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the triangle speakers:
evaluation of speaker panels for high school students

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Introduction

Triangle Speakers was founded in 1991 to eliminate fear, prejudice, and hatred against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people so that a healthy environment exists for all members of the LGBT community.[1] Further, Triangle Speakers aims to pursue a sensitive and meaningful process to increase their cultural competency.

Programatically, Triangle Speakers focusses on providing educational panels to schools and organizations. These panels include one lesbian, one gay man, one bisexual person, one transgendered person, and one family member of a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered identified person. After sharing their life stories, panelists distribute LGBT community resource lists to all audience members.

They also coordinate outreach into the Latino LGBT community. They have accomplished this through a Latino Outreach Coordinator who organizes events and conducts training workshops. She also works directly with the Gay-Straight Alliance at Watsonville High school.

Additional services include developing school curricula, organizing speak-outs on community television, and cross-community organizing and collaborating.

Triangle Speakers hired Ceres Policy Research to evaluate their organization. Since the majority of the work completed by Triangle Speakers is the provision of panels at local high schools, we decided to focus our evaluation on this aspect of the organization. This paper reports our findings.

Research Design and Methods

Ceres Policy Research followed a particular research process when evaluating the Triangle Speakers high school panels.

Logic Model Development
We began the program evaluation with the development of a logic model. This process was collaborative: we worked with the board of directors to define the unique components of the panels as well as the expected short- and long-term outcomes (see Appendix A for a copy of the logic model).

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[1] *This background information was compiled from the Triangle Speaker website (http://www.trianglespeakers.org/), written promotional material, grant applications, and informal conversations with Triangle Speaker staff.*

Through the provision of educational panels, Triangle Speakers expects to see

- an increased willingness of schools, churches, and organizations to sponsor panels;
- an increased knowledge of LGBT issues;
- dispelled myths and stereotypes among parents, youth, and professionals serving the LGBT community;
- an increased knowledge of support services and LGBT events
- strengthened identities among the LGBT community, family members, and other allies.

After achieving these short-term outcomes, Triangle Speakers expects to see

- a reduction in harassment and violence directed against the LGBT community;
- a reduction in fear of violence among LGBT community members;
- a reduction in social isolation among LGBT community members;
- improved health and self esteem among LGBT community members;
- stronger feelings of affirmation and support among the LGBT community;
- increased comfort in coming out for LGBT community members; and
- the integration of LGBT community members and families into society.

Further, Triangle Speakers aims to achieve equitable outcomes in all of the racial and ethnic sub-communities within Santa Cruz County, particularly the White and Latino communities.

Triangle Speaker Panel Evaluation Data

After developing the logic model, Ceres Policy Research analyzed evaluation data collected by the Triangle Speakers from 1998 to 2005.

A Triangle Speaker intern randomly selected evaluation forms from panels over a seven-year period. She then entered this data into an Excel spreadsheet.

Ceres Policy Research took the Excel spreadsheet and analyzed the data. We used descriptive statistics to compile a portrait of audience members over this seven-year period. We also looked at which audience members were more likely to

- view the panels positively;
- like having someone speak about LGBT issues;
- feel different about the LGBT community; and
- recommend a Triangle Speaker panel to others.

High School Survey Development

After developing the logic model and analyzing the existing panel evaluation data, Ceres Policy Research worked collaboratively with the Triangle Speaker Evaluation Committee to develop a survey for Santa Cruz County high school students to

measure the outcomes identified in the logic model. The final survey included two domains of information collected. These two domains are explained in more detail below:

General Descriptive Information: In this section, we collected general demographic information such as age, school, gender, zip code, ethnic/racial identity, and sexual identity. We also asked how many Triangle Speaker panels each high school student had previously seen.

Triangle Speaker Program Evaluation: In this section, we ask all respondents thirteen questions that measure whether Triangle Speakers is meeting their short- and long- term outcomes. Respondents are provided with a series of statements and are asked whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

We also added four questions specifically for LGBT youth. These questions addressed youth comfort in coming out to family and friends.

Survey Collection and Analysis

Triangle Speakers provided Ceres Policy Research with a list of eight teachers who sponsor panels each year. We contacted all of these sponsors and were able to make arrangements with teachers at San Lorenzo Valley High School, Santa Cruz High School, Aptos High School, Pajaro Valley High School, and Watsonville High School. (We were unable to make arrangements at Soquel and Harbor due to schedule conflicts.) In addition, we contacted the Gay-Straight Alliance at Scotts Valley High School and surveyed their members.

The survey and administrative data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and then input into SPSS (a statistics software). We used descriptive statistics tests to compile a portrait of the respondents. We calculated means for each of the the evaluation questions. We also ran analysis of variance tests to see if subgroups of respondents were different than one another. We were particularly interested in three comparisons.

- We wanted to see if students who have seen the panels provided different answers than students who have not seen the panels. This comparison allowed us to determine whether the panels are effective for the general high school population.
- We wanted to see if straight and LGBT identified students provided different answers.[2] This allowed us to establish whether LGBT identified students would benefit from additional programming.

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[2] *We use the term LGBT identified students throughout this report. In our data analyses, we included three students who did not identify as straight but did not feel comfortable defining themselves with any of the other categories. We had the choice of calling this group "non-straight." We chose the more positive category of "LGBT identified" in order to avoid using "straight" as the normative category.*

- We wanted to see if Latino and non-Latino students provided different answers. This allowed us to determine whether Latino students would benefit froom additional programming.[3]

Focus Groups

Once we collected and analyzed the survey data, we held three focus groups. One focus group consisted of seven panelists. One focus group consisted of five board members. The third focus group consisted of three Triangle Speaker Evaluation Committee members. The purpose of these focus groups was to share the findings from the survey, collect opinions about the preliminary analysis, and explore ways for Triangle Speakers to expand their service.

Findings

Portrait of Audience Members Who Completed Gig Evaluations

Data from 2397 randomly selected panel, or "gig," evaluations from 1998-2005 were analyzed. The people who responded to these evaluations were varied by the year of their response, the area that they live, gender, ethnic/racial identity, and age:

- 223 responses were completed in 1998, 436 responses were completed in 1999, 292 were completed in 2000, 288 were completed in 2001, 324 were completed in 2002, 291 were completed in 2003, 265 were completed in 2004, 278 were completed in 2005.
- 207 responses came from the far-north portion of Santa Cruz County (Scotts Valley and San Lorenzo Valley), 999 came from the city of Santa Cruz, Davenport, Soquel, Capitola, and Aptos, 673 came from Watsonville or Freedom, and 222 came from outside of the county.
- 974 respondents were men, 1382 respondents were female and 12 were other.
- 789 of the respondents identified as White, 489 respondents identified as Latino, Chicano, or Hispanic, 31 identified as Black or African American, 187 identified as Asian or Pacific Islander, 10 respondents identified as Native American or Alaskan, 9 identified as Middle Eastern, 29 identified as other (mostly American and Jewish), 72 respondents identified as multi-racial.

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[3] *We use the terms "Latino" and "non-Latino" students throughout this report. The term "Latino" is used to include students with Latino/-a, Chicano/-a, Mexican, Mexican American, and Hispanic identities. We also include students with multiple ethnic or racial identities that listed Latino/-a, Chicano/-a, Mexican, Mexican American or Hispanic as one of their identities. The term "non-Latino" includes students who identify as White, African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American or "Other." This category also includes students who had a mixed ethnic or racial identity, but did not list Latino/-a, Chicano/-a, Mexican, Mexican American or Hispanic as one of their identities.*

- 101 respondents were aged 12 and under, 1391 respondents were between the age of 13 and 18, and 867 respondents were over the age of 18.

Portrait of High School Students Who Completed the Survey

Ceres Policy Research collected 315 surveys from Santa Cruz County high school students. These respondents varied by age, school, gender, ethnic/racial identity, sexual identity, the number of times they have seen a panel, and degree to which they identify as an ally of the LGBT community:

- 121 if the students are 14 years of age, 146 are 15 years of age, 29 are 16 years of age, 11 are 17 years of age, and 2 were 18 years of age.
- 109 respondents attend San Lorenzo Valley high school, 9 attend Scotts Valley High School, 22 attend Santa Cruz High School, 63 attend Aptos High School, 62 attend Pajaro Valley High School, and 49 attend Watsonville High School.
- 146 of the students identify as White or European-American, 25 students identify as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Indian, 122 students identify as Mexican, Mexican-American, Hispanic, Latino, or Chicano, 11 students identify as Black or African-American, 9 students identify as Native American, and 10 students identify as something other (examples include Bohemian, American, Brazilian, and Jewish).
- 284 of the students identify as straight, 1 student identifies as a lesbian, 15 students identify as bisexual, 2 students identify as queer, 8 students identify as questioning, and three students wrote that they are uncomfortable answering the question and then answered questions related to coming out to family and friends.
- 128 of the students have never seen a Triangle Speaker panel, 126 of the students have seen one Triangle Speaker panel, 23 students have seen two panels, 10 students have seen 3 panels, 1 student has seen 4 panels and 1 student has seen 5 panels.
- 23 students identify as very strong LGBT allies, 80 students identify as strong LGBT allies, 99 students identify as allies, 21 students identify as opponents to the LGBT community, and 14 students identify as strong opponents to the LGBT community.

Short-Term Findings

We collected and analyzed data related to six short-term outcomes. Table 1 (see page 9) summarizes our findings.

We used panel evaluation, or "gig" evaluations, from the Triangle Speaker archives to explore

- whether audience members have an increased knowledge of LGBT issues; and

- whether panels dispel myths and stereotypes about the LGBT community.

The "gig" data did not allow us to draw any conclusions. It did, however, provide some promising information. We elaborate on our findings below:

Increased Knowledge of LGBT Issues: Audience members were asked, "What (did you) like about the presentation." In response, 47% of audience members said they liked that the panelists were open and honest. 33% of audience members said that they found the panel educational and informative. These were the two most common responses. Both of these responses imply that the audience learned something new about the LGBT community, though we cannot make this conclusion unless we ask the question directly.

Dispelled Myths and Stereotypes: Audience members were also asked "Did you feel different about lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people after hearing the speakers?" Less than 1% of audience members felt more negative after the panel. Around 70% of audience members felt the same after the panel. 30% of audience members felt better about the LGBT community after the panel. In order to have a more positive attitude about the LGBT community, audience members may have learned something or have had myths or stereotypes dispelled. However, we cannot make this conclusion unless we ask directly about dispelled myths and stereotypes.

We used high school survey data to measure whether:

- audience members have an increased knowledge of LGBT events;
- audience members have an increased knowledge of LGBT support services;
- LGBT community members experience strengthened identities after seeing a panel; and
- community members have stronger identities as allies after seeing a panel.

We elaborate on our findings below:

Aware of LGBT Events: Students were asked to respond to the statement "I am aware of LGBT events in my community." They had the choice of circling a "1," which means "strongly agree," a "2," which means "agree," a "3," which means disagree," and a "4," which means "strongly disagree." Students who have seen a panel had an average response of 2.40. Students who have not seen a panel had an average response of 2.67. While both of these averages mean "neither agree or disagree," students who have seen a panel are more aware of LGBT events. This difference is statistically significant (sig=.04). These averages are fairly high, however, indicating that Triangle speakers could do a better job of educating audience members about LGBT events in the community.

Aware of LGBT Support Services: Students were asked to respond to the statement "I know where there are support services for the LGBT community." They had the choice of circling a "1," which means "strongly agree," a "2," which means

"agree," a "3," which means disagree," and a "4," which means "strongly disagree." Students who have seen a panel had an average response of 2.80 (they neither agree or disagree). Students who have not seen a panel had an average response of 3.03, meaning they disagree with the statement. This difference is statistically significant (sig=.06), meaning that students who have seen a panel are more knowledgeable about LGBT support services. The averages are fairly high, however, indicating that Triangle Speakers could do a better job of educating audience members about where there are support services for the LGBT community.

Comfort with Sexual Identity: Students were asked to respond to the statement "I am comfortable with my sexual identity." While we had 30 LGBT students respond to the survey, this number was not high enough to determine whether LGBT community members experienced strengthened identities after seeing a panel. (Such an analysis would have required a sizeable number of LGBT identified youth who had seen a panel and an equally sizeable number of LGBT identified youth who had not seen a panel.)

Ally Identity: Students were asked to respond to the statement "I am an ally for the LGBT community." They had the choice of circling a "1," which means "strongly agree," a "2," which means "agree," a "3," which means disagree," and a "4," which means "strongly disagree." Students who have seen a panel had an average response of 1.57. Students who have not seen a panel had an average response of 1.80. While both groups of students agree with the statement, students who have seen a panel are more likely to agree with this statement. This difference is statistically significant (sig=.09), indicating that Triangle Speaker panels lead to strengthened ally identities among audience members.

Table 1

Expected Outcome	Survey Question	Data	Interpretation
Audience members will have an increased knowledge of LGBT issues	(*Gig Evaluation Sheet*): What I liked about the presentation.	47% of students said they liked that panelists were open and honest. 33% of students said they found the panel educational and informative.[4]	Students appear to have learned something about the LGBT community, though data is inconclusive. [5]
Triangle Speakers will dispel myths and stereotypes about the LGBT community.	(*Gig Evaluation Sheet*): Did you feel different about lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people after hearing the speakers?	.6% of students feel more negative about the LGBT community, 69.4% of students feel the same, and 30% feel better.	30% of students feel better about the LGBT community after seeing a panel, though data is inconclusive. [6]
Audience members will have an increased knowledge of LGBT events.	(*High School Student Survey*): I am aware of LGBT events in my community.	Students who have seen a panel had an average response of 2.40. Students who have not seen a panel had an average response of 2.67. (significance=.04).	**Students who have seen a panel have more knowledge about LGBT events.**
Audience members will have an increased knowledge of LGBT support services.	(*High School Student Survey*): I know where there are support services for the LGBT community.	Students who have seen a panel had an average response of 2.80. Students who have not seen a panel had an average response of 3.03. (significance=.06)	**Students who have seen a panel have more knowledge about LGBT support services.**
LGBT community members will experience strengthened identities after seeing a panel.	(*High School Student Survey*): I am comfortable with my sexual identity.	There were not enough LGBT identified students to test this hypothesis.	The data is inconclusive.
Community members will have stronger identities as allies after seeing a panel.	(*High School Student Survey*): I am an ally for the LGBT community.	Students who have seen a panel had an average response of 1.57. Students who have not seen a panel had an average response of 1.80. (significance=.09)	**Students who have seen a panel are more likely to identify as an ally.**

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[4] *This question was entirely open-ended. These were the two most common responses.*

[5] *Triangle Speakers might ask a question about what students learned on their panel evaluation survey.*

[6] *Triangle Speakers might ask a question that more directly addresses specific myths and stereotypes.*

Long-Term Outcomes

We collected and analyzed data related to six long-term outcomes. Specifically, we explored whether Triangle Speakers have

- reduced harassment and violence directed against the LGBT community;
- helped LGBT community members experience a reduction in fear of violence;
- helped LGBT community members experience a reduction in social isolation;
- helped LGBT community members experience improved self-esteem;
- helped LGBT community members experience stronger feelings of affirmation and support; and
- helped LGBT community members experience increased comfort in coming out.

Notably, all of these outcomes require change. Because we surveyed students at one time only, we were not able to measure change. Nonetheless, this survey allowed us to set a baseline for all of the measures. Table 2 summarizes all of our baseline findings (see page 12).

We elaborate on our findings below:

Reduction in Harassment and Violence: Students were asked to respond to two different statements, "Youth are safe coming out at this school," and, "Adults are safe coming out at this school." They had the choice of circling a "1," which means "strongly agree," a "2," which means "agree," a "3," which means disagree," and a "4," which means "strongly disagree." On average, students responded with a 2.28 for youth and a 2.20 for adults, meaning they neither agree or disagree with either statement. Straight students and students who are LGBT identified did not respond differently to these questions. These findings indicate that improvement could be made on student perception of harassment and safety on high school campuses. This finding holds true for straight and students who are LGBT identified.

Another source of data reinforces these findings. The Advanced Placement Statistics class of 2004-5 at San Lorenzo Valley High School surveyed their peers about the treatment of LGBT identified students on campus. They found that the majority of students hear slurs directed against LGBT identified peers on a weekly or daily basis. Moreover, only a small minority of teachers make it clear that these slurs are unacceptable. A survey at Watsonville high found similar findings. This data reinforces our survey data: Students and teachers could use more education about the effects of verbal harassment.

Reduction in Fear of Violence: Students were asked to respond to two different statements, "I am afraid someone will attack me because of my gender," and ,"I am afraid someone will attack me because of my sexual identity." They were asked to respond using the same 1-4 scale described above. On average, students who are LGBT identified responded with a 3.25 about gender-related violence and 3.22 about sexual identity-related violence. These responses mean that students who are

LGBT identified are not afraid that someone will attack them. On average, straight students responded with a 3.67 about gender-related violence and 3.77 about sexual identity-related violence. These responses mean that straight students are not afraid that someone will attack them. While neither group of students is afraid of attacks, straight students are less afraid than students who are LGBT identified. These differences are statistically significant. These findings indicate that work could be done to reduce the fear of students who are LGBT identified.

Social Isolation: Students were asked to respond to the statement, "I feel alone." They were asked using respond to the same 1-4 scale described above. On average, students who are LGBT identified responded with a 3.50, meaning that they do not feel alone. Straight students do not feel any different than students who are LGBT identified. These findings indicate that students who are LGBT identified are not more socially isolated than straight students.

Self Esteem: Students were asked to respond to the statement, "I feel good about myself." They were asked using respond to the same 1-4 scale described above. On average, students who are LGBT identified responded with a 1.80, meaning that they feel good about themselves. Straight students responded with a 1.30, meaning that they also feel good about themselves. While both groups of students feel good about themselves, straight students are more likely to feel good about themselves. This result is statistically significant. These findings indicate that work could be done to close the gap between straight students and students who are LGBT identified.

Feelings of Support: Students were asked to respond to three statements, "My friends support my sexual identity," "People at work support my sexual identity," and "People at school support my sexual identity." They were asked to respond using the same 1-4 scale described above. Students who are LGBT identified feel supported by their friends (avg=1.39), at work (avg=1.77), and at school (avg=2.05). Straight students also feel supported by their friends (avg=1.12), at work (avg=1.17), and at school (avg=1.16). While both groups of students feel supported, straight students feel more supported. This result is statistically significant. These findings indicate that work could be done to close the gap between straight students and students who are LGBT identified.

Comfort Coming Out: Students who are LGBT identified were asked to respond to four statements, "I feel comfortable coming out to my family," "I feel comfortable coming out to my friends," "I feel comfortable coming out at work," and "I feel comfortable coming out at school" They were asked to respond using the same 1-4 scale described above. Students who are LGBT identified feel comfortable coming out to their friends (1.52). They feel neither comfortable or uncomfortable coming out to family (avg=2.61), at work (avg=2.29), or at school (avg=2.41). These findings indicate that work could be done to help youth who are LGBT identified feel more comfortable coming out to family members, co-workers, and school peers.

Table 2

Expected Outcome	High School Survey Question	Baseline Data
There will be a reduction in harassment and violence directed against the LGBT community.	-Youth are safe coming out at this school. -Adults are safe coming out at this school.	-Students neither agree or disagree about youth (avg=2.28). -Students neither agree or disagree about adults (avg=2.20). -Straight students and students who are LGBT identified did not respond differently to these questions.
LGBT community members will experience a reduction in fear of violence.	-I am afraid someone will attack me because of my gender. -I am afraid someone will attack me because of my sexual identity.	-Students who are LGBT identified do not fear gender (avg=3.25) or sexual identity (avg=3.22) attacks. -Straight students have less fear of gender (avg=3.67) and sexual identity attacks (avg=3.77). These differences are statistically significant.
LGBT community members will experience a reduction in social isolation.	-I feel alone.	-Students who are LGBT identified do not feel alone (avg=3.50). -Straight students do not feel any different than students who are LGBT identified.
LGBT community members will experience improved health and self-esteem.	-I feel good about myself.	-Students who are LGBT identified feel good about themselves (avg=1.80). -Straight students feel better about themselves (avg=1.30). This difference is statistically significant.
LGBT community members will experience stronger feelings of affirmation and support.	-My friends support my sexual identity. -People at work support my sexual identity. -People at school support my sexual identity.	-Students who are LGBT identified feel supported by their friends (avg=1.39), at work (avg=1.77), and at school (avg=2.05). -Straight students feel supported by friends (avg=1.12), at work (avg=1.17), and at school (avg=1.16). These differences are statistically significant.
LGBT community members will experience increased comfort in coming out.	-I feel comfortable coming out to my family. -I feel comfortable coming out to my friends. -I feel comfortable coming out at work. -I feel comfortable coming out at school.	-Students who are LGBT identified feel comfortable coming out to their friends (avg=1.52). -Students who are LGBT identified feel neither comfortable or uncomfortable coming out to family (avg=2.61), at work (avg=2.29), or at school (avg=2.41).

Latino Student Outreach

We analyzed data to determine whether Latino students might benefit from additional programming. We conducted this analysis by comparing the answers of Latino and non-Latino students. We found eight statistically significant differences (see Table 3 on page 13). However, the findings are contradictory and fail to provide any clear policy implications.

Attitude about the LGBT Community: The data from the panel evaluations indicate that White and Latino students both develop a more positive attitude about the LGBT community after seeing a panel. However, Latino students are slightly less likely to develop a positive attitude when compared to non-Latino students.

Supporting Sexual Identities: The high school survey data indicates that most students feel that their student peers support their sexual identity. Latino students are more likely to agree with this statement when compared to non-Latino students.

Youth Coming Out: The high school survey data indicates that students neither agree or disagree with the statement, "Youth are safe coming out at this school/organization." Latino students are more likely to agree with this statement when compared to non-Latino students.

Adults Coming Out: The high school survey data indicates that students neither agree or disagree with the statement, "Adults are safe coming out at this school/organization." Latino students are more likely to agree with this statement when compared to non-Latino students.

LGBT Allies: The high school survey data indicates that most students identify as allies of the LGBT community. However, students at the predominantely Latino Pajaro Valley High School are less likely to identify as allies. This difference could be driven by the fact that Pajaro Valley High School contains only freshmen and sophomores.

Aware of LGBT Events: The high school survey data indicates that students are niether aware or unaware of LGBT events. However, students at the predominantly Latino Watsonville High school are more likely to know about LGBT events. We hypothesize that this is the result of the most active Gay-Straight Alliance in the county on the Watsonville campus.

Aware of LGBT Support Services: The high school survey data indicates that students are unaware of LGBT support services. However, students at the predominantly Latino Watsonville High School are more likely to know about LGBT services. Again, we hypothesize that this is the result of having the most active Gay-Straight Alliance in the county on the Watsonville campus.

Table 3

Survey Question	Results	Interpretation
(Gig Evaluation): I feel different about the LGBT Community.	35% of non-Latino respondents reported having an improved attitude. 30% of Latino respondents reported having an improved attitude. This difference was significant when controlling for gender, zip code, year of the presentation, and age of panelist. (sig=.043)	Latino students are less likely to have a more positive attitude about the LGBT community.
(High School Survey): People at school support my sexual identity.	Non-Latino students responded with an average of 1.26. Latino students responded with an average of 1.14. This difference is significant. (sig=.088)	Latino students are more likely to feel that their peers support their sexual identity.
(High School Survey): Youth are safe coming out at this school/organization.	Non-Latino students responded with an average of 2.38. Latino students responded with an average of 2.13. This difference is highly significant. (sig=.025)	Latino students are more likely to feel that youth are safe coming out at their school.
(High School Survey): Adults are safe coming out at this school/organization.	Non-Latino students responded with an average of 2.33. Latino students responded with an average of 2.02. This difference is highly significant. (sig=.008)	Latino students are more likely to feel that adults are safe coming out at their school.
(High School Survey): I am an ally for the LGBT community.	All students responded with an average of 1.74. Pajaro Valley Students responded with an average of 2.20. This difference is highly significant. (sig=.000)	Pajaro Valley High School students are less likely to identify as allies of the LGBT community.
(High School Survey): I am aware of LGBT events in my community.	All students responded with an average of 2.53 Watsonville High School students responded with an average of 2.16. This difference is highly significant. (sig=.024)	Watsonville High School students are more aware of LGBT events in their community.
(High School Survey): I am aware of LGBT support services in my community.	All students responded with an average of 2.91. Watsonville High School students responded with an average of 2.45. This difference is highly significant. (sig=.005)	Watsonville High School students are more aware of LGBT support services in their community.

Focus Group Recommendations

The focus groups generally agreed with the analysis of the quantitative findings.

The focus group discussed challenges that they have faced as panelists. These challenges include:

- presenting to a class that appears disinterested and doesn't ask questions;
- not being able to ask questions directed at co-panelists to stimulate conversation;
- presenting with co-panelists who say things that are offensive (i.e. discussing how women's sex drives are less than mens'.);
- having to present as a person that only identifies with being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered. (A number of panelists identify as more than one of these categories. A few panelists also identify as queer, which is not currently a category.);

We asked the focus group about some potentially challenging behavior that we observed while collecting data: Half of the classes giggled and snickered about the question requesting sexual identity questions. Two different classes erupted into behavior that we viewed as homophobic: students tried circling the word gay on friends' surveys, students declaring in loud voices that they are "straight" or "very straight." The focus group participants disagreed on how to interpret this behavior. Most board members felt this was behavior that should be recognized as potentially problematic and addressed. Most panelists felt that this behavior should be expected when teenagers talk about sex. Most panelists agreed that open snickering is not a challenge because students do not generally act this way towards panels.

In addition, focus group participants provided a range of suggestions for improving the Triangle Speaker model:

- train facilitators to ask questions of the panelists to stimulate discussion;
- develop a teacher guide that would prepare students to ask questions;
- consider developing an additional panel that focusses on defining and describing the effects of homophobia (this would be directed at social studies classes for older students);
- train teachers how to recognize and address homophobic slurs;
- provide local LGBT service referral information (the current referral sheet currently focusses on state and national resources)
- hire a high-school aged youth outreach coordinator that would pull more youth into the LGBT community;
- conduct outreach into groups of parents and grandparents so that coming out becomes easier over time;
- organize a panel of "60 plus" LGBT community members to speak to Gay-Straight Alliances so that young people learn their history;

- organize faith panels (i.e. a panel of Jewish LGBT community members, a panel of Catholic LGBT community members) to speak to church groups;
- develop a press list so that the media knows where to go when they want personal stories from LGBT identified community members (training would have to be conducted so that people on the media list do not discuss LGBT organizations, but only share their personal stories).

Summary and Recommendations for High School Panels

The high school survey indicates that the panels are effective. Students who have seen panels are more likely to identify as allies, be aware of LGBT events, know about LGBT support services.

In addition, the high school survey data indicates that LGBT identified youth do not

- feel unsafe coming out
- fear attacks due to gender or sexual identity
- feel alone

It also appears that LGBT youth do feel

- good about themselves
- their sexual identities are supported by friends, at work, and at school
- comfortable coming out to friends

Nonetheless, there are gaps in the responses between youth who are straight and youth who are LGBT identified. This indicates that services might be directed at youth who are LGBT identified in order to close these gaps. Ceres Policy Research recommends that Triangle Speakers

- develop educational support materials. Triangle Speakers might develop one or two lesson plans that proceed and succeed the panels. This would help teachers prepare their students and focus on the objective of demystifying the LGBT community.

- develop additional panels. The content of the current panels focuses on the personal experiences of the panelists. This is an appropriate format for freshmen health classes. Triangle Speakers might consider developing an additional panel format that defines homophobia and focuses on civil rights issues. This second panel format could be marketed to American History classes. This would give each high school student two different

experiences with Triangle Speakers, thereby reinforcing the lessons gained.

▪ develop teacher training workshops. Triangle Speakers might develop a one hour presentation for staff meetings that would address the problem of pejorative and homophobic name-calling on high school campuses and the harms of ignoring these behaviors within the classroom.

As Triangle Speakers begins to conduct outreach, they might consider that few youth identify as lesbian, or gay. Most youth identify as bisexual and questioning. While Triangle Speakers consciously includes men and women who identify as bisexual in their panels, they may want to consciously reach out to questioning youth. They could do this during panels by addressing times that panelists questioned their identities. They could also accomplish this by addressing the flexibility in identity that many panelists have experienced.

There are no clear findings from the comparison of Latino and non-Latino students.

The focus groups provided excellent suggestions that Triangle Speakers should take into consideration as they seek to expand their programs (see page 14 above). If Triangle Speakers is interested in determining whether more panelists share these views, they might consider conducting annual panelist surveys to measure satisfaction with Triangle as well as opinions about program development.

With regard to future research, we suggest that Triangle Speakers consider combining their existing panel evaluation form with the high school survey that we used for this research. In this way, they will be able to measure change over time on the measures identified in their logic model.

Triangle Speakers Logic Model

Program Components	Short Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes
-GLBT and Family Member panels provided in multiple settings to audiences aged 12 years-adult in English and Spanish* -Training and mini-workshops by staff for local organizations and agencies -Resource lists to all audience members -School curriculum -Speak-outs on community TV -Social, cultural, sports events -Staff support to Gay-Straight Alliances -Community collaboration and organizing (includes Women as Social Warriors)	-Increased willingness of schools, agencies, organizations to sponsor panels -Increased knowledge of GLBT issues -Dispelled myths and stereotypes --parents --youth --professionals serving GLBT community -Increased knowledge of support services and GLBT events --GLBT community --referring agencies -Strengthened identities --GLBT community --family members --other allies	-Reduction in harassment and violence directed against the GLBT community -Reduction in fear of violence -Reduction in social isolation -Improved health and self-esteem -Stronger feelings of affirmation and support -Increased comfort in coming out -GLBT community members and families are no longer construed as "other."
	Instruments	Instruments

*Some panels have been presented to elementary schools.