

Deliberations Virtual Colloquium

Can you describe how you came to develop this writing project?

My paper was actually derived from a talk I prepared in my Writing 101 class with Dr. Nan. I analyzed dozens of TED talks in order to determine what ensured a successful delivery of my message. Beyond the actual content of my talk, I played around with different supplementary slides, hand gestures, and tones. Every choice I made needed to amplify the emotions associated with the very personal subject matter of coming out.

Describe the writing and research process that went into this article—what stands out for you about that process?

While crafting my talk, the evidence for my claims mostly came from my personal experiences, though I did address some supporting claims and counterarguments from other sources. However, in the revision process over the summer, I actually decided to pull back on the scholarly citations because they felt forced for such an intimate and personal topic.

What were the most challenging and/or your favorite aspects of the publishing process?

The publishing process was actually quite challenging for me because I had the overwhelming urge to rewrite everything I had written before. In the few months between my Writing 101 class and the start of the revision process, I grew more comfortable in my own skin, even if ever so slightly. I also consumed new media that added to my “gay experience,” such as the representation I saw in the show, *Schitt’s Creek*. However, it was very interesting converting my talk back into an essay, making sure the intentional pauses and the shifts in tone and tense translated on paper.

What do you hope the article does/how do you hope the article impacts readers?

I just hope that the article inspires others to continue being self-reflective. I don't want to act as though my experiences have been the most challenging and that I need pity. Instead, when people read my essay, I hope they think of experiences and feelings in their own lives that are similar to the ones I shared. While not everyone needs to come out of the closet in the traditional, heteronormative sense, I'd argue that most of us have hidden something about ourselves before. I just want to share this deep dive into my personal experiences so that we can all keep thinking critically about the nuances of it all.

How does this writing project connect (or not) with your larger intellectual aims/interests/aspirations?

While I am currently on a pre-med track, one of my greatest passions outside of my academic career is music. As a singer-songwriter, music is a creative outlet that frees me to express my emotions. I typically don't think of my music as an academic pursuit, so it was incredibly gratifying to be able to write an academic paper in a way that was very similar to my songwriting process.