

### EVENT NO\_6, WORKSHOP NO\_3

Workshops for students of pedagogy took place in Szczecińskie Centrum Edukacyjne Sp. z o.o. on 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2015. The main goal was to acquaint participants with the concept of HETERONORMATIVITY. Every day we live in the world dominated by different kind of majorities. As a consequence of this situation our personal point of view is constantly influenced by majority's perspective. One of majority is: heterosexual people. There live between 90% or 95% hetero people in every society. For most of them it is completely obvious that everybody else is heterosexual too. But there is such a big group of LGBT people who have quite difficult choice – either to come out every day and everywhere or to adapt to that heterosexual world and to remain silent. Decision of coming out takes often a lot of time and after that strongly influences private life, family relationships, work and, among all, emotional and mental condition of many gays, lesbians, bi and transsexual people. But decision of remaining silent is sometimes much worse. It causes negation or silence of important issues in our life, like relationships.

In order to show to all participants the phenomenon of heteronormativity, students were not informed about workshop's subject. Main goal, presented by trainer, was to analyze texts of some polish songs.

After introduction of the trainer and workshop's contract with some rules for cooperation, participants were asked to work separately on few texts of songs. There were five, identical questions to each song and students were asked to answer shortly to each question:

1. What is this song about?
2. Who could be a sender/author of this text?
3. What tells us/ suggests us about it?
4. Who could be a receiver of this text?
5. What tells us/ suggests us about it?

Students made notes and afterwards they were divided into groups. Their task was to analyze all answers, searching similarities and differences between them. Later, they were supposed to present their results in front of the whole group (finally 11 students participated in the workshop). Results of students' work surpassed all expectations. There was completely heteronormative system of representation. One of presented text of the song was clearly written by a woman to a man. Everybody judged it correctly. Next one was addressed to a man, but the author was unknown. Students presupposed, the author has to be a woman as the receiver is a man. Similar result was with a next text, where they knew the author (male), but the receiver was unknown. Everybody wrote, it has to be a woman. Trainer expected this kind of results, based on heteronormative point of view and perspective of thinking. However, in the last song, where both of sides (an author and a receiver) were clearly women, most of students (6 from 8 people) suggested that the author has to be a man. The reason was "easy" – if a woman is a receiver, a man has to be an author. Although polish language has clearly different forms in verbs, dependent on sex, only two people came up with the idea and wrote, that both, the author and the receiver, are women in the last song text. After all presentations, students were asked reasons of their point of view, and their decisions. They could

look again at all texts and some of them were completely surprised with their own conclusions. It was clearly noticeable, they didn't suppose, that man could write a text to a man, or woman to woman. Something obvious was, that love songs are written by people with opposite sex. Some students reacted consciously, some, unfortunately, didn't want to understand and adapt those conclusions, that heteronormativity is definitely point of view, is a stereotype in social relationships and influences strongly our judgements, opinions, attitudes.

Then, trainer informed students, that they analyzed all of the texts in context of heteronormativity and the ARES project connects ACM (art and cultural media) subjects with LGBT situation. By the way, trainer defined LGBT – LGB as psychosexual (not only sexual) and T as gender identity. Afterwards, trainer defined the phenomenon of heteronormativity and showed some examples of it. He connected it also with homophobia and heterosexism.

After that, trainer proposed to the group to watch short part of *Desperate housewives*. Some of participants heard about this series. Trainer proposed to watch one scene representing homosexual couple moving from the city to Wisteria Lane (in the suburbs) and Susan (one of main characters in the series) who is their neighbor and wants to know them. She committed few *faux pas*, related to stereotypes about gays. In that scene heteronormativity was shown in the distorting mirror, but very clearly.

The trainer hopes, that after this workshop, all participants know the concept of heteronormativity and hopefully can react more reflectively in the future: in their professional life (for example at work) as well as in their social relationships.

**Paweł Roszkowski**  
**Trainer of the event no\_6**