diverse populations. Even so, more work needs to be done to ensure all of the diverse populations represented in the LGBT community of Chicago can see TLP as a resource for themselves.

Future research is suggested for the development and integration of The Legacy Project as a proactive educational tool to create an accepting climate for the entire LGBT community. This would support diversity and address the marginalization of lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgendered people in history, which is long overdue. This type of education could help make all more schools become safer places for all types of students.

**Appendices**

**Appendix A: Group 1 - Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Child Development Course, Truman College, Chicago, IL (October 10, 2012)**

**Data**

A total of 21 undergraduate students wrote responses to the following questions:

1. How has the Legacy Project informed your knowledge about GLBT issues?
2. How have you been changed by this presentation?
3. Would you like to volunteer for The Legacy Project? If so, provide your name and telephone number.

The following open-ended responses represent the answers to the questions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How has the Legacy Project informed your knowledge about GLBT issues? | How have you been changed by this presentation? |
| Participant | *Open-Ended Response* | *Open-Ended Response* |
| 1 | This presentation just informed me of issues that I already knew a little about | I haven't been changed by this presentation. |
| 2 | I believe this project has provided great information about the contributions and historic importance of many GLBT individuals. I think this project is a grand idea and the way it has honored GLBT is positive and inspiring. Thank you! | I think it has changed me opening my mind a bit more on the topic. I am not too familiar with, but have respect for. |
| 3 | I heard about LGBT in the streets but it's the first time I hear a lot about. I can say I am informed now. | It's more difficult for us than teachers before because it was undercover. We need more information on how to approach this subject. |
| 4 | The legacy project has really added to my knowledge about GLBT issues, how I can plan lessons with diverse people. I learned about the people who are the gem of this GLBT community and appreciated for their contribution. | Yes, it did changed that how important it is for everyone of us to include all the people in our society. As we are all the same and I am glad that we have people around us. We can approach to know more, if we need them for GLBT issues to solve. |
| 5 | I knew before today that there a legacy project. I am happy to learn that these people are finally being recognized for their contributions. | I would not say that I have changed because I always believe that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, should be treated with respect. |
| 6 |  | I would not say that I have changed because I always believe that every person, regardless of sexual orientation should be treated with respect. |
| 7 | This presentation blew me away. I was absolutely riveted by both Victor Salvo & Gerri Spinella. Being able to meet the man who began the Legacy Project was like a celebrity experience. His belief in the importance of recognizing these influential beings. I have a vast and new appreciation for what this project has done for GLBT community and those who want to do more. THANKS | The Legacy Project something I am familiar with given my own curiosity from living by a pylon on Halsted Street, further informed me about GLBT by bringing to my attention the importance of the past in preparing and changing the pathway for future children, families that are connected to GLBT in anyway. |
| 8 | The Legacy Project has informed me a lot about GLBT. I didn't know anything about this and what was talked about in class. I feel I have learned a lot. I am very excited to do The Legacy Walk on Halsted sometime soon. It also informed my views on how I look at people who are GLBT. | This presentation has changed me a lot and I felt this was a great presentation. Nothing needs to be changed. It changes my views on how I look at GLBT people and makes me want to be a role model for adults/kids who need someone to talk to about this. I am bisexual so this changed me a lot and to except myself for who I am and not worry about other people think. |
| 9 | It has brought awareness about GLBT persons that play an important part of history and have made contributions to society that are usually not made part of our education system. The Legacy Project has made me want to learn more about all the people being acknowledged. | It has changed me because it was an issue that I did not think about because it has never really affected me. Now I can think about it more so I can learn more and become a better educator because of it. |
| 10 | This presentation has educated me about people who have done great deeds in society to help shape a better world who are GLBT, not that I doubt GLBT, can be a positive impact on society, but I was informed. | No Comment |
| 11 | This presentation just made me aware of certain people I didn't know or a sexuality level but other than that I feel just like others who have fought in what they believed in, so have they. | I'm very exposed to the GLBT community so I wasn't changed as far with my mood or how I treat people. |
| 12 | It brightened my horizon of how much history the GLBT has and helped me recognize that everyone is not the same. | I am much more open to GLBT families, and like how others are coming out acknowledging who they are, without any shame. |
| 13 | It informed me and educated me about GLBT because I have never heard of The Legacy Project and I also never hear of GLBT. So I really enjoyed this speech. | There's really no change, because I believe that Gays or Lesbian shouldn't be treated different. This presentation educated me about the famous people who are gay and they contributed a lot and are legends. |
| 14 | The Legacy Project informed my knowledge about GLBT issues greatly. I am able to have knowledge (more info) about this issue. If I am need more info about the GLBT, I am able to contact the project in inquire more info. |  |
| 15 | The legacy Project informed my knowledge about GLBT issues by realizing that even though problems are seen or heard as often as before doesn't mean the problem doesn't exist anymore. | I have been changed by this presentation because I have learned about people I have never heard of before. |
| 16 | The Legacy Project informed me with knowledge about GLBT issues that bullying and the teacher must stop name-calling. | I have been changed by this presentation. It made me aware that these issues may come up in teaching. |
| 17 | Knowledge I did not know about, but I am more pleased with the accomplishment as oppose to their personal lifestyle. | It has not changed me. |
| 18 | I had no idea that there were so many GLBT individuals. | It will help me talk to parents/children in my teaching career. |
| 19 | The GLBTQ has changed my perspective about GLBTQ community because it has proved that history can help people transition into something amazing. | It has also proved to me that love doesn't care what gender/sex you are. Thank you |
| 20 | The Legacy Project information shows how different people were and are GLBT. | Changes are that there is more facts and education to this topic. I do know that there is no shame in been what you are. |
| 21 | Legacy Project informed my knowledge about GLBT issues by education me on the different laws to protect GLBT community. | I don't think I've been changed by this presentation. |

**Summary Responses:**

Twenty-one pre-service college students, enrolled in a Child Development Course, wrote individual responses as indicated in the chart.

Question 1: How has the Legacy Project informed your knowledge about GLBT issues?

There were 20 out of 21 responses. There were 7 responses, which referenced that they had no previous information about GLBT issues or The Legacy Project. There were 3 responses, which discussed the use of planning lessons and recognizing resources in The Legacy Project. There were 12 responses, which discussed the GLBT history and contributions to society.

Question 2: How have you been changed by this Legacy Project presentation?

There were 4 responses that responded with no change. There were 7 responses that referenced how to approach how to teach respect and acceptance. There were 4 responses that discussed the importance of the “past in preparing and changing the pathway for future children.”

**Appendix B: Group 3 - High Schools Students, Gay Straight Alliance Group from Sterling Illinois High School, Sterling, IL on (April 5, 2013)**

**Data**

A total of 7 participants in Group 3, and 6 participants who completed the survey of 11 items on The Legacy Project Education Initiative.

Responses:

Q.1 Name of group and location.

Q.2 What was the most important contribution in The Legacy Project Education Initiative?

There were 6 responses stated history, education, visibility, and dedication to “everything.”

Q.3 Has this impacted your personal beliefs and attitudes towards gay and lesbian issues? How?

There were 7 responses that indicated that this strengthened feelings of pride and understanding of treatment of others. An appreciation of the hardships and struggles experienced by TLP Inductees was also mentioned.

Q. 4 Describe any resources needed.

There were 2 responses, one indicated which LGBT inductee made the biggest difference and the other spoke about activities that could be used in schools.

Q. 5 What other information would you like to know about LPEI?

Three responses asked for three different things. These were lesson plans, information on the origin of TLW, and upcoming events.

Q. 6. Rating LPEI presentation components.

There were 4 responses. Three indicated Excellent (85.71%), and one chose Good (14.29%) for the overall presentation. The rating for the discussion was 50% Excellent and 50% Good. The PowerPoint Presentation was 66% (Excellent) and 33.33% (Satisfactory).

Q. 7 Rating effect of today’s training.

There was a technological glitch in the question because participants were not able to rate each of these areas, except for the first area – GLBT Historical Figures. There were 6 responses, 5 chose Excellent (83.33 %) and one chose Good (16.67%).

Q. 8. Rating presentation.

There were 6 responses, which indicated the overall experience of TLP as 100% (Exceptional and Worthwhile)

For the area of Knowledge of Content, 50% indicated Exceptional and Worthwhile while 50% chose Satisfactory.

For the area of Development of activities, discussion, and lesson approaches, there was a 66.67% indicted Exceptional and Worthwhile, and 33.33% Definitely would like more information.

For the area of personal goals, 1 participant requested more information and 1 one participant noted improvement.

Q. 9 Comments

None

Q. 10 Participant information

4 males, 3 females, 7 (white not Hispanic), 4 (rural), 1(suburban), 1 (urban), and 1 (prefer not to answer), 3 straight, 2 gay, 1 lesbian, 1 bisexual.

Q. 11 Other comments:

Cannot select excellent for all

Great experience. Thank You.

I thought the experience was wonderful and really helped me out with information with the LGBT Community. I am hoping to come back soon again for next year to do the walk again.

THANK YOU! What an amazing experience.

**Appendix C: Group 4 - Combined Class Group from Two Classes (April 5, 2013) The classes were ECE 262 -1 Childhood, Family, and Community Relations from National Louis University and CD262 Child, Family and Community Relations from Truman College. Professor Karen Roth from National Louis University, Chicago, IL taught both classes.**

**Data**

A total of 14 participants in Group 4 and 1 instructor, Professor Karen Roth, who teaches these courses for National Louis University and Truman College, located in Chicago, Illinois.

The following responses represent an aggregation of both university classes as these classes were treated as one group by LPEI.

Responses:

Q. 1 Name university and location

Q. 2 What was the most important contribution from The Legacy Project Education Initiative?

There were 13 responses that indicated awareness of LGBT issues, resources for LGBT parents/children, LGBT community building, The Legacy Walk, history, and contributions to society. There was 1 participant was not sure.

Q. 3 How has this impacted your personal beliefs and attitudes towards gay and lesbian issues?

There were 13 responses that indicated the following: the visit supported personal beliefs and freedom. One mentioned that their mother is gay. resources to support students, affirmed advocacy, positive influence on students for anti-bias classroom, and very positive.

There was 1 response that indicated that this was an unfamiliar topic

Q. 4 Describe any resources needed.

There were 14 responses that showed a need for: research studies, parent guidebooks, constitution information, children’s books, histories of the plaque, websites, more famous people in history, immigration information, and The Legacy Walk itself.

Q. 5 What other information would you like to know about LPEI?

There were 11 responses, which indicated the following: one wanted an improved website, another inquired about a school presentation, another asked for educational resources for children and families, another wanted information on addressing LGBT issues in public schools, another asked about outreach programs, another inquired about more Asian LGBT achievements, and finally one asked how to address someone who is against gays and lesbians.

There were 3 responses who had did not give a response.

Q. 6. Rating LPEI presentation components

Participants rated the overall presentation Excellent (84.62%), and Good (15.38%). The rating for the discussion was Excellent (85.71%), Good (7.14%), and Satisfactory (7.14%). The PowerPoint Presentation was rated Excellent (71.43%) and Good (28.57%). The Legacy Walk was rated Excellent (76.92%), Good (7.69%), and Satisfactory (15.38%). The Legacy Walk Website was rated Excellent (76.92%), Good (15.38%), and Marginal (7.69%).

Q.7 Rating the effect of today’s training on your knowledge

The effect on knowledge of LGBT Historical Figures was rated Excellent (92.86%) and Good (7.14%). The effect on attitudes toward LGBT History was rated Excellent (85.71%), Good (7.14%), and Satisfactory (7.14%). The effect on knowledge of strategies to counter bullying and harassment was rated Excellent (64.29%), Good (21.43%), Satisfactory (7.14%), and Very Little (7.14%). The effect on knowledge of legal protection regarding LGBT individuals was rated Excellent (71.43%), Good (7.14%), Satisfactory (7.14%), Very Little (7.14%), and Poor (7.14%). The effect on knowledge of inclusive curriculum for LGBT History was rated Excellent (61.54%), Good (7.69%), Satisfactory (23.08%), and Very Little (7.69%).

Q.8 Rating of the presentation

Ratings of the overall experience of TLP were Exceptional (55.56%), Good (33.33%), and Satisfactory (11.11%). The knowledge of content was rated Excellent (85.71%) and Good (14.29%). The development of activities and lesson approaches was rated Excellent (40%), Good (20%), and Satisfactory (40%). The responses about the development of personal goals indicated a response rate of Excellent (33.33%), Good (16.67%), Satisfactory (33.33%), and Needs to be improved (16.67%). One participant wanted materials for educators working with LGBT parents and children.

Q. 9 Personal Information (Optional)

There were 9 participants who submitted information.

Q. 10 Participant information

1 males, 13 females; 4 (white not Hispanic), 5 (Hispanic or Latino), 3 (Black or African), 1 (Asian), and 1 (Other); 2 (Rural), 1(suburban), and 11 (urban); 12 straight, 2 gay, 1 bisexual, and 1 prefer not to answer; 6 (21-30 age), 5 (31-40 age), 1 (41-50 age), and 2 (51-60 age).

Q.11 Other comments:

* Clearly still in the works, The Legacy Project will absolutely be a positive contribution to the LGBT community, as well as an informative interaction to increase knowledge of those who are unfamiliar with the relevant issues.
* See my comment above. Educators need to know how to work with issues brought to school by LGBT parents. How can educators support their unique needs?
* Very informative and helpful in starting dialogue about a sensitive subject. Like the information on dealing with children and parents while in school as a teacher.
* Great experience!
* Thank you!

**Appendix D: Group 5 - Homewood Flossmoor Support Group, Advisor Phillip Baker, on April 17, 2013.**

**Data**

A total of 7 participants, including 1 advisor, Phillip Baker.

Responses:

Q. 1 Name group and location

Q. 2 What was the most important contribution from The Legacy Project Education Initiative?

There were 6 responses that indicated history, tour, plaques, money/time, and a welcoming environment.

Q. 3 How has this impacted your personal beliefs and attitudes towards gay and lesbian issues?

There were 7 responses that indicated that there was new knowledge, impact of educated people and contributions, historical impact, and education.

Q. 4 Describe any resources needed.

There were 7 responses that indicated information about support events, seminars, textbooks, youth events, historical background, and The Legacy Website.

Q. 5 What other information would you like to know about LPEI?

There were 6 responses, who would like to know about teen gatherings, support groups, background about TLP, and school issues.

Q. 6. Rating LPEI presentation components

There were 7 responses that indicated 100% (Excellent) for the overall presentation. The rating for the discussion was 85% Excellent and 14.29% (Satisfactory). The PowerPoint Presentation was rated from Excellent to Satisfactory. There was only one area, The Legacy Walk and Website, which had 71% (Excellent), 14% (Good) and Marginal (14.29%).

Q. 7 Rating effect of today’s training

There were 7 responses that indicated Excellent, Good, or Satisfactory. There was 1 response that indicated marginal for strategies for antibullying.

Q. 8 Rating presentation

There were 6 responses, which indicated the overall experience of TLP as 85% (Exceptional and Worthwhile) and 1 indicated Poor.

For the area of Knowledge of Content, there was a 100 (Exceptional and Worthwhile).

For the area of Development of activities, discussion, and lesson approaches, there was a 57.14% (Exceptional and Worthwhile), 28.57% (Definitely would like more information) and 14.29% Satisfactory

For the area of personal goals, there were 6 responses (Exceptional and Worthwhile) and 1 response indicated Poor.

Q. 10 Participant information

4 males, 3 females, 7 (white not Hispanic), 4 (rural), 1(suburban), 1 (urban), and 1 (prefer not to answer), 3 straight, 2 gay, 1 lesbian, 1 bisexual.

Q.11 Other comments:

* It was a wonderful opportunity & I would love to do it again during the summer. 4/17/2013 1:53 PM
* Overall, I think the idea and content is amazing. I think the website is a little "busy" and isn't being utilized to its full capacity. Perhaps it was because we didn't have tons of extra time, but I would've like to have participated in more discussions about anti-bullying and legislative initiatives and slowed down on some of the slides at the end of the presentation.
* It was very nice to learn about such a strong and prominent support center full of people who are passionate in human rights, and its history

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