Cris Mayo
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Queer Pedagogies

Theory, Praxis, Politics

Critical Studies of Education

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We live in an era where forms of education designed to win the consent of students, teachers, and the public to the inevitability of a neo-liberal, market-driven process of globalization are being developed around the world. In these hegemonic modes of pedagogy questions about issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, colonialism, religion, and other social dynamics are simply not asked. Indeed, questions about the social spaces where pedagogy takes place—in schools, media, corporate think tanks, etc.—are not raised. When these concerns are connected with queries such as the following, we begin to move into a serious study of pedagogy: What knowledge is of the most worth? Whose knowledge should be taught? What role does power play in the educational process? How are new media re-shaping as well as perpetuating what happens in education? How is knowledge produced in a corporatized politics of knowledge? What socio-political role do schools play in the twenty-first century? What is an educated person? What is intelligence? How important are socio-cultural contextual factors in shaping what goes on in education? Can schools be more than a tool of the new American (and its Western allies') twenty-first century empire? How do we educate well-informed, creative teachers? What roles should schools play in a democratic society? What roles should media play in a democratic society? Is education in a democratic society different than in a totalitarian society? What is a democratic society? How is globalization affecting education? How does our view of mind shape the way we think of education? How does affect and emotion shape the educational process? What are the forces that shape educational purpose in different societies? These, of course, are just a few examples of the questions that need to be asked in relation to our exploration of educational purpose. This series of books can help establish a renewed interest in such questions and their centrality in the larger study of education and the preparation of teachers and other educational professionals.

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Queer Pedagogies

Theory, Praxis, Politics

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About the Book

Queer Pedagogies: Theory, Praxis, Politics invites readers to explore the critical interruptions occasioned by queer pedagogies. Building on earlier scholarly work in this area, as well as pedagogical production arising out of queer activism, the chapters in this volume examine a broad range of themes as they collectively grapple with the meaning and practice of queer pedagogy across different contexts. In this way, this book provides a glance at new ways of thinking about and acting on contemporary educational topics and debates situated at the intersection of queer studies and education. In taking up the concept of queer pedagogy, the volume provides ample opportunities for scholars, educators, activists, and other cultural workers to critically engage with ongoing questions of theory, praxis, and politics.

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About the Editors

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Chapter 1
Wanting More: Queer Theory and Education

Check for updates

Cris Mayo and Nelson M. Rodriguez

Nearly at its 30th year, the critical disruptions occasioned by queer theory (and queer activism) have been useful to many of us in education; yet, after all these years, we still want (and need) more. Indeed, when it comes to LGBTQ+ issues within contexts of schooling and education, things are far from settled. Queer theory, however, has provided conceptual tools that push us to see, as well as to grapple with, the unfinished challenges of desire bound up with forms of teaching and learning.[1] The contingencies of pedagogies embedded in institutions and practices have always been queer things, structuring what we try to do in classrooms but exceeding those limits as well. Because queer theory traces the persistent breaks in and recuperations of normative power, it gives us strategies for trying to think about our ongoing efforts to intentionally queer processes that will both revert to normalcy and queer all on their own. Queer theories have helped to think more about abstractions but also cemented the sense of quotidian rupture. Since its inception, too, what queer theory can do for education, or anything else, has been subject to debate. On the one hand, queer theory has provided strategies for interrupting problematic educational practices (Britzman 1995). On the other hand, maybe queer theory is best thought of as not being especially performative (Berlant and Warner 1995). Furthermore, queer theory can also fail to account for forms of racialized queerness (Brockenbrough 2015) or "quare" experience (Johnson 2001).

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[1] For a broad constellation of critical concepts that may be utilized for furthering this ongoing work at the intersection of queer studies and education, see Rodriguez et al. (2016). For a more general analysis of the unfinished work of queer theory situated within a retrospective discussion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the journal *GLQ*, see DeVere Brody and Ochoa (2019).

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The questions, gaps, and longed-for corrections to queer theory continue to motivate educators to think more about the process of education. Whether queer theory can provide intentional strategies for pedagogy and action or whether it is best thought as an inadvertent source of disruption within normativity, its operations continue to prod at cemented practices in education. Whether its effects are potential, constant, or cautiously intentional, queer theories and actions continue. The authors in this collection show how eruptions of queerness and normalcy continue to be generative in classrooms. They carefully detail how normative assumptions are seamlessly embedded in all levels of educational practice, from pedagogies to lessons to policies to assumptions about the aims and goals of education. As much as we might have queer hopes for transgression, the authors here remind us of the constancy of normatively racialized, gendered, classed formations and the persistent demand—from pedagogy, curriculum, and policy—that students conform to normative sexualities and gender identities and expressions. If the normative regularly fails and those normative assumptions are perpetually queered in practice, the struggle with normativity doesn't end. What the long-term view of queer praxis in education shows us is the constant need to encourage queer interruptions, even as queer interruptions themselves continue to shift and change.

The durability and changeability of queer interruption entails continual renewal and attention. In recent years, too, we are reminded that our hopes for queer intervention entail repetition. Theories intent on problematizing exclusions, like queer theory, need to be reminded of exclusions they enact—whether this be the exclusion of serious engagement with racism, internal debates of misogynies, or insufficient attention to gender identities. Queer theory in education needs to keep making a spectacle of exclusions and needs, too, to make that spectacle in itself. Queer theory needs, in other words, to keep going. Now more than ever we need queer theory in education, especially as we think more about the daily processes of what might seem like an oxymoron: the maintenance of queerness in the continued renormatization of educational spaces, practices, and policies. In short, we need more spectacularity of queerness. We need a sense of invitation and struggle for queerness's place in education.

The earlier iterations of queer theory suggested transgression as a way to enact social justice in education, but we now need to move into maintenance mode, too. We continue to be concerned, year after year, with the high rate of trans and queer suicides, reports of harassment and abuse at schools, and increasingly pressures from the erasure of translives, and the continuation of racism, classism, able-ism, and misogynies as well. Queer desires continue to motivate the push for more: more than simple recognition, more than simple inclusion, more interest in what desires do to keep us wanting more.

On the one hand, some things are improving, even if we are rightly cautious about the fragility and scope of that improvement. The legalization of same-sex marriage in all 50 states in the *Obergefell* ruling has helped schools advocate for teaching and learning about family diversity, LGBTQ+ histories, and, in some areas, the need to be attentive to bullying and exclusion on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. But even as we seem to move forward, not all queer and

trans people are included in that progress. Going back even further to the legalization of same-sex sexual activity, the *Lawrence* decision excluded minors from its ruling and thus did not provide protection for queer youth or recognition of youth sexual agency. Schools rarely address the needs of any student's sexuality, frequently leaving out information about women and LGBTQ-related sexuality issues. The legalization of same-sex marriage did not stop states, including Alabama, Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas from continuing to outlaw the mention of LGBTQ issues in schools or to keep Missouri and South Dakota from prohibiting school districts from listing protected categories in their antibullying laws.[2] Trans rights face significant backlash not only with peer-based harassment but also by administrators actively engaging in abuse of trans youth. In some areas, so-called marriage equality is simply not equal anyway: same-sex partners may be discriminated against in foster care and adoption and may not have access to the same partner benefits provided to heterosexual married couples. Nor would encouraging queer and trans youth to wait until marriage to think about desire and connection be a very queer response to education about the queer potentials of relationality.

If normative power continues to try to recuperate itself through backlash, there is and has always been something quite queer about teaching and learning. Despite a conservative resurgence, queerness is part of learning. Classes, lessons, policies, conversations with colleagues don't always follow the expected trajectories. Intentions to queer things run into inevitable exclusions, as authors in this collection warn against. Our queer failures may pull us up short and encourage some reflection on whatever hopes we've had for queerness. Vigilance against racism, sexism, transmisogyny must be part of queer interventions. Following Critical Race Theory and queer and trans legal scholars, queer-curious educators can understand how laws and policies protect white property interests, heterosexual privilege, and normative gender expression. Forms of the normative continue to haunt queer theory and whatever desires we might have for legal or educational reform. Hitching our hopes to policies to fix intractable problems, when policies themselves are designed to protect a normative status quo, is not enough.

So, after decades of trying to, in some sense, harness queerness to education, it may be that intentional queerness binds us more closely to normativity and prevents us from making the fullest sorts of connections. It is possible that sometimes we've become too confident in what we think queer is and should likely learn to first of all, recognize that which is also "bent" in others and second of all, become more tentative in the gorgeous, grandiose claims we make for queerness. Queer pedagogy, if we push its tendency to cruise, can help us to see what isn't there, but might be, and to recognize the seductive pull of a normalcy gone slightly bent. Queer pedagogies may give us a way to help encourage the multiple and disconnected truths that are already in our classrooms. Queer attentiveness may encourage interest in the slide toward and away from one another as we try new forms of connection and difference.

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[2] For an important resource that takes up the legal dimensions of LGBTQ+ issues in public schooling, see Biegel (2018).

Thinking more about "bent" as an approach also implicates us in the straight part of whatever is bent: we don't escape the push to normalcy even if we intentionally avoid it.

Queerness isn't done and finished, so finding connections with "normal" practices and policies and being aware of our own queer slide into normal can help us teach and learn together. Much of queerness may come out of the ability to slide into situations and relationships; and, perhaps, too much of our head-on pedagogical attempts to queer fail because it only compensates for desires for the normative. Queerness is not in full control of itself, needs connections with related forms of exclusions, and needs to be much more attentive to its tendencies to exclude. But as we see in these essays, queerness is also promiscuously interested in connection.

That more promiscuous form of queerness reminds us of the best forms of learning, those that enable students to deftly, enthusiastically slide into generative connections, and to move beyond what was expected of them. Think of the enthusiasm of young students literally jumping out of their chairs to answer questions, aware of the constricting nature of schooling but eager to appear to one another and appear to the teacher. Learning is imbued with eros, a striving to find ways in and ways beyond. That eros of learning has an exuberant critique of disciplining school structures even as it knowingly winds its way through the openings in even the most tightened down institutional practices. Eros is a struggle and so the learning of eros carries on that struggle over who knows what and how. Learning entails difficult relationships among learners and teachers, each of whom may be vying for different positions in those relationships, trying out new ideas, new forms of power, and new strategies for subjectivity. Learning involves sparking interest and connections in ways that students and teachers might not even initially suspect. Teaching and learning disrupt and shift the grounds of knowledge, identity, and relation in surprising ways even if they are also practices undertaken in the context of standards and goals. Something more happens in classes than is intended and that is the normal but queer course of events in struggles over and with learning.

Trying to think and teach in ways that make that queer presence even more disruptively educative is not only a challenge but also a conundrum. That LGBTQ (and more) identities simply exist, of course, is often enough to make students who have seemingly had a life organized around simple identities and dominant sexualities have some anxiety. But queer pedagogy queers assumptions and practice, even its own. Settled patterns of ethical and political practice need to be continually alert to their limitations in ways that we cannot begin to easily know, even if we think we're already quite queer enough. And as we continue to insist on the complications that race, class, gender, gender identity, disability, and ethnicity bring to what is defined as either LGBT, queer, or other terms that resonate more with members of other communities, we're both insisting on queer presence and being careful that queer doesn't itself keep becoming another form of normalizing power.

So even if queerness is everywhere, it is not effortless. Queer interventions in policies and praxis take energy: repetitive and constant labor, thought, and collaboration, and continued critique. The essays here show how to think through that constant, shifting work, beginning with Kathleen Quinlivan's chapter "Hooked on a Queer Feeling? The Paradoxes of Engaging with Affective Silences and Talk in a High

School Classroom." In revisiting data from her research on sexualities and genders in a high school health class, Quinlivan's retrospective project entails "interrogating normative assumptions that privilege the affective spoken word over affective silences," specifically within educational research that examines queer pedagogical approaches that aim "toward confounding normative subjects and locations in the classroom." In this way, she explores the affective dimensions of learning, analyzing how students queer normative messages through their silences. Focusing on students' "unspoken and unrepresentable feelings," Quinlivan troubles the queer intentionality of teachers and researchers, finding that her assumptions about power dynamics in a classroom were not quite what her initial experience and observations had led her to think. Reflecting through queer affect theory, she revises her sense of the ebbs and flows of power and representation in the classroom, moving to more consideration of how silences and resistances queer her first round of analysis. Her work both troubles the narrative trajectory of social justice work, particularly around the desire to recuperate "marginalized" students, and unsettles the methodological aims of such work, reminding queer teachers and researchers alike that there are more queer potentials in educational experiences than might be initially evident. Engaging in such critical reflexivity, she positions her chapter "as contributing toward providing a productive anatomy of a very hopefully queer kind of failure."

As Quinlivan's research and critical reflections suggest, "reading queerly"—that is, reading "slantwise" (Foucault 1997) or counter-intuitively—is an integral aspect of queer praxis, and Mollie V. Blackburn and Becky Beucher further demonstrate this in their chapter titled "Productive Tensions in Assessment: Troubling Sociocritical Theories Toward an Advancement of Queer Pedagogy." Blackburn and Beucher turn the lens of queer theory on writing assessment practices in order to "make sense of and make trouble for" teaching. Drawing on New Literacy Studies, feminism, and Critical Race Theory, in addition to queer theory, they complicate how teachers think about writing effectiveness by way of advancing "a socially emancipatory approach to literacy assessment" that is decidedly theoretically intersectional. More specifically, in utilizing the writing from a young Black lesbian, stressed from homophobia and tired of being the token lesbian at school, Blackburn and Beucher detail the careful sort of questions about gender, sexuality, and representation that her writing ought to raise. Pushing against the assessment-based practices that would correct paragraphing and spelling, they aim at a queerer read, one that moves through the structuring contexts the writer is navigating. They reposition the work of assessment as one that reflects the positionality of the writer and the goals of the writing, asking what gender, sexuality, and race mean in the student's writing, especially within the context of her "social change work." They ask, too, how the intersectional collision of theories they draw on can be refigured in their productive tensions to keep their critiques moving "closer to queer."

While Blackburn and Beucher's contribution to this volume may be read as a queer critique of mainstream approaches to writing assessment, Elizabeth J. Meyer's contribution may be similarly read as a queer critique of the limitations of more mainstream approaches to addressing the problem of bullying in schools. Her chapter, "Ending Bullying and Harassment: The Case for a Queer Pedagogy," recounts the recent history of research on bullying as well as contemporary school-based

difficulties facing LGBTQ+ youth, while situating the problem of bullying as one of "gendered harassment." For Meyer, forms of gendered harassment include "(hetero) sexual harassment, homophobic harassment, and harassment for gender nonconformity which includes transphobic harassment." To address gendered harassment in schools, Meyer argues that queer theory's critique of normalcy needs to become part of antibullying pedagogies. Indeed, educators cannot hope to interrupt the power-laden practices of bullying if they are not also committed to disrupting the normative binaries keeping the status quo of gender identity and sexuality in place. Queer pedagogy, Meyer highlights, can play an important role here by helping students to explore and challenge the construction and institutionalization of hierarchical social group identities situated within relations of power that mirror a stratified society across any number of social differences.[3] This means, in short, expanding a critique of the normative to not only interrupt bullying itself, but to more carefully explore how pedagogies and policies enacted in schools can reinforce broader societal power imbalances as normal.

In the next chapter, Kai Rands also engages with "regimes of the normal" (Warner 1993) that would position mathematics and mathematics education as outside cultural influences. In "Mathematical Inqueery: Queering the Theory, Praxis, and Politics of Mathematics Pedagogy," Rands takes up the challenge to queer mathematics pedagogy, noting "how queering mathematics education can address not only the normativity of mathematical processes, but also normative messages about subjectivity, family, and economics contained within mathematics education." Their work, thus, is situated within a broader sociocultural turn among mathematics educators who are committed to approaching their field from a number of critical perspectives, including queer theory. More specifically, Rands suggests that new trends in critical mathematics have opened the possibility for what Rands terms "mathematical inqueery," an approach that can use the tools of the discipline to explore the tensions and riskiness of mathematics. From their analysis of how the discipline of mathematics has developed to their discussion of the openness of using "proofs," Rands pushes against the normative idea that mathematics is stable or settled. Finding queerness in mathematical operations that must reset norms or that necessitate stating normative constraints, moreover, Rands shows that in mathematics the normative can neither be taken for granted nor can it be ignored. Providing a queer close-reading of financial literacy education, Rands problematizes and explores hidden assumptions about gender, class, and sexuality embedded in curricula emphasizing rational economic choice.

In "'That Wasn't Very Free Thinker': Queer Critical Pedagogy in the Early Grades" Kim Hackford-Peer examines the normative assumptions embedded in elementary school and the resistances that at least some students mounted in response to the normative marriage of *Q* and *U*. She begins by suggesting that queer critical pedagogy would be a useful formation for such resistances. In this way, Hackford-Peer sees "queer pedagogy augmenting critical pedagogy" in order to engender a "queer conscientization" among students. But she also suggests that

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[3] See Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) for an excellent discussion of group identities and socialization that might be utilized within the context of teacher education.

limitations in both critical pedagogy and queer pedagogies may remain. For example, if dialogic pedagogy relies on student's and teacher's knowledge, is critique limited only to experiential knowledge? How can teachers and students engage in problem-posing education if they are constrained by local values and practices? Are gender and sexuality binaries reinforced if teachers and lessons only assume particular classmates are queerly knowledgeable? Questions such as these highlight the potential limitations for research and/or teaching in utilizing any singular critical perspective but also suggest that theoretical and political tensions can arise when deploying multiple perspectives in combined ways. Also, in thinking back to Quinlivan's work on silence, Hackford-Peer, too, wonders if queer critical pedagogy might rely too much on voice or dialogue that keep power imbalances in place.

In the next chapter titled "Thinking Queer about the Space of School Safety: Violence and Dis/placement of LGBTQ Youth of Color," Lisa Weems also engages with multiple theoretical perspectives. In particular, she combines transnational theorizing and Black queer feminist work to problematize how schools, and some queer interventions, conceive of safety in ways that "may reproduce epistemological bias by foregrounding the realities of 'violence, schooling, and gay youth' within the material realities of white, middle-class youth." Deploying a queer decolonial approach, Weems troubles the spatialized metaphor of "safe space." Against the assemblage of home subtending the purportedly safe (but still exclusionary) classroom, Weems suggests the multilayered "camp" is better suited to a queerly destabilized and historicized response to the violences of normative safe space, in that, as a form of praxis, it "forgrounds the politicized nature of the classroom, school, and education more broadly." Camp might signal connection with queer practices, leisure activities, or temporary refuges, each of which brings their own potential for disrupting the normative home of the classroom. Such rethinking, too, affords opportunity for a stronger connection between queer theory and the work of antiracist and decolonizing activism.

As all of the essays discussed thus far suggest, education constitutes a robust and necessary site of queer activism, a terrain of ongoing queer struggles situated within relations of power regarding the politics of knowledge production, visibility and recognition, and identity formations. From this perspective, in the final two chapters of the collection, author Janna Jackson Kellinger—in "Queer(y)ing Teacher Education: Ignorance, Insecurity, and Intolerance"—and authors Leila E. Villaverde and Dana M. Stachowiak—in "Introductions/Orientations: Queer Pedagogies, Social Foundations, and Praxis"—locate their queer praxis in the field of teacher education. Jackson Kellinger analyzes the shortcomings in teacher education programs and textbooks, noting that very little information on LGBTQ+ students, let alone queer pedagogies, is available. While there are exceptions, when representations are to be found, too often they problematize or marginalize gayness, avoiding the potential for queer approaches to make connections across categories of difference and sexualities. Jackson Kellinger further suggests that greater attention to queer theory can alter the way teacher education thinks of learning, creating "chaos out of order by making visible and calling into question the false binaries that structure society." Not only do teachers need to learn from queer theory, they need to intervene in normative practices that continue to make schools hostile places for so many students.

Villaverde and Stachowiak share Jackson Kellinger's commitment to taking up queer studies content within the context of teacher preparation programs, especially given the paucity of queer epistemologies as well as queer ways of thinking about teaching and learning made available to students of education as part of their program of studies. As the authors pointedly note: "a cursory review for syllabi at the undergraduate level on queer theories and education for education majors is dismal." From this perspective, Villaverde and Stachowiak center their queer praxis on the specific task of outlining what they term "curricular wanderings" for reconceptualizing in queer ways an undergraduate foundations of education course, one that could potentially be titled "Queer Pedagogies, Social Foundations, and Praxis." In such a course, students would move beyond analyses of repressive forms of power to analyses of disciplinary and normalizing power, or, as the authors explain: "an analysis of the productive power of educational discourse to construct realities around such notions as race, gender, and class." In utilizing a queer pedagogical approach to reconceptualizing a social foundations course, students would then be in a position to critically engage with dominant notions of what constitutes "good" teaching by being able to analyze the ways normalizing power constructs discourses around the binary of "good" versus "bad" teaching. The result would be providing students of education with opportunities to engage with the critical knowledge necessary to enact *queerly*, culturally responsive pedagogies.

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Chapter 2
Hooked on a Queer Feeling? The Paradoxes of Engaging with Affective Silences and Talk in a High School Classroom

Kathleen Quinlivan

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I make a case for attending more closely to affective silences as well as talk in attending more fully to the destabilizingly queer dynamics of interrogating heteronormativity in a high school Health classroom. I revisit data to produce a counter-reading of an incident of hetero- and gender-normative policing between two groups of students that occurred in a New Zealand high school Year 12 Health classroom research project, which triggered high levels of affect (Quinlivan 2009, 2011, 2012). My initial analysis drew on the perspectives of the young men policing heteronormative masculinities, and of several groups of young women in the class, to argue for attending more fully to the emotional responses generated in the incident. In retrospect, I became aware that one of the effects of this analysis was to render the group of students being policed as victims, and to underplay the extent to which the embodied and affective histories of students' relationships were played out in the present. Attending more closely to the silences and talk of the focus group interview with the silenced group has encouraged me to render my original analysis as problematic, to see the normative power of the ways in which silences can never be heard if voiced speech is seen as the norm (Jackson and Mazzei 2009; MacLure et al. 2010; Mazzei 2007). I suggest researchers and teachers attempting to work queerly would benefit from looking beyond the normative power exercised by the spoken word to attend to the aporias (Derrida 1992) that can be produced by affective silences as well as talk in destabilizing heteronormativity.

I begin the chapter with a consideration of the literature related to affect and silences across a range of broad queer educational contexts. I then move on to providing the methodology of the project. Next, I provide some background for the

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classroom incident, and then draw on a range of data to present an alternative rereading of the incident (Nairn et al. 2005; Mazzei 2007; Roseneil 2011; Youdell 2010) from the perspectives of the silenced group of students and the heteronormative masculinity policers who challenge previous notions that I had constructed of them as marginalized and oppressive. I move toward providing a richer and more nuanced analysis of the performative social relations between the students, in ways that move between the present, the past, and the future, and consider their implications. I close by considering the conceptual and methodological implications of engaging with understandings of affective silences in ways that can work toward sexuality education in classrooms becoming sites that can engage more fully with the possibilities of becoming present in relation with others (Todd 2012).

2.2   Affectively Queer?

Queer and psychoanalytic frameworks take it for granted that in learning and teaching about sexuality, feelings and emotions will be mobilized (Britzman 2010; Gilbert 2010, 2014; Lesko 2010). Considering the power of love, Britzman (2010) notes, "Eros manages to gather all that we want, with all that we worry about losing" (p. 325). Recognizing the profound emotional labor involved in teaching and learning about sexualities, she suggests that suspending moral judgement to become queerly curious about the unknown could be a helpful pedagogical orientation to cultivate. One of the key tenets of queer theory is its interest in problematizing the normalcy of heterosexuality, and the potential theory can have to disrupt fixed biological notions of sexuality and gender, allowing for an exploration of sexual and gendered subjectivities as something more fluid and temporal (Rasmussen 2006; Talburt and Rasmussen 2010). Rather than reinforcing binary framings of gender and same sex desire as abnormal and "at risk" in relation to heterosexual and gendered norms (Rasmussen et al. 2004), I am interested (albeit within the largely normative cultures of school classrooms) in the ways in which destabilizing notions of sexual and gendered normalcies can provide an opportunity not to foreclose ways of thinking about gender and sexual difference (Britzman and Gilbert 2004). Rereading the marginalized students' meaningful silences as representing more of a challenge to, than a tacit acceptance of, gender and heteronormativity are attempts to work toward foreclosure.

Acknowledging the potential of queer and psychoanalytic approaches in sexuality education, Britzman (2010) notes that open-mindedness and a willingness to be affected by the lives of others is our best pedagogical resource but also the most difficult of capacities to sustain. Working within a high school Health classroom to develop a partnership with teachers and students that explored the possibilities of destabilizing normalizing representations of sexualities and genders highlighted Britzman's paradox. The challenges Emma (the teacher), the students, and I faced in remaining open-minded and showing a willingness to be affected by the lives of others in a classroom context were largely dominated by cognition and rationality

(Boler 1999; Boler and Zembylas 2003). In this chapter, I suggest that destabilizing the normative value of the spoken word by attending to meaningful affective silences, as well as spoken talk, may hold some potential for engaging queerly with sexuality education. Next, I turn to discuss queer take-ups of the *affective turn* and productive silences, and their relevance to my arguments.

2.3 Affectively Queer

The *affective turn* as it is often described (Clough 2010; Seigworth and Gregg 2010) reflects contemporary ongoing global challenges of negotiating ongoing war, colonialism, trauma, torture, massacre, and counterterrorism (Alexander 2005; Clough 2010). Clough (2010) notes that work on affect has also developed in response to the emphasis that poststructuralism and deconstruction placed on a range of discursive constructionisms at the expense of attending to embodied and material feelings and emotions. Lesko (2010) observes the limitations of the discursive turn in engaging with contemporary social phenomena that could be considered (I thought) rather queerly marked by in-between-ness, becoming, movement, and immanence (Muñoz 2009). She suggests that attending to, and retheorizing, a range of feelings can address such limitations.

Drawing on Tomkins's (1995) work, Skattebol (2010) conceptualizes affect as a capacity and as a "tangible, embodied force that operates between people" (p. 78). Ahmed (2004) and Cvetkovich (2003) understand feelings to be produced as effects of circulation, rather than residing in subjects or objects. Affect then can be understood as relational and as having a material sociality. Ahmed (2004), in describing emotions, notes they involve affective reactions or relations of towardness, awayness, and reorientation in relation to objects and people. She also emphasizes that the "sociality" of emotions, and how they impress upon us, may depend on histories. Affective relations can be seen as alive, insomuch as they have already left their impressions, which can then be activated in affective encounters.

Queer theory's orientation toward calling normative conceptualizations of heterosexuality into question and in exercising an "ambivalence about 'proper subjects' and 'proper locations'" (Talburt and Rasmussen 2010, p. 10) has been drawn upon by a number of theorists working with affect across a range of informal educational sites (Ahmed 2004, 2006; Cvetkovich 2003; Sedgwick 2003). Cvetkovich (2003) draws on queer theoretical perspectives to explore the ways in which popular cultural texts operate as repositories of feelings and emotions, which are encoded not only in the content of the texts themselves but also in the social practices that surround their production and reception. Cvetkovich emphasizes that feelings challenge conventional understandings of what constitutes an archive because feelings can be unspeakable and unrepresentable, marked by forgetting and disassociation, and often seeming to leave behind no records of feelings at all. Upon closer examination of a range of the project's data sources, the affective silences characterizing the heteronormative policing classroom incident seemed to speak more fully than I

had initially thought. Cvetkovich's (2003) interest in reframing unspoken and unrepresentable feelings such as silences as productive resistance rather than as a personal pathology and failure (Colum 2011; Schultz 2009) is one I want to draw on in the analysis of the silences I revisit for this chapter. As Miller (2005) reminds us, drawing on the works of earlier feminist scholars such as Magda Lewis, bell hooks, and Alice Walker, silences are politically and personally charged and often strategic. Silences are performative social interactions that occur in relation (Colum 2011), can be redolent with a range of meanings and purposes, and, in many cases, confound interpretation (see also Jackson and Mazzei 2009; Mazzei 2007; MacLure et al. 2010).

Educationalists working in formal educational contexts have also explored the role affect plays in destabilizing heteronormativity (Britzman 2009, 2010; Gilbert 2010; Lesko 2010; Quinlivan 2009, 2011; Sandlos 2010). They are interested in attending more fully to the high levels of affect generated when thinking otherwise about normative constructions of gender and sexuality. Drawing on Ahmed's (2008) explorations of the ways in which we are simultaneously directed toward, and turn away from feelings, Lesko (2010) suggests that it may be useful for scholars to consider the emotions and social relations that knowledge in learning about sexualities helps construct or directs us toward, and their implications. In this chapter, I interrogate the ways in which the dominance of the affective spoken word shapes social relations, the understandings that may be gained and lost in the process, and their queer implications.

I have found queer and poststructural literature on affect and silences useful in attending, albeit in retrospect, to the role that relational affective feelings and silences as a social, everyday, and political experience (Cvetkovich 2003; Rooke 2010) can play in exploring queer pedagogical approaches that work toward confounding normative subjects and locations in the classroom. Next, I describe the methodological approaches that informed the study, and provide some background for the incident I will be revisiting.

2.4 Methodologies and Background

The incident I am revisiting in this chapter took place during the course of the 1-year case study in which I developed a research partnership with Emma (a 40-year-old Health teacher) and 16- and 17-year-old Year 12 Health students to explore what it means to draw on queer and critical poststructural approaches to interrogate and explore understandings of sexual and gender diversity within a high school Year 12 Health classroom (Quinlivan 2006). The Health class was a Year 12 option in a state coeducational school situated in a small satellite town near an urban center in New Zealand.

Informed ethical consent was gained from the six male and ten female students and the teacher. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the confidentiality of the students, teacher, and school. Participants had the option of discontinuing their participation in

the project at any point, but none chose to do so. The teacher and, where possible, the students have had the opportunity to view and provide feedback on the initial data analysis, and are informed, as much as is possible, when project data are presented and published.

Five sets of qualitative data were collected over the course of the case study. Initially, face-to-face semistructured tape-recorded interviews were conducted in four self-selected focus student friendship groups and one individual interview with Emma. During the course of the project, I regularly wrote participant observations and field notes, and Emma kept a research journal. In response to the extensive data I observed emerging from the students' informal peer interactions in the classrooms, eight classroom sessions over 3 months in the middle of the project were audio-taped using a portable multidirectional recorder, which I positioned in different parts of the room during the classroom sessions to capture differing student groups' conversations. Six follow-up face-to-face semistructured tape-recorded interviews were conducted at the end of the year in self-selected focus student friendship group interviews, and two follow-up individual interviews were undertaken with Emma. I draw on Hollway's (2009) work to capture the emotional terrain of the interview transcripts, and my own and the teacher's field notes, by describing the affective tenor of the ways in which the words were spoken.

The classroom work we undertook was part of a wider compulsory unit of work on Sexuality and Gender within the Year 12 Health curriculum, intended to encourage students to understand and reflect on ways in which socially constructed understandings of gender and sexuality were in a constant state of production and contestation and could be actively engaged within a range of ways by students. At the request of the students, Emma (the Health teacher) and I introduced a range of cultural texts to understand and critically engage with sexual and gender differences. Next, I revisit my analysis (Nairn et al. 2005; Roseneil 2011; Youdell 2010) to retrospectively consider the performative silences and speculate (Browne and Nash 2010) about some possible readings of these silences.

2.5 Affective Silences and Talk: The Classroom Incident Reconsidered

In this section, I provide some background for the classroom incident and then move beyond the spoken words exchanged in the encounter to consider, in retrospect, the performative possibilities and meanings of affective silences (Jackson and Mazzei 2009; Mazzei 2007; MacLure et al. 2010) among Guy and his friends, in ways that confound my initial reading of the data. Attending to the silences and the talk in Guy's group, I suggest their silences may have been assertive and even quite defiant, reflective of the past and the future, as much as they are of the present situation. I show the ways in which Guy and his friends subvert my subconscious normative desires to marginalize and recuperate them. Despite my desire to undertake queer pedagogical work, their responses highlight the fact that it proved challenging

for me to undo my need for a linear salvationist narrative of the project which, ironically, reinscribed many of the binaries that Emma and I intended to undo.

The classroom incident arose in response to an exercise when, at several young women's suggestion, analyses of gender and sexuality representations through magazine advertisements of male models selling underwear were being undertaken in the class (Quinlivan 2009, 2011, 2012). In the context of discussions surrounding heteronormativity, and intertwined representations of masculinity and sexuality, several of the male students seemed to feel uncomfortable looking at images of desirable men in the advertisements and to engage with the extent to which representations of masculinity and sexuality were drawn on to sell underwear. Justin, a male student in the class who constantly overtly displayed his heterosexuality in class, turned around to Guy, a student who did not appear to exercise Justin's heterosexual status, pointed to the advertisement, and remarked in a low and suggestive voice; "Oh, I bet you think he's really hot!" Guy ignored Justin's remark and chose to remain silent, as did the group of friends he sat with.

At the time, Emma (the teacher) and I felt that Justin, with support from his friend, was establishing his normative heterosexual masculinity through subtly calling into question Guy's heterosexuality. Talking with two other groups of young women in the class who represented students with a deep investment in high-status femininities and those with more of an outsider status, respectively, they concurred, noting Justin's investment in normative masculinities would mean Guy and his outsider friends would be easy pickings (Quinlivan 2009, 2012). In retrospect, I understand that Justin's reaction is an almost inevitable affective reaction to the provocation of a research project developed to widen understandings of gender, sexuality, and difference. However, at the time Emma and I had strong emotional reactions to what had happened. In addition to our understandably protective concern for Guy and his friends' well-being, Justin's subterfuge also challenged the intentions of a project that subconsciously Emma and I had a deep investment in being successful.

Despite strenuous disagreement from the girls who supported Justin in the class, and acknowledging the way that the incident raised relevant issues for the project, Emma's research journal entry indicates that the traditional norm of punishing bullying and harassment by exclusion that strongly characterizes classroom and schooling cultures shaped the ways in which Justin was punished and pathologized:

> Felt upset with the fact that Justin has been putting other kids in the class down. So spoke to him about the learning culture of the classroom. He was on the defensive and attacked back with backing from Jordan and Michael.—Some class members defended the fact that I shouldn't be talking to Justin in front of the class.—My comment was I have already talked to him personally and he has been warned. They accepted that. I also said I was addressing it in front of the class & this was part of the issue we are wanting to address in Health classes, i.e. gender bullying. The talk—as it wasn't a discussion! like I had anticipated, stirred the class—Ryan, Guy etc. were silent the whole way thru. Also found out during the lesson that Guy has been bullied by Jordan. Jordan was taken out of class & talked to by [the deputy principal]. (Emma, Research journal, May 21, 2004)

Despite my response being couched initially in more academic language, my field notes indicate a similar intention to challenge, punish, and pathologize Justin for his misdemeanors. In the heat of the moment, our desire to protect and recuperate what Emma and I saw to be a marginalized group of students appeared to be only largely understood by me within schooling and classroom norms and systems that punished the perpetrator and ironically had the effects of remarginalizing the affected victims:

> It is really interesting how we have been doing all this work around dominant masculinities & how they have been the basis for the kind of heteronormative harassment of male students who don't fit into desirable forms of masculinity. The good aspect of it is that Guy and Peter too—have made official complaints so perhaps the talk about understanding why & how people harass has encouraged them to think that this isn't actually them and that it says more about insecurity of the people who are doing the harassment. Emma really barrelled Justin publicly in front of the rest of the class and interrogated him about why/how he might have behaved in that way. (Kathleen, Field notes, May 21, 2004)

At the time of the incident, dominant classroom and school norms and the high levels of affect generated in the classroom made it challenging to move beyond understanding the silence of Guy and his friends as reflective of their victimized and marginalized minority status. I did, however, want to understand how Guy and his friends understood what had happened and had the opportunity to do this in a focus group interview at the end of the project. At the time, I remember feeling I had gained few insights from Guy and his friends, but revisiting the interview transcript with a renewed interest in gaining some understandings about their classroom silences challenged my normative assumptions. Guy and his friends confounded my assumptions that the actions Emma took in excluding Justin from the classroom would have had any effect in either altering his behavior or in supporting or validating their group. In response to my asking them whether they thought anything in the classroom had changed once Emma had challenged Justin's behavior and he had been exiled from the class, they responded:

> Peter: Yeah, she got more grumpy. (ironically)
>   Kathleen: She got more grumpy? (quizzically)
>   Angela: I think that was on Justin's behalf!
>   Peter: Yeah
>   Guy: Yeah, exactly.
>   Angela: Justin pissed her off. (emphatically)
>   Kathleen: Yeah, she was pretty wound up about that. We didn't know what to do about that situation, actually … (resignedly)
>   Guy: Yeah.
>   Angela: That's why …
>   Kathleen: Do you think we should have acted quicker on that than did actually happen? (decisively)
>   Angela: Yeah.
>   Kathleen: … than actually happened, you do? (enquiringly)
>   Peter: Yeah.
>   Angela: She just kicked him out. He'll just go and do it again. (pragmatically)
>   Kathleen: Yeah. I know. (resignedly)
>   Guy: But Justin might change this time after … (optimistically)
>   Angela: Doubt it! (definitively)
>   Peter: You can't change people. (emphatically)

(Follow-up audio-taped interview with Guy, 16; Ryan, 16; Peter, 16; and Angela, 15, June 29, 2004)

Despite my ongoing attempts in the extract to frame the silenced group as marginalized and in need of recuperation by Emma and me, their largely pragmatic and ironic talk indicates wisdom about the peer group power dynamics within the school that positions them as far less passive. In revisiting the data, what is also interesting, and rather embarrassing, is the extent to which my subconsciously deep investment in the rationally linear success of the project seems to be undermined by notions of failure surrounding the classroom incident. Although rationally I frequently trouble the positivist desire for salvation narratives in research (Lather 2007), it is salutary to see the extent to which modernist authorial narratives of school and research cultures subconsciously shape my responses as a researcher.

On rereading the data, the group's perception of Justin also appeared to challenge the trajectory that Emma and I were invested in during the course of the research project, one that is sustained by the cultural norms and rituals of the classroom and the school. On the contrary, despite my constant attempts to position the group as marginalized, they were able to dig down underneath the classroom incident to raise some complex questions that perhaps never can be or even should be acknowledged within traditional classroom norms:

Angela: I think Justin's had something happen to him that he doesn't particularly like. It's kind of, like, upset him a bit . . . 'Cos when I was in his class in Year 9 he just, like, always hassled people. And if he didn't get his own way he'd just go absolutely psycho and stuff. … I think something's happened to him … (reflectively)

Kathleen: … Your group was on the receiving end of what he was doing … (matter-of-factly)

Angela: 'Cos he doesn't like us. (perfunctorily)

Peter: Yeah … he's an idiot. (assertively)

Kathleen: … What's your take on that? You know, what do you think was going on there? (inquiringly)

Ryan: I don't know. He just like he changes. Like at one point he can be really nice to you—like talk … And then, like, he just goes ape-o at me because I do something different … he starts teasing us because we do that kind of stuff. I don't know why, but he just does. (incredulously)

Angela: He's just insecure … (perfunctorily)

Ryan: Maybe he's afraid that he's different and he's trying not to be different? (thoughtfully)

(Follow up audio-taped interview with Guy, 16; Ryan, 16; Peter, 16; and Angela, 15, June 29, 2004)

The misread silences of Guy and his friends that characterized Emma's and my understandings of the classroom incident are firmly repudiated. The students shrug off any sense of themselves as marginalized victims, instead also reinscribing school-based individual pathologizing discourses by suggesting that Justin himself is the problem. More interestingly, they dig more deeply than the dominant discourses we all drew on in framing the classroom incident to indicate that there is a deeply held history to the interactions that occurred in the classroom, which, while unacknowledged at the time, needs to be attended to (Todd 2012). The students speculate about why the incident occurred, drawing attention to the deeply inter-subjective relational

politics that are called upon in shaping a sense of who we are and how we want to be seen (Todd 2012). Ironically, the students' insights deeply echo the intentions of the research project that class members, Emma, and I were embarked on.

A follow-up interview with Justin and his friend alluded to many of the issues and explanations articulated by Guy and his friendship group. Although the rational part of Justin wants to dismiss the extent to which the shared affective historical relationships of the group going back to primary school shape what is possible in terms of present social interactions in the Health classroom, he acknowledges their current importance:

> Justin: Things have happened between like people in the class sort of bringing them … into [the] relationships [of] the Health classroom environment. (quietly)
> Michael: Yeah.
> Justin: … And it affects you … We'll start with primary school. Me and Peter have never got on … And I think that affects the classroom environment for me and him. That also affects like we can't completely open ourselves up completely when one another's in the class I suppose. That's probably what he'll feel. (thoughtfully)
> Kathleen: Do you feel like that yourself? (sympathetically)
> Justin: Sort of yes and no but not really. 'Cos that's six years ago, five years ago. (matter-of-factly)
> Kathleen: That's something that you're aware of, Justin? (probingly)
> Justin: Yep. (matter-of-factly)
> Kathleen: Yeah. Do you think that's something that would have changed over time if you'd been able to work that out. Do you know what I mean? (sympathetically)
> Justin: Yep. Oh, no not really.
> Kathleen: And why does that kind of conflict occur? (sympathetically)
> Justin: A lot of stuff happened at primary school eh. (reflectively)
> Michael: Yeah.
> Kathleen: Was it to do with the fact that he was harassed and bullied because he's big and stuff like that? Did he get a hard time? (questioningly)
> Michael: More when he came to high school recently. (matter-of-factly)
> Justin: More—he got more shit when he come to high school. But at primary school it was more the way he acted towards people. (convincingly)
> Kathleen: 'Cos I noticed in class that he never said very much. You know like he was very quiet and stuff like that. (reflectively)
> Justin: Closed up. (matter-of-factly)
> Kathleen: Yeah, you noticed that as well.
> Justin: He's always been like that. (matter-of-factly)
> Kathleen: Is that because you don't think he feels safe in the class? (questioningly)
> Justin: Yeah. Don't you reckon? (questioningly to Michael)
> Michael: Mmm.
> Kathleen: Is that because people hassle him and stuff like that? (questioningly)
> Justin: Yeah, hassle. (matter-of-factly)
> Michael: Yeah, and it's also because, like, there's seven people in this class that used to go to Kiwi Primary. (explanatorily)
> Kathleen: Okay, so there's a bit of past history here. (reflectively)
> (Kathleen, Justin, 16, and Michael, 16, first follow-up audio-taped interview, June 30, 2004)

Rereading the text of the transcript, it is interesting to see the silence around Justin's own role in contributing to the incident and the extent to which the conversation from all of our perspectives revolve around pathologizing discourses of Peter,

framing he and his friends as having a problem. Despite such silences, he in particular is open and willing to talk thoughtfully at length about what may have lain behind the incident (requesting another interview to elaborate further). Later, Justin made himself vulnerable by reflecting at length not only about his behavior but also about life circumstances that he thought contributed to him acting in those ways. The thoughtful insights he displayed during the course of both follow-up interviews were also often apparent in (less personal) classroom discussions during the course of the project, when I had frequently thanked him for the pedagogical value they offered to the research project (Quinlivan 2009, 2012).

I do not want to minimize the mutually useful role the interviews played for Justin and me as a researcher in wanting to understand Justin's and Michael's perspectives of the classroom incident. However, a little disconcertingly, my role in the conversation also appears to subconsciously reflect that of a concerned counselor, another way of being that is strongly sanctioned and available as a modus operandi within the culture of the school. The unspoken assumptions sitting behind what I say and my counselor-speak verbal expression could be seen to repathologize Justin and his friend Michael, as much as they do Guy and his friends.

Because (however subconsciously) I read the silence of Guy and his friends as powerlessness, I assumed that, since they were a "nerdy" and marginalized group, coming to their defense as part of participating in the project would make them feel more valued. However, a rereading of the interview transcript shows that the group of students largely confounded my desire to marginalize and recuperate them:

> Kathleen: Has the project changed ways that you think about differences? (enquiringly)
>   Guy: It hasn't made me feel stronger really. It's just … (reflectively)
>   Peter: It hasn't really changed anything for me. I'm still—I still think of people the way I thought of them before. There's no changes or anything the way I think about. (forthrightly)
>   Guy: It's just given me more information about, you know. The things that people believe in and stuff like that. (pragmatically)
>   Angela: Yeah.
>   Kathleen: Do you think it's helped for you to see yourself as less of an outsider? (sympathetically)
>   Peter: I don't know. I actually quite like being an outsider. (challengingly)
>   Kathleen: Oh, you're just a rugged individual, you're a rebel really, aren't you, Peter? (humorously)
>   Peter: Yeah, completely a rebel! (ironically laughing)
>   (Follow-up audio-taped interview with Guy, 16; Ryan, 16; Peter, 16; and Angela, 15, June 29, 2004)

Despite my attempts, Peter and Angela in particular strongly reject any notions constructing him as a powerless minority. These and later comments from Guy and his friends indicate that to the contrary they have embraced their outsider status. They indicate that this positionality, rather than my rather naive assumptions related to participating in the research project, enables them to successfully use the harassment policies provided by the school to call students who harass to account, but also to stand up to their peers:

> Kathleen: … Over the course of doing this unit of work, have your ideas about sexuality changed at all? (inquiringly)

Guy: I already knew all this stuff, I just didn't know in depth about it. You know. But, yeah, I've always accepted people for who they are. (pragmatically)

Angela: Exactly what I was going to say. (assertively)

Kathleen: You feel that way, too, Astrid. Yeah. So being exposed to all the ideas that we've talked about have worked to, kind of, just confirm what you already thought? (thoughtfully)

Guy and Astrid: Yeah.

Peter: Yeah, it's like it's you accept people for who they are not what they are eh. You just do it automatic—well, I do it automatically. So I already knew most of the stuff. (assertively)

Kathleen: Do you feel like that because of your own experiences, Peter or, you know, is it like?... (tentatively)

Peter: Yeah, it'd be that way … because with me being the size I am I get quite a bit of harassment, but that makes me different to other people so I tend to accept different people easier than other people do. (thoughtfully)

Kathleen: Okay, yeah because you've got the experience of what it feels like to be on the outside sometimes from people. (sympathetically)

Peter: Mmm. (vaguely)

Angela: Same for me … People just being racist and stuff. So, it's a bit like, yeah, you can relate to other people that are, like, not very socially accepted … (thoughtfully)

Guy: Oh, sometimes people tease you and stuff but you just have to, like, well what I do is I just ignore it or I just tell them that: far out if you're just going to keep doing it it's just pathetic and stuff like that. I just don't really listen. (pragmatically)

Kathleen: … I wonder if any of you have, actually, taken any action against being harassed. (inquiringly)

Peter: Yeah, I have … I don't know. I just got sick of it … my teacher I go and see she usually—she always reacts—she always takes action. Which is why, yeah, the other day some boys were insulting me about my girlfriend and so I went and saw the teacher and she's going to talk to them on Wednesday. Yeah. So that's good … I went to see her in the third form about something and it got sorted out so I just go and see her now … The person never did it again. (perfunctorily)

Kathleen: Oh, really. Okay. So did you feel after doing this work on the gender and sexuality stuff did you feel stronger to be able to do things like that? Did it help in any way? (inquiringly)

Peter: No, I didn't find it helped in any way. (definitively)

(Follow-up audio-taped interview with Guy, 16; Ryan, 16; Peter, 16; and Angela, 15, June 29, 2004)

Finally, I want to speculate on some of the conceptual and methodological implications that my rereading of the data suggests.

2.6 Some Speculative Conceptual and Methodological Implications

In this chapter, I have suggested that engaging with queer pedagogical possibilities in education involves interrogating normative assumptions that privilege the affective spoken word over affective silences (Jackson and Mazzei 2009; Mazzei 2007). Drawing on Lesko's (2010) suggestion of exploring the emotions and social relations knowledges in learning help construct and direct us toward, I revisit a

previous analysis of silences that occurred in a research project developed to work toward destabilizing normative understandings of gender and sexuality. Considering some possible rereadings of silences as affective has provided me as a queer researcher, with some productive, if rather humbling, conceptual, and methodological issues to ponder. In terms of more fully engaging with conceptualizing queer affective silences, my rereading challenges the extent to which the normative spoken word is privileged in analysis, and silences. Because silences leave no record, as Cvetkovich (2003) suggests, they can remain unattended to, and forgotten. Attending ethnographically to the messy, paradoxical affective lived everyday within schools (Browne and Nash 2010), my reanalysis draws attention to silences as meaningful, affective (Jackson and Mazzei 2009; Mazzei 2007; MacLure et al. 2010), and performative social relations (Colum 2011). The reanalysis queerly confounds my own problematic normative assumptions that not only sought to marginalize and recuperate the group of students who were policed by Justin, assuming their silence reflected their victimhood, but also positioned Justin as a triumphant yet troubled bully. The troubling implications of this reading of emotions and social relations (Lesko 2010), despite Emma's and my best intentions at the time, made it challenging to move beyond the limited individual pathologizing discourses that framed Justin, and Guy and his friends alike. In addition, it prevented a more nuanced and political analysis that could have ironically been of use to the project we were embarked upon. Given these limitations, however, my rereading showed Guy and his friends as agentic outsiders who astutely negotiated the normative peer cultures they were situated in, and ably used formal schooling systems to challenge normativity, and shore up a sense of themselves as valued individuals. Despite my inability to harness the expertise of Guy and his friends at the time, in retrospect I have been able to understand and appreciate their expertise.

As a queer researcher, I have certainly been up for exploring the ways in which failure, especially in schooling contexts it seems, appears to characterize many of the queer endeavors I have embarked upon. However, looking back at the extent of my (very unqueer) investment in the research project as a linear and affirmative action success story (Talburt and Rasmussen 2010) has proved particularly telling. At the same time, it seems critical reflexivity, and an openness to explore such paradoxical aporias (Derrida 1992), is an important disposition for a queer researcher to cultivate. It is a visceral reminder of the fact that what is possible occurs within contexts, which, despite our best intentions, shape and mold our subjectivities in particularly subtle ways. Perhaps because of such constraints, I am getting rather tired of hearing empirical queer scholarship being chastised as (rather inevitably, I would suggest) never being queer enough (Talburt and Rasmussen 2010). I take heart from Muñoz's (2009) insistence that disappointment is an integral condition of hoping queerly, but that disappointment shouldn't be a reason to cease hoping. I see this chapter as contributing in a small way toward providing a productive anatomy of a very hopefully queer kind of failure.

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Chapter 3
Productive Tensions in Assessment: Troubling Sociocritical Theories Toward an Advancement of Queer Pedagogy

Mollie V. Blackburn and Becky Beucher

As we contemplate queer pedagogy, we struggle with how to teach queerly in classrooms, schools, districts, and states that are so rigidly defined, as they are in the United States, by prescribed curriculum, standards, and standardized testing. What could be less queer than these constraints? Here, we focus particularly on queering assessment, and even more specifically, the assessment of student writing. In an effort to do so, we turn to a piece of student writing authored by Justine, an African American lesbian, during her junior year in an urban, arts-based magnet high school. One way of queering teaching, and assessment as a part of teaching, is to draw on various theories that simultaneously make sense with and make trouble for one's teaching. Queer theory can provoke the queering, challenging how a teacher approaches seemingly axiomatic assumptions about social identities and the expected behaviors of those exhibiting those identities. New Literacy Studies (NLS) can be useful in troubling the approaches we take toward defining "good" writing. Because of the gendered and racial identities Justine claimed, we also turned to feminism and Critical Race Theory (CRT) to make sense of and complicate our understanding of her writing, in terms of both content and form.

In this chapter, we first introduce our understandings of these theories and then introduce the student-author and one of her short stories to illustrate how this troubling might look. We then return to the theoretical framework to propose an approach to assessing student writing and model how that approach might look in pedagogical action. We see our work as pushing toward a queer project rather than an

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approach that adds LGBT issues to educational research (Wimberly 2015), although we do consider ourselves in conversation with such researchers. Finally, we consider the implications of a closer to queer assessment.

3.1 Assembling a Troubling Theoretical Framework

Here, we describe each of the four theories, discuss their compatibility, and finally discuss the productive tensions among them.

Queer Theory. Queer theorists define queer not as the lumping together of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, although they do pay particular attention to nonnormative sexual and gender identities such as these (Jagose 1996). Rather, they define queer as the suspension of these classifications (Pinar 1998), since sexualities and gender are relationally constituted (Mayo 2017). According to queer theorists, sexual identities are shaped in and by sociocultural contexts, which vary across times and spaces. Britzman (1997), for example, asserts, "every sexual identity is an unstable, shifting, volatile construct, a contradictory and unfinalized *social relation*" (p. 186). She goes on to describe "sexuality as a contradictory and socially complex social construction" (p. 192).

Queer theorists also recognize the multiplicity of sexual and gender identities, which means, "refusing stable identities and … producing new identifications that lie outside binary models of gender and sexuality" (Luhmann 1998, p. 151). Winans (2006) argues that an understanding of multiplicity must shape our secondary English pedagogies by considering "multiple, often intersecting strategies of normalization and oppression" (p. 118). Failing to do so perpetuates homophobia in schools (Allan et al. 2008; DePalma 2013). Furthermore, as Sieben and Wallowitz (2009) write, "Antihomophobia education, rooted in advocating acceptance, assimilation, and tolerance, does not require investigating the construction, production, and maintenance of what is considered normative, nor does it challenge the status quo" (p. 45). Beyond recognizing multiple forms of oppression, we must disrupt them.

Schools can constitute particularly violent spaces in their erasure of queer identities. Allan et al. (2008) explore how school discourses and norms specifically regulate and police LGBT identities through engaging homophobic discourse. Pinar argues that queer theorists "work overtime … to try to find ways to decenter, destabilize, and deconstruct … the heterosexist normalizations that so essentialize many of the students we teach" (p. 44). Morris (1998) pushes the idea of the disruptive even further, suggesting that teachers "trouble the curriculum, troubling the very relationships of the day-to-day lived experiences of school life" (p. 285). But Tierney and Dilley (1998) remind us that disruption alone is not enough when they write, "queer theory seeks to disrupt and to assert power and voice" (p. 59). Similarly, Morris claims that "Queerness as a political act challenges the status quo, does not simply tolerate it, and does not stand for assimilation in the mainstream," and further, queer theory helps us to understand most things as "potentially politically radical" (p. 277).

By rejecting categories of identity, particularly the assigning of such categories to others, queer theorists interrogate and disrupt notions of normal, with particular respect to sexuality and gender and thus work against the oppression that comes with being named, labeled, and tagged (Foucault 1982). At the same time, queer theorists acknowledge the importance of attending to the lived realities of queerness, as the worth of one's life is all too often policed in relation to so-called normal practices expected of socially constructed bodies (Butler 2004; Cruz 2011). Anzaldúa (1987) addresses the dilemma of oppressive forces through theorizing the new *mestiza*, a pluralistic identity that traverses boundaries and borders. Anzaldúa writes, "only by remaining flexible is [the *mestiza*] able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically" (p. 101). To assume such a fluid identity expresses the embodiment of queer theory.

New Literacy Studies. NLS scholars, along with critical literacy theorists (Gee 1996; Giroux 1993; Lankshear and McLaren 1993; Street 1995, 1999), make it their work to explore the relationships among literacy, education, and social change. These scholars understand literacy as sociocultural, an understanding that represents a shift from the idea that literacy constitutes a universally recognizable approach to reading and writing, to reading and writing as localized "social acts that one engages in within a community" (McKay 1996, p. 428). Or, in Street's (1995) terms, "features of literacy are always embedded in particular social practices" (p. 151). Similarly, Gee (1996) insists that literacy not be understood "as a singular thing but as a set of social practices" (p. 46). Such a notion of literacy all but demands that literacy be understood as multiple, in that there are a plethora of "kinds of reading, writing and representation, as well as … functions for and uses by" (de Castell and Jenson 2007, p. 137) readers and writers. Because NLS scholars understand literacy as multiple or plural, they reject dichotomous notions of literacy. For example, when it is understood that there are so many ways of reading and writing, it is unproductive to conceptualize a person as either entirely literate or illiterate. Rather, most people engage in some ways of reading and writing but not others. NLS scholars recognize that some of these ways of reading and writing have more and less power in different contexts, including but not limited to academic contexts, and, related to this, they disrupt the notion that one standard of literacy should dominate the many other forms of literacy (Street). Here, the undergirding emancipatory agenda of NLS becomes evident. Gee more explicitly directs NLS scholars to attend to "social activism and calls for social justice" and demands that they "be much less interested in creating a new science than in a new society" (p. 65).

Lankshear and Knobel (2003), whose work is oriented toward theorizing equity-oriented approaches to education, address an important tension in sociocultural approaches to literacy. To support their argument that NLS scholars should direct more attention to technologically and chronologically *new* forms of literacy production (as opposed to just focusing on new approaches to documenting literacies), they describe a sampling of the diverse ways that people are employing language and narrative with a particular attention to people's production of literacies that maintain an "active or critical stance" (p. 9). While these *new* literacy examples are selected with subversive criteria in mind, the fact that many authors elect and produce new forms of literacy to articulate disruption implies that the form of mainstream literacies constrain nonnormative discourses.

Feminism. Feminism focuses on power dynamics defined through embodied gender. Unlike earlier waves of feminism, third-wave feminism, typically associated with the 1980s and later, attends more to sociocultural aspects of women's lives than the previously valued essentialized notions of women. Kirsch (1999), for example, demands that feminist researchers show the "social, cultural, and economic forces that shape participants' life experiences" (p. 101) in their work. Another distinctive characteristic of third-wave feminism is the acknowledgment of multiplicity. Whereas earlier waves were defined predominantly by white middle-class straight women, third-wave feminists include a broader range of women, including women of color, from a range of socioeconomic classes, and those representing diverse sexualities (Reinharz 1992; Ristock and Pinnell 1996; Weedon 1987).

Although feminism has evolved over the decades, feminists have consistently placed gender at the center of their mission. They have always worked to disrupt sexism (Lather 1991). In other words, the disruption of norms, particularly for emancipatory purposes, has always characterized feminism. Even early feminists, or first-wave feminists, had emancipatory agendas such as the right for women to own property and vote. Fine (1992) pushes feminists to disrupt when she argues, "we must provoke a deep curiosity about, indeed an intolerance for, that which is described as inevitable, immutable, and natural" (p. 223).

In this effort, feminists look to the materialization of gender in bodies that are "contrived, monitored, controlled and moralized" by social forces that have concurrently marginalized the female voice (Pillow 2000, p. 201). Cruz (2011) argues that the normalized expectations for how certain people should behave based on what they look like blinds us to seeing what they actually do and who they actually are. She calls on education researchers (and we would add teachers) to "see" not only how racialized, queered, and classed youth get characterized through stereotypes, but more importantly to witness these youth "talking back" to powerful and oppressive forces, effectively characterizing themselves humanely (p. 548).

Critical Race Theory. Paying attention to and interrogating power dynamics defined by race is the overarching concept of Critical Race Theory (CRT). That CRT is undergirded by sociocultural theory is evident in the understanding among CRT scholars that "racism [is] endemic and deeply ingrained in American life," and, as such, it is "institutional and structural racism" that are to blame for people of color's lack of success in schools (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, p. 55). In other words, we must understand students of color, for example, in their sociocultural context, which is shaped dramatically by racism and is made material in things such as biased tests, punishments, and diagnoses. As a way to counter such institutional and structural racism, Ladson-Billings (2000), a CRT scholar, insists that researchers, and we would add teachers, "operate in a self-revelatory mode, to acknowledge the double (or multiple) consciousness in which she or he is operating" (p. 272), value the stories of their participants, and we would add students, and invite them to contest findings. Implicit in this argument is an understanding of multiplicity, that various people have unique experiences that are viable and valuable. Attending to these various stories prompts a sort of disruption of "claims of neutrality, objectiv-

ity, color-blindness, and meritocracy" in social systems (e.g., schools, politics, economy) (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, p. 56). Thus, CRT scholars can eliminate "racial oppression as part of the larger goal of eradicating all forms of oppression" (Tate 1997, p. 234), thus clearly emancipatory in nature.

Compatibility. Even though queer theorists focus on nonnormative sexual and gender identities, NLS scholars on literacy, feminists on gender identities, and Critical Race Theorists on racial identities, these theories share some significant commitments:

- the recognition of the sociocultural nature of identities, languages, and realities more generally speaking;
- a critical attention to how socially constructed lives are experienced;
- the acknowledgement of multiplicity and the rejection of binaries;
- the commitment to disrupting norms, including but not limited to racist, sexist, and heterosexist norms;
- the persistence of an emancipatory agenda on behalf of traditionally oppressed people, such as people of color, women, and lesbians, gay men, bisexual people, transgender, and queer people; and,
- a recognition of the necessity of creating spaces for queered, gendered, racialized, people to *talk back* and counter narratives of oppression with narratives of resistance.

Moreover, their compatibility is suggested in the ways scholars who work in these fields have overlapping interests and talk about the need to expand their interests to include those of the other areas. Overlapping interests are evident, for example, in how early NLS scholarship emerging from within the field of anthropology (see Heath 1983; Scribner and Cole 1981) focused on nondominant people's practices, establishing their legitimacy in the face of dominant perceptions that ignored the richly diverse modes of communication not visible through a homogenous view of reading and writing. Following this early work, NLS scholars have continued to include a wide range of people in their work, including those historically marginalized by race, gender, and sexuality although more so in terms of race and gender than sexuality.

The need to expand interests beyond any one of the theories is conveyed, for example, by Critical Race Theorists McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) when they assert that the study of race must include the study of other aspects of identities, including sexuality (p. xxvii). And we know that such an opening and inclusion is what distinguishes third-wave feminism from the first and second waves. Similarly, Butler (1997) asserts that "queer studies need to move beyond and against those methodological demands which force separations in the interests of canonization and provisional institutional legitimation" (p. 24). In particular, she names the "analysis of racialization" (p. 24) as the work beyond sexuality that scholars need to do. Consider Hawley's (2001) collection entitled *Post-colonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections*, Johnson and Henderson's (2005) *Black Queer Studies*, and Muñoz's

(1999) *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, for examples. Clearly, putting these theories in conversation with one another has great potential.

Productive tensions. The bringing together, though, provokes some tensions. Queer theory, for example, has pushed NLS, feminism, and CRT to be more critical of heteronormativity and to pay more attention to the multiple and disruptive. In the field of literacy education, queer theory has pushed scholars beyond LGBT-inclusiveness, that is, reading texts that represent LGBT people, for something even more significant. Britzman (1995), for example, draws on queer theory to challenge literacy scholars to understand that "there are no innocent, normal, or unmediated readings" (p. 164), an assertion that might rest quite comfortably with a NLS scholar, but also that "Reading practices might well read all categories as unstable" (p. 164), a claim that might challenge the same NLS scholar in his or her thinking. Sumara and Davis (1999) advocate for interpreting "complex relations among knowledge, desire, and identities (and not just queer identities)" when reading and discussing literature with students, arguing that "these interpretive sites yielded complex understandings of the ways in which knowledge/ignorance, queer/straight, and male/female always are articulated in and through one another" (p. 204). Similarly, Martino argues for "embracing reading practices that are critical of *privileging* and *othering*" (p. 396), again, pushing NLS in a productive direction.

The bringing together of all four of these theories fosters an understanding of intersectionality. Crenshaw (1991), a Critical Race Theorist, brought to the foreground the concept of intersectionality as a way of better understanding the "unique vulnerability" of those caught in "converging systems of domination" (pp. 1265–1266). This is an incredibly significant concept fostering understanding issues of equity and diversity. However, her application of the concept at the time was limited to race and gender, and sexuality was understood as occurring between a man and a woman, a heterosexist assumption that provokes tension with queer theorists. Since then, though, the concept has been regularly expanded to include a variety of identity markers. This expansion has happened within the field of CRT (e.g., Hancock 2007) and beyond, including those of us who are particularly engaged in queer studies (e.g., Blackburn and McCready 2009; Blackburn and Smith 2010). Thus, tensions among different approaches have resulted in an increased understanding, even if not seamlessly so. Employing these socioculturally informed identity theories as a means to exploit multiplicity demands an attention to these tensions as we explore how teachers might apply these lenses to inform a socially emancipatory approach to literary assessment.

3.2   The Researcher, the Student-Author, and a Short Story

Next, we describe ourselves, and the student-author, with respect to these theoretical approaches. As the authors, we are both former English teachers. Mollie and Becky are current educational researchers; thus, we might be understood as people who not only use standard academic English with some degree of effectiveness but promote such use through our respective work. Our skin color and ethnicities mark us as white, so we can be understood as outsiders in the theoretical conversation of CRT but also as in the center of a racist world. As queer-identifying cisgender women, we each can be understood as insiders in feminist and queer theoretical conversations but marginal in a sexist and heterosexist world. In keeping with queer theory, then, we are never fully central or marginal.

We can think about Justine in similar terms. She was a regular and active member of the youth-run center for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (or LGBTQ) youth where Mollie used to work. When Mollie first came to the center, Justine was 14 and had been coming to the center for a year already. At that time, she was finishing her freshman year at her urban magnet high school for the creative and performing arts, where she was a writing major and a facilitator of the Gay Straight Alliance (or GSA). Mollie had the privilege of getting to know her over her sophomore, junior, and senior years; Mollie and Justine have continued their friendship throughout Justine's college years and since, in Justine's adulthood.

With respect to literacy, though, Justine was a reader, writer, leader, and student sometimes but not always striving to master standard academic English. Her racial identity positioned her quite differently than ours; that is, as an African American, Justine could be understood as one who is marginalized in a racist world. In terms of gender and sexuality, we share the positionality of being marginal in a sexist and heterosexist world. It is not that any of these positionings were stable; of course, they were not. Justine's racial identity, for example, was sometimes called into question by her peers who, on occasion, called her an "oreo," to indicate that although she was brown on the outside, she was white on the inside. We only mention Justine, Mollie's, and Becky's positionalities here as a sort of starting place for introducing them.

Even though Justine was a reader, writer, leader, and student, her relationship with school was a tumultuous one because of the heterosexism and homophobia that she experienced there. She described herself as a good student in middle school, when she came out during her eighth grade year. However, when she came to high school, even though she strategically selected the arts-focused school because she believed it would be more welcoming to her as a lesbian, she said, "it was just like constant harassment in the hallways. Just people calling me names, and calling me dyke and all kinds of stuff. I didn't know what to do." As a result, Justine stopped focusing on her schoolwork, started cutting classes, and started staying home because she felt sick. She said:

> I didn't want to move. I didn't want to do anything to draw attention to myself, so I was just like, I would sit there and, I had like a spell check little like thing and it had games on it so I would play games instead of paying attention in my classes.

A teacher noticed her withdrawal and referred her to a guidance counselor who dismissed her claims of harassment, which continued, and, according to Justine, "it got worse and worse and worse and it was like I was rarely ever in school because I was sick." Her mother took her to doctors who identified the health problem as stress-induced. Justine told her mother about the homophobia she was experiencing at school, and her mother came to school. She talked with the counselor and then the principal, both of whom dismissed Justine's concerns, until Justine's mother threatened to file suit against the school. Such struggle was characteristic of her relationship with school.

In fact, just before the start of her junior year she told Mollie that school was not a happy place for her to be, that she felt like the token lesbian, and that she felt like she had to speak for all gay people. Although there were other lesbians at her school, they were not out, so they neither shared the responsibility with her nor added to the diversity of individuals representing LGBTQ people. She told Mollie that she knew she was doing good work, for example, by facilitating the GSA, but that this work was difficult for her. She went on to explain that she needed the support of the center. If her grades slipped, however, she would not be permitted to spend as much time there because, even though her parents were supportive of her as a lesbian, school was their top priority for her. She stated plainly that she was worried about returning to school. It was during this school year—her junior year—that she wrote a short story entitled "What's Wrong with Gene?" for her fiction class. A story that much later she described to Mollie as "an intentional piece."

What's Wrong With Gene?

"I don't know dear, he locks himself away like this all day, I just don't know what's wrong with him" comments Mother to Father.

Every afternoon they watched Gene scramble up the stairs to his bedroom after school. He'd come down for meals but generally requested his meals be eaten in his room.

"He's a weird one dear," said Father as he straightened his tie. "I say we send him to military school, that'll straighten him out, no boy should lock himself away from his family and the outside world like that".

Gene was quietly listening at the top of the stairs. The thick carpet silenced his footsteps. It was the only thing Gene liked about the house. The carpet. It was comforting at times and never spoke or questioned him. Gene tiptoed back to his bedroom. He lifted the mattress and felt around underneath, his search recovered a small notebook. Gene placed the notebook under his pillow and crossed the room to close the door. He chose a pen from his desk; all the pens were in a small box inside the drawer. No disorder. Everything had a place and everything was stiffly stuck in the desk, in the room, in the house.

Gene neatly wrote the date on the paper and began writing:

Dear diary today was just like the rest of them. Long and painful. Father is still talking about sending me to military school, I hate the military, and I hate school. Those two things together are even worse. The gym teacher asked me to join the football team today. I couldn't come up with a good answer why I couldn't, so I told him I had bad knees and couldn't run too well. I hate gym and football. Father would kill me if he knew I could have joined the team, and didn't. He wants me to be just like him. Perfect. Well I'm not and never will be. I've just realized this. I keep my hair perfect, my clothes, my grades, and my damn room. I can't stand to look at him, I hate him but at the same time I feel guilty for being me. I'm not what he wanted. He wanted someone to play football with, someone to go to military school, someone he could put his arm around and introduce as "his son". He doesn't do that with me. He hates me.

Mother looks right through me; all she cares about are meals and ironing. I kind of hate her too. She ignores me. I try to ignore her too.

I feel like I'm living in an Edgar Allan Poe poem. Everything is so dark and gloomy. No signs of hope. I don't want to live in a poem or in this house.

Things I hate today:

I hate football, I hate military school, I hate gym and gym teachers, I hate perfection, I hate mother, and I hate father.

I hate myself.

Gene looked at the sentence he had just written in disbelief. He somberly closed the notebook and placed it underneath the mattress. He was startled by his mother's voice calling him from the kitchen. He looked around the room to make sure everything was in place.

"Gene dear, sit down your father wants to speak to you," said Mother as she placed dishes on the table.

"Gene we've been thinking and you need to go to military school. I went, look at me I turned out just fine didn't I dear?" Father turned to Mother for reassurance.

"Oh yes dear, just fine" smiled Mother and quickly turned back to the pot on the stove. "What do you think Gene? We can call the enrollment office tomorrow. This is good; it'll get you out of that room for one. It'll straighten you out". Father winked at Gene and waited for his answer.

Gene didn't know what to say. He was burning inside to tell his father how much he hated him and how he didn't desire to be anything like him, but instead he dropped his eyes and squeezed his hands together. "Do they have a football team at the military school Father?" asked Gene without looking at him.

"Of course they do! I was quarterback; you're a good size for a quarterback. I think you'd be perfect. We'll call tomorrow."

Gene rose from the table and went back upstairs. He sat on his bed and held his head in his hands. After a few minutes he stood and looked around his room. He walked over to the desk and pulled out the drawers and dumped the contents on the floor. He pulled books from the shelves and dropped them to the floor. Soon the room was strewn with books, papers and clothing. Gene walked to the end of the hall to his mother and father's room; he opened the closet and pulled out a box. Carrying the box he returned to his room.

Removing his shirt, Gene stared coldly out the window into the neighboring house. The family next door was eating dinner. A son, a father, a mother. These were the new neighbors. The boy resembled Gene. He looked pained and upset. He looked right into Gene's window and started right at him. Gene and the boy held a look until the boy's father got his attention.

Gene moved from the window and took a big marker and began writing on his chest. He picked up the box and removed the weight inside.

"Gene come down for dinner dear" called mother.

Gene swung open the door to his room; he stopped and looked out the window again. "He looks like a quarterback," he said to himself.

He ran down the steps and stood in the middle of the living room. Mother and Father entered the room disturbed by the noise of running.

"Gene what are you doing? Why did you write that on yourself?" said Father.

"What's wrong with you Gene? What does I'm not perfect mean dear?" asked Mother.

Gene lifted his hand and held a revolver to his temple. The cold metal made him flinch. "I'm not perfect Mother! I hate football, I hate military school, I hate father, I hate gym and gym teachers, and I hate perfection. I hate myself". Said Gene before he quickly pulled the trigger on the revolver.

Mother screamed and fell on top of Gene body she shook him and yelled at him, "What's wrong with you!!!"

3.3   Approaches to Assessment

One can easily imagine a sort of assessment in which a teacher points out run-on sentences, fragments, typographical errors, and failures to indent the first line of paragraphs. One can imagine inserting punctuation and capitalization where it is needed. One can also imagine commending this writer for her use of dialogue, foreshadowing, metaphor, line breaks, and repeated use of words that convey meaning implicitly. Each teacher has his or her own approach to assessing student writing. Mollie's high school English teacher would have cut every "to be" verb and each use of "very," "nice," and "interesting," for example. Although we can't say what Justine's teacher's instructional or assessment approaches were, we can say that, according to Justine, "She never did like my writing and typically gave me low grades." But queer theory, NLS, feminism, and CRT challenge us to try something different, something more complex.

Queer and feminist theory asks us to pay attention to the sexual and gender identities of the author, characters, and readers. Moreover, it also asks to recognize these categories of identities as multiple and variable, and ultimately to imagine what it would be like to suspend them entirely. We can ask:

- What does sexuality have to do with this text?
- In what ways are the characters sexualized (or not)? What difference does this make?
- In what ways are queer people constructed in the text? How about straight people?
- What are the relationships among the author, characters, and readers, in terms of sexual identities? What difference does this make?
- Are any characters ambiguous in terms of sexual identity, gender, race, or otherwise? How are they constructed?

NLS asks us not to focus on the ways that a piece of writing does or does not match a particular standard, such as standard academic English. Rather, it asks that we consider the sociocultural contexts in which the text was written and interpret the power the language used had in those contexts. Further, NLS asks us to imagine the possibilities of what work a text can do toward social change, keeping in mind that working toward social change through the presentation of nondominant storylines may demand unorthodox inscription spaces for the articulation of those messages. NLS prompts us to ask:

- What does literacy, understood in sociocultural terms, have to do with this text?
- In what ways are the author/characters/readers located in particular sociocultural contexts (or not)? What difference does this make?
- What power does the language used have in these contexts? Or not?
- What nonstandard, multimodal forms of literacy are evident in this text?
- Can this text work toward social change? If so, how?

Feminism asks that we consider what difference gender makes to the author, characters, and readers. It asks that we consider the ways in which the author, characters,

and readers shape the text, not just as men or women, but as whole and complicated people. Further, feminism asks that we consider what work the text does for the author as well as the readers. And feminism, as well as queer scholarship, asks that we consider the embodied experiences of the author in relationship to the text she created. We can ask:

- What does gender have to do with this text?
- In what ways are the characters gendered (or not)? What difference does this make?
- In what ways are people of particular genders (men, women, transgender, intersex) constructed in the text, particularly in terms of control and power?
- What are the relationships among the author, characters, and readers, in terms of gender? What difference does this make?
- What work does the text do for the author? For the readers?

CRT asks us to consider the racial identities of the author, characters, and readers and what difference these racial identities make. Further it demands that we do not rely on the text alone; rather, we, as readers, should be in communication with the author, when possible, such as in classrooms, so that we can discuss the ways in which our understandings of a text are in accord or discord with the author's intentions. CRT demands that we do not assume that our interpretations are correct, or that if they are not then it is the author's fault; instead, we might be open to the possibility that we have misunderstood the author's work. We can ask:

- What does race have to do with this text?
- In what ways are the characters racialized (or not)? What difference does this make?
- In what ways are people of particular races constructed in the text, particularly in terms of control and power?
- What are the relationships among the author, characters, and readers, in terms of race? What difference does this make?
- If we had the opportunity to talk with the author, how would we state our interpretation of the text? What questions would we pose to the author?

It is worth considering concretely what such an approach to assessment might look like.

3.4 Troubling Assessment

The story provides evidence that the author values literacy in that the character with whom readers are to empathize, Gene, who writes in his journal and even references a canonical poet. Further, the author's understanding of what counts as literacy is expansive, as is indicated by Gene writing what is essentially a suicide note to his parents on his chest. It seems as if his journal writing influences him a great deal, but it is the more public writing on his chest that has power beyond himself, indeed

has a powerful impact on everyone else in the story. Justine's choice to have Gene write a suicide note on his body demonstrates her own awareness of how the queer body is a socially contested space. Gene's power resides in his action to inscribe his own counter message on his chest, and in his subsequent action of taking the life he could not live. Assessing the author's choice to have a character write a suicide note on his body may be read as a "new" form of literacy from an NLS perspective in that the words derive their meaning at the site of the body and through the dark, bold, black ink in which they are written.

Language also matters in understanding the story. For example, years after the story was written, Mollie found herself reading Mother's words in an exaggerated stereotypically white voice, which made her realize she really didn't know the race of Gene and his family. She texted Justine:

> Mollie: I wanna know whether gene is white.
>   Justine: With a name like gene, I'm pretty sure he would have been a white character. But send [the story] to me I can probably figure it out
>   Mollie: I thought the same thing. I'll send it.
>   Justine: K …. I remember now it was my anti nuclear family story. Yea it's a white family…. Lol yea at the time I was watching alot of leave it to beaver and dennis the menace on nick at nite.

Understanding that June Cleaver and Alice Mitchell, from the late 1950s and early 1960s television shows, were the white-mom voices in Justine's head as she wrote the almost hyperbolically standard "Mother" allows an interpretation of the piece as a sort of parody of the power of a white, middle-class, nuclear family. The importance of this becomes even more pronounced when you know that, her teacher was, according to Justine, "an older white woman," and that Justine was "writing directly to" her. She explained that the character selection was essentially for the teacher, "Something that was reminiscent of her childhood [that] I used and then fucked up." The power of the story, thus, is amplified, suggesting the significance of talking with student authors about race in their writing.

Such an interpretation of the story as a parody and then destruction of the power of a white, middle-class, nuclear family neatly aligns with the explicit characterization of the family as a place where being "straight" and masculine are valued, and even stereotypically feminine is valued as long as gender is performed in normative ways. Father, for example, is characterized as a football player, a military student, and a straight man who is "just fine." Mother is characterized as one who manages the home, cooks and even delivers the meals, and affirms Father. As such, Father and Mother are understood in normative terms, that is as a straight man and woman in a marriage, likely monogamous. Father is the most powerful in the house. He can solve the problem of their son, Gene. Mother, who is more powerful than Gene but not as powerful as Father, identifies Gene as the problem and directs him to "sit down" so Father can solve the problem. The hierarchy in the family is clearly delineated in the story, and Gene is at the bottom.

Gene is characterized as "weird," as not-straight, isolated, and "not perfect." Although he is never named as gay, his queerness is suggested by these characterizations. This suggestion is underscored by his comfort in silence and his opening

of the "closet door." Still, his sexuality, as it is constructed in the story, is ambiguous. A conversation with the author, however, provides some clarity. Justine said, "he is gay …*to me*, it was a story about a gay kid … and his struggle." She pointed to a place in the story in which Gene and a boy next door stare out of their windows at each other. She explained that she intended this scene to be both homoerotic and homophobic. She went on to say that Gene "was looking so coldly at [the neighbor] because he resented him for who he was … sort of like, 'you're gay too, just like me, but you'll make a better quarterback than I would because I can't take this anymore.'" This is where, in the story, Gene finally disrupts the hierarchy. He asserts his own power and agency by committing suicide.

As a young queer person submitting this short story to an adult with some authority in her life, Justine effectively conveys to her teacher that when a young queer person is belittled and isolated, and when that degradation is not interrupted by adults, like Mother, or even perpetuated by adults, like Father, then suicide is one of the few ways that young person can assert his or her power in the situation. In other words, submitting such a story demands of the teacher receiving it that she at least not play a role in the homophobic and heterosexist abuse of students and perhaps even actively fight against such abuse. In a recent conversation between Mollie and Justine, Justine made it clear that the teacher was more like Gene's parents than the hypothetical ally teacher that she perceived herself to be. Justine said that the teacher repeatedly

> told me she was my ally after all the harassment died down. She had a GLSEN ally sticker on her classroom door. I hated that woman. She pontificated about supporting gay students all the time, but she never did anything for any students I knew. She was all talk and no action.

In other words, Justine created Gene's parents to critique her teacher, particularly in terms of being an ally. As such, this story worked on the author's behalf, as well as on the behalf of other queer students in the school. While a teacher who perceives herself to be an ally might find it painful to realize her complacency in the face of homophobia, the cost of pained awareness is far less than the pain of endured harassment and invisibility. Using these theories for assessment potentially creates opportunities for authentic allies to emerge among educators, as teachers may be opened to learn from marginalized youth now positioned as experts in their own experiences with identity.

Understanding the suicidal character and his oppressive family in terms that are significantly distinct from that of the author is important, too. By making the story about a white boy, about a potential football player and a potential military school student, Justine conveys to her teacher that this character Gene is not Justine. It may be other queer kids, but it is not her. She is not vulnerable to the impact of people like Gene's parents, including this teacher, but other kids are. In doing so, she not only implicates the teacher, she also draws attention to a social issue that deeply concerns her: the increased rate of suicide among young people perceived as queer. By drawing attention to queer youth suicides, long before the intense media focus on this social issue in the fall of 2010, Justine accomplished important work for

social change in her writing and submission of this short story. As social justice-oriented educators, we must look beyond stereotypical expectations for people of particular identities in favor of faithfully witnessing resistance (Cruz 2011). LGBTQ youth suicide quickly risks becoming a trope if we fail to see the complexity of each individual's life and action or of an author's use of this tragic, fatal act.

3.5 Closer to Queer

Assessing Justine's writing through these four theories made visible her social change work in a way that a more simplistic and mainstream assessment would never have done. An approach that focused entirely on grammar and literary devices, for example, prepares students to assume power in a particular kind of environment, such as school, but not necessarily negotiate and share power in that or any other kinds of environments. Such a preparation is inadequate. However, that is not to say that the effectiveness of Justine's story is not in part due to her sophisticated awareness of audience and application of powerful images such as the writing on Gene's chest. But, it's the purposeful use of language to convey a socially powerful message that draws the reader's attention to them. We alternatively advocate for a pedagogical approach that challenges students to disrupt inequitable power dynamics and argue that a theoretically complex assessment can be a part of inviting such an approach.

The approach we offer here is in some ways decidedly queer in that it provokes a critique of "privileging and othering" (Martino 2009, p. 396), while encouraging an active discovery and construction of something new (Davies 2000). Queer theorists, for example, critique the privileging of heteronormativity and the othering of the experiences and ways of being queer in the world. NLS scholars critique the privileging of a single standardized academic English and the consequential othering of all other forms of reading and writing. Like queer theorists, feminists and Critical Race Theorists critique privileging men and white people, respectively, as well as othering women and people of color. So, if we assess writing with the question of who is privileged and who is othered and reflect on the consequences of such privileging and othering, we can provide an entirely different sort of assessment, one that challenges writers to consider the kind of contributions and changes they can make through their writing, in particular. Rather than preparing students to win in the game of hierarchy, it challenges them to understand and change the rules of the game. Work worth doing, it seems to us.

Combining these theories in this way, however, replicates a series of dichotomies in ways that are not queer at all. Consider the notion of intersectionality. We still maintain, as we assert early in this chapter, that this approach promotes a focus on intersecting identities as a means to understand how individual lived experiences emerge as a result of being labeled and othered through these category labels. And although the approach we present here broadens the concept from an intersection of two lines, defined by race and gender, to an intersection of, say four lines—race,

gender, sexuality, and literacy—it is still an intersection. An intersection suggests lines, that is, where two or more lines meet or have points in common. These lines may or may not end, but they travel in different, not necessarily opposite, directions. Think standard and nonstandard, Black and white, men and women, queer and straight. These paired directions, even if not understood as end points or opposites, which we argue they most typically are, suggest dichotomies—as they are defined in relation to each other and always marking something recognizable—something queer theorists explicitly intend to disrupt. Indeed, Puar (2007) critiques the limitations of intersectionality to understand identity, claiming identity is too "messy" to be "boxed"; she argues that "in the stillness of position, bodies actually lose their capacity for movement … for (social) change" (p. 213). This approach, then, fails to actualize a queer pedagogy, or even a component of a queer pedagogy, which in practice, risks teachers expecting youth inevitably to produce recognizable forms of nondominant identities (whether intersecting or independent of one another) in recognizable forms of literacy. While Lankshear and Knobel (2003) address the need to consider new forms of literacy as literacy—this tension remains a tension in NLS scholarship and is arguably least welcome in school curricula taking its order from standards-based instruction and assessment.

We are left wondering, what if we put queer theory on top of NLS, CRT, and feminism, rather than aside them? Would we then think less of intersectionality and more of hybridity, or assemblage? It would most certainly take us away from Crenshaw's intersections to the rhizomes of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), which would just as certainly require that we disrupt the dichotomies implied by intersections, as well as predetermined roles erected between student and teacher. We worry, though, that it could take us away from attending to the material consequences of being labeled (il)literate, raced, gendered, and sexualized. There must be ways to avoid this pitfall of traveling to queer.

Muñoz (2011), in his essay, *The Sense of Watching Tony Sleep*, offers a queer approach to interpreting American visual artist, Elizabeth Peyton's pairings of Shakespearian sonnets with her pencil drawings. Approaching an analysis of the piece through considering multiple genres in relation to what one does for the other enables a reading of Peyton's work that disrupts critical interpretations that mark her work as "too feminine and too gay" (Muñoz 2011, p. 144). These critical readings which view particular social identit(ies) emerging so profoundly from Peyton's work indexes a stance that imposes expectations of what one knows about identity, based on stereotype and experience rather than on what the work accomplishes, to what one sees on the canvas. Interpreting art in juxtaposition to the genres the artist or author intentionally paired not only honors the piece in its entirety but concurrently pushes back on these predetermined interpretations, thus inviting readers to suspend judgment of expectations long enough to discover something new. Such an approach to assessment, particularly when the student is invited to play creatively with form as Justine does, might challenge teachers to set the rubric aside, place on the backburner all the expectations held for students' writing, and read the piece with the idea that it has something new to say, something that has never been said before, thereby freeing teacher-readers from the assumptions held about the quality

of what an author is able to accomplish, and with the belief instead that this child has something of value from her lived experiences to teach us about how to make meaning from and to the world. A sociocultural approach, then, holds us to an understanding that meanings emerge only through the respectful conversation between author and reader, as the author maintains both an eye to author intention and theoretically informed questions posed in this chapter that guide an understanding of how new understandings of social categories are contested and reified in the text.

As we grapple with this, trying to describe what *this* would look like, convincing ourselves that we have written the exact wrong chapter, as if there is a right one out there, it strikes us that we will not arrive at queer, or *the* queer pedagogy, or even the component of assessment within queer pedagogy. It is unattainable. Trans activist Dean Spade (2002) argues, "what we mean to be resistant aesthetic practices become new regulatory regimes" (p. 1). This point is essential to keep in mind as deconstruction must inevitably be followed by agentive reconstruction on the part of the individual who expresses and embodies multiple identities that are never free from social norms, yet always struggling to be something new. So, the best we can hope for are opportunities to reflect on efforts at queering and to project on where to go next. The same can be said of teaching: Teachers must strive for and thrive within opportunities to reflect on efforts at queering to gain insights about how to get closer to queer.

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Chapter 4
Ending Bullying and Harassment: The Case for a Queer Pedagogy

Elizabeth J. Meyer

4.1   Introduction

The fall of 2010 was marked by highly publicized suicides that were attributed to homophobic bullying. The September deaths of Billy Lucas, Asher Brown, Seth Walsh, and Tyler Clementi brought public attention to the issues faced by bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, transgender (BGLQT),[1] and gender-creative[2] youth in schools. These tragedies also gave inspiration for the Internet video campaign initiated by journalist Dan Savage. He called the initiative the "It Gets Better" project (http://www.itgetsbetter.org/) to speak directly to youth who are feeling targeted, isolated, and suicidal to give them hope and strength to survive their current realities. In response to the "It Gets Better" project, the California-based Gay-Straight Alliance Network (http://gsanetwork.org/) initiated the "Make It Better" project. The goal of this campaign is to motivate students, educators, politicians, and concerned community members to take action to address the problem of bullying and harassment in schools related to gender and sexuality, a group of behaviors called gendered harassment. Students shouldn't have to endure constant bullying and harassment or

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[1] Although some readers may be more familiar with the acronyms LGBT or GLBT, I choose to order the letters alphabetically to attend to the history and politics of exclusion and hierarchies of inclusion within this diverse community. By placing these groups in alphabetical order, I hope to encourage readers to be conscious of attending to the needs and interests of each group inclusively and equitably.

[2] I use Diane Ehrensaft's term *gender-creative* to refer to youth whose gender expression in any way transcends the narrow norms of heteronormative masculinity for males and femininity for females. This term is offered as a more positive and inclusive term in contrast to some of the other language used in research literature, including gender atypical, gender variant, gender dysphoric, gender nonnormative, and gender nonconforming.

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wait until they are out of school to experience an inclusive and supportive environment. This chapter is written in the spirit of the "Make It Better" project. The objective is to help current teachers, administrators, school counselors, as well as teacher educators gain the tools and knowledge necessary to understand the complex issues in their school communities related to gendered harassment and the support to take steps to transform their communities.

To provide the reader with a basic understanding of bullying and harassment in schools, the first section introduces gendered harassment (Meyer 2006, 2008) and the role gender and sexuality play in common forms of bullying and harassment in schools. The second section focuses on theory by introducing queer pedagogy and how it can play a role in reducing bullying and harassment by creating safer, more inclusive, and more socially just school environments. The third section addresses legal and policy issues that provide an overview of some of the institutional concerns related to gendered harassment. The fourth section takes up the question of praxis by offering tangible suggestions for taking thoughtful action to positively transform school cultures. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of ways to get others involved and to work strategically to maintain energy, optimism, and employment during the often controversial, challenging yet ultimately rewarding, process of transforming the culture of a school community.

4.2 The Problem: Gendered Harassment

Forms of bullying and harassment that are most common in schools are related to body size, perceived sexual orientation, and gender expression (California Safe Schools Coalition 2004; Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network [GLSEN] and Harris Interactive 2005; National Mental Health Association 2002). The field of queer theory has created innovative ways of thinking about and discussing issues related to embodiment, gender, and sexuality; therefore, these forms of bullying and harassment can be understood in more complex and multidimensional ways when examined through a queer lens. In my research, I have linked these behaviors under the term "gendered harassment" (Meyer 2006, 2008, 2009). Gendered harassment describes any behavior that polices and reinforces the traditional gender roles of heteronormative masculinity and femininity through harmful behaviors that can be physical (hitting, tripping, shoving), verbal (name-calling, spreading rumors, graffiti), or psychological (mean looks, ostracism). Forms of gendered harassment include (hetero)sexual harassment, homophobic harassment, and harassment for gender nonconformity which includes transphobic harassment. These three forms can be linked under the umbrella of gendered harassment because the motives behind these behaviors are linked to the norm setting and public performance of traditional heterosexual, cisnormative, gender roles (Larkin 1994; Renold 2002; Smith and Smith 1998). This section provides an overview of these forms of bullying and harassment as examined through the lens of queer theory.

4.2.1 Bullying

Dan Olweus published his first study on the problem of bullying in Norway in 1978 and has consistently set the agenda for research in this field by defining bullying, structuring how researchers study the problem, and creating interventions and evaluations of programs to reduce bullying in schools. He introduced the following definition of bullying:

> A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students … it is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempting to inflict, injury or discomfort on another … Negative actions can be carried out by words (verbally), for instance, by threatening, taunting, teasing, and calling names. It is a negative action when somebody hits, pushes, kicks, pinches or restrains another—by physical contact. It is also possible to carry out negative actions without the use of words or physical contact, such as by making faces or dirty gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group, or refusing to comply with another person's wishes. (1993, p. 9)

Bullying studies report 9% (Olweus 1993), 33% (Bond et al. 2001), and 58% (Adair et al. 2000) of students are victims of bullying at school. The wide variation in reported rates of bullying may be attributed to how survey questions were phrased, what period was being investigated (entire school career, the past year, the past month), and how the data were analyzed and reported. Researchers also found a large number of negative impacts associated with being the victim of bullying. These studies reported that students who were victims of bullying also reported symptoms of anxiety, depression, stress, hopelessness, and low self-esteem and were more likely to attempt self-harming behaviors and suicide (Bond et al. 2001; Coggan et al. 2003). The problem with the majority of bullying research and related antibullying programs is that they rarely identify or examine social group memberships (race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation), biased attitudes, and how they may interact with the bully-victim phenomenon (Meyer 2014).

More recently, Gruber and Fineran (2008) published the first study to examine the prevalence and impacts of bullying and sexual harassment behaviors in the same study. This information is valuable for educators and scholars as it provides a common frame of reference for understanding these overlapping issues. The authors found that more students experienced bullying (52%) than sexual harassment (34%) and that boys and girls experienced similar levels of bullying (53% vs. 51%) and harassment (36% vs. 34%). Where the authors did find a difference was in students who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning their sexual orientation (GLBQ). Gruber and Fineran found that GLBQ students experienced more bullying (79% vs. 50%) and more sexual harassment (71% vs. 32%) than non-GLBQ identified students. This study also examined the impacts of bullying and sexual harassment on the health of students. The authors found that girls and GLBQ students generally have poorer health (self-esteem, mental and physical health, and trauma symptoms) during middle and high school. Finally, Gruber and Fineran concluded that sexual harassment has a more severe impact than bullying on a student's overall health. Their findings led them to conclude that "the current trend of focusing on

[bullying], or else subsuming harassment under bullying, draws attention away from a significant health risk" (Gruber and Fineran 2008, p. 9) and that schools need to include sexual harassment interventions as a distinct focus. This leads us to a discussion of sexual harassment.

4.2.2   (Hetero)sexual Harassment

Male students often assert their masculinity by degrading their female peers through common use of terms such as "bitch," "baby," "chick," and "ho." These are ways in which men attempt to assert their masculinity by degrading their female peers (Larkin 1994). Another common and socially acceptable way to perform masculinity is to sexually objectify female peers and discuss sexual acts they would like to engage in—or have already engaged in (Duncan 1999; Larkin 1994; Stein 1995). This behavior is generally not stopped by teachers and is sometimes even encouraged by their participation. Students report that male teachers might "laugh along with the guys" (Larkin 1994), add to the comments, and even blame the victim (Stein 1995).

Although sexual harassment, by definition, is sexual in nature, it is a form of gendered harassment due to the theoretical understanding of its roots: the public performance of traditional heterosexual gender roles. It is important to acknowledge that men can also be victims of sexual harassment, much of it from other men, and it tends to be homophobic in nature. Young women may also be implicated in such behaviors, and they are most commonly exhibited as verbal insults directed toward other women as a result of competition for boyfriends or between friendship groups (Brown 2003; Duncan 1999).

Sexual harassment has been described as a way of understanding how patriarchy works: how men continue to assert their power over women. Though this is a useful place to begin, it is important to stretch our understanding of this problem to include how highly valued forms of traditionally masculine behaviors are practiced and performed over the devalued forms of traditional notions of femininity. These traditional gender roles are established within a heterosexual matrix (Butler 1990) that allows only for a single dominant form of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1978/1993). As long as these attitudes and behaviors go unchallenged, then schools will continue to be sites where young people are harassed out of an education. To prevent this from continuing, we must learn effective strategies for intervention that will help educators create schools where such discriminatory attitudes and behaviors are replaced by more inclusive notions of respect, equality, and understanding.

4.2.3   Homophobic Harassment

Homophobic harassment is any sort of behavior that displays negative attitudes toward bisexual, gay, lesbian, and queer (BGLQ) people, as well as people who may be questioning their sexual orientation or identity. The most common form is verbal

and includes the use of antigay language as an insult (for example, "that's so gay," "don't be such a fag") and antigay jokes and behaviors that make fun of gays and lesbians (such as affecting the speech and walk of a stereotypically effeminate gay man to get a laugh) (Pascoe 2005; Smith and Smith 1998). In a national study of school climate conducted by the GLSEN, 87.3% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed (e.g., called names or threatened) at school because of their sexual orientation and 59.5% of LGBT students reported that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation and 44.6% felt unsafe because of their gender (Kosciw et al. 2018). In a more positive note, students have reported less harassment and increased feelings of school safety when a teacher intervened or when schools have a Gay-Straight Alliance (Kosciw et al. 2018).

In addition to the risks that BGLQ youth face in schools as a result of this homophobic climate, students who are transgender, agender, gender-fluid, nonbinary, or gender-creative are also frequently targeted in schools. Harassment of those acting outside the narrow boundaries that define gender norms is often linked with homophobia, but it is important to understand this area separately so as not to confuse existing misconceptions of gender expression and sexual orientation.

4.2.4   Harassment for Gender Nonconformity

Harassment for gender nonconforming behaviors is under-researched, but important to understand. According to the one study published in 2004, 27% of all students in California schools reported being harassed for gender nonconformity (California Safe Schools Coalition 2004). Due to prevalent stereotypes in our society of gay men and lesbians who defy traditional gender norms, anyone whose behavior transgresses popular notions of masculinity and femininity is often perceived to be gay. This is a dangerous assumption to make as it mistakenly conflates the concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity. There is not enough room here to fully explore the notions of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, but each identity is distinct and may be expressed in various ways.[3] For example, although many females (sex) identify as heterosexual (sexual orientation) women (gender identity), it does not mean that this is the only possible combination of identities. By perpetuating these misconceptions, schools reinforce traditional notions of heteronormative masculinity and femininity that reduce educational opportunities and school safety for all students. Research has demonstrated that more rigid adherence to traditional sex roles correlates with more negative attitudes and violent behaviors toward gays and lesbians (Bufkin 1999; Whitley 2001). The negative threat of being perceived as a sissy or a tomboy (particularly after puberty), and the resulting homophobic backlash, limits the ways in which students participate in school life. Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli (2003) describe an interview with a student who was harassed for his interest in art:

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[3] See Butler (1990) for a more in-depth explanation of these concepts and their differences.

> On his way to school one morning a group of boys at the back of the bus from one of the local high schools started calling him names. Initially, he was targeted as an "art boy" because he was carrying an art file. But the harassment escalated and they began calling him "fag boy."

In this example, the students used an antigay slur to harass a student for his gender nonconforming behavior.

Unfortunately, North American society's ongoing misogyny, or negative attitudes toward femininity, generally makes this gender performance much harder on individuals expressing feminine identities. North American schools generally place a higher value on strength, competitiveness, aggressiveness, and toughness, qualities widely viewed as masculine. Whereas being creative, caring, good at school, and quiet are often considered to be feminine qualities and are viewed by many as signs of weakness—particularly in boys. It is not surprising then that bullying studies report that "typical victims are described as physically weak, and they tended to be timid, anxious, sensitive and shy … In contrast, bullies were physically strong, aggressive, and impulsive, and had a strong need to dominate others" (Hoover and Juul 1993). It seems difficult to effectively intervene to stop bullying when the qualities that bullies embody are the ones most valued by many and demonstrate a form of power generally esteemed in a male-centered, or patriarchal, society. The pressure on boys to conform to traditional notions of masculinity is great, and the risk of being perceived as gay is an effective threat in policing the boundaries of acceptable behavior.

Students in every school experience various forms and degrees of gendered harassment (Taylor et al. 2011). Due to the prevalence of bullying and harassing behaviors influenced by homophobia, transphobia, as well as other forms of sex and gender bias, educators must have a more complex and nuanced understanding of these social influences. Queer pedagogy is one approach that can provide educators frameworks and tools to more effectively help students understand sex, gender, and sexuality to unlearn their prejudices and transform the toxic environments in many schools.

4.3   Queer Pedagogy

Queer pedagogy defies a static definition, but to provide new readers a starting framework, I offer an excerpt from an early and influential text on queer pedagogy. Bryson and de Castell (1993) describe it as "a radical form of educative praxis implemented deliberately to interfere with, to intervene in, the production of 'normalcy' in schooled subjects. We argue for an explicit 'ethics of consumption' in relation to curricular inclusions of marginalized subjects and subjugated knowledges" (p. 285). This approach encourages "praxis," an ongoing cycle of action informed by reflection (Freire 1970/1993). In queer pedagogy, this reflection is focused on how patterns of what is "normal" are created and reproduced in schools and asks teachers and students to examine and question them to make space for

other bodies and identities that have been marginalized and cast outside the "charmed circle" (Rubin 1984/1993) of normalcy. One way this normalcy is inserted into the curriculum is through the prevalence and acceptance of the "fag discourse" (Pascoe 2005; Smith and Smith 1998). The "fag discourse" is the persistent threat of being accused of being gay that is used to regulate masculinity. Examples of this in schools include the use of antigay names, insults, and jokes throughout everyday interactions that are rarely ever challenged or interrupted by the adults in schools.

The concept of queer as a more inclusive and empowering word for anyone who lives outside the boundaries of heteronormative and cisgender identities and relationships emerged in the early 1990s as a controversial and deeply political term (Jagose 1996, p. 76). Queer is understood as a challenge to hetero and cisnormative understandings of gender and sexual identity by deconstructing the categories, binaries, and language that support them. Advocates of a queer pedagogy have used elements of critical and poststructural feminist theories to inform their theoretical frameworks. Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990/1993), and Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987/2007) were influential works for this emerging school of thought. Jagose (1996) explains that queer theory's most significant achievement is to specify "how gender operates as a regulatory construct that privileges heterosexuality and, furthermore, how the deconstruction of normative models of gender legitimates lesbian and gay subject-positions" (p. 83). Queering seeks to disrupt and challenge traditional modes of thought around gender and sexual identity and, by standing on the boundaries or "borderlands" (Anzaldúa 1987/2007) drawn by dominant culture, can more effectively examine and dismantle them. Deborah Britzman (1995), a leading theorist in this field, explains how she understands queer theory and its role in learning:

> Queer Theory offers methods of critiques to mark the repetitions of normalcy as a structure and as a pedagogy. Whether defining normalcy as an approximation of limits and mastery, or as renunciations, as the refusal of difference itself, Queer Theory insists on posing the production of normalization as a problem of culture and of thought. (p. 154)

Britzman (2000) specifically addresses how sexuality is currently inserted in the school curriculum. She notes, "this has to do with how the curriculum structures modes of behavior and orientations to knowledge that are repetitions of the underlying structure and dynamics of education: compliance, conformity, and the myth that knowledge cures" (2000, p. 35). In discussing how to challenge *pedagogical* forms of resistance, Britzman (2000) encourages educators to recognize the power that *Eros* can play in teaching. By understanding sexuality as a force that "allows the human its capacity for passion, interests, explorations, disappointment, and drama" and "because sexuality is both private and public—something from inside of bodies and something made between bodies—we must focus on sexuality in terms of its contradictory, discontinuous, and ambiguous workings" (2000, p. 37).

This disruption and open discussion of previously silenced issues can be difficult for teachers to navigate. Queer pedagogy empowers educators to open up traditionally silenced discourses and create spaces for students to explore and challenge the

hierarchy of identities that is created and supported by schools, such as teacher-student, jock-nerd, sciences-arts, male-female, Black-White, rich-poor, disabled/able-bodied, cis/trans, and gay-straight. To move past this, teachers must learn to see schooling as a place to question, explore, and seek alternative explanations rather than a place where knowledge means "certainty, authority, and stability" (Britzman 2000, p. 51). Although the term "queer pedagogy" might seem difficult for some teachers to embrace, it can help educators, youth advocates, schools, and other institutions creatively and effectively work to end bullying by transforming hostile and oppressive environments and meeting the needs of all students.

Queer pedagogy offers a further extension of ideas introduced by social justice education, critical and feminist pedagogies, multiculturalism as well as antioppressive theories, by calling on educators to question and reformulate through a queer pedagogical lens: (a) how they teach, reinforce, or expand normalized gendered practices in schools; (b) how heteronormativity is repeated or questioned; and (c) how they embrace or challenge other repetitions of normalcy in their classrooms. Schools can do more to challenge and disrupt traditional ways of knowing and encourage students to question all that is normally assumed and taken for granted in society so that all students have a fair chance to learn in a physically and psychologically safe environment.

4.4 Politics and Praxis

4.4.1 Politics and Policies

Institutional silence and violence are responsible for many severe cases of gendered harassment. Since the mid-1990s, there have been several legal cases where students and their families successfully sued their principals and/or school districts as a result of the severe, pervasive, and harmful harassment they experienced in schools, including the following:

- A high school student subjected to repeated acts of homophobic harassment, and as a result, he had been hospitalized, dropped out of school, and attempted suicide. The court wrote, "[W]e are unable to garner any rational basis for permitting one student to assault another based on the victim's sexual orientation," and the school district settled with Nabozny for $900,000 (*Nabozny v. Podlesny* 1996).
- A fifth-grade girl was repeatedly sexually harassed by a male classmate such that her grades declined drastically, and she wrote a suicide note. Schools are not responsible for the actions of the harassing student, "but rather for its own discrimination in failing to take immediate and appropriate steps to remedy the hostile environment once a school official knows about it" (Office for Civil Rights 1997; *Davis v. Monroe County* 1999).

- A female-identified transgender student was repeatedly sent home by her principal for "dress code violations," and began requiring her to check with him to have her clothing approved on a daily basis. The court found that the treatment she received from her school principal violated sex discrimination protections provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and that the school could not place restrictions on her attire based on her sex assigned at birth (*Doe v. Brockton* 2000).
- A group of high school students filed a class-action suit against their school district for failing to protect them from repeated homophobic harassment. The court found sufficient evidence of deliberate indifference to the ongoing sexual orientation harassment of six students in this California School District, which resulted in a $1,100,000 settlement with the students (*Flores v. Morgan Hill* 2003).
- A student was bullied for his "perceived lack of masculinity" and the court decided that the environment at school was so "severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denied (him) an education in the Tonganoxie school district" (*Theno v. Tonganoxie* 2005).
- In 2017, a high school student refused access to the boys' room won a federal ruling, after his graduation, enabling him to use male facilities should he return to his Gloucester County, Virginia high school. The court ruled that the school district had violated Title IX by refusing him access. In a related case, *Whitaker v. Kenosha Unified School District* (2017), the school district paid an $800,000 settlement to Ash Whitaker for refusing him access to male facilities, despite requests from his mother and his doctor that the school district help him socially transition.

These official acts of homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny enacted by school administrators either by their actions or inactions linked to acts of gendered harassment, are a central element in establishing either an inclusive or hostile learning environment at school. In recent years, there has been an increase in state legislation and federal enforcement and guidance that address homophobic bullying and sexual harassment in schools.

State nondiscrimination laws that protect individuals based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity exist in only 22 states and the District of Columbia (Out & Equal Workplace Advocates 2017). However, according to the Human Rights Watch (2017), only 19 states and Washington, DC have statutes specifically protecting students in schools from bullying based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Students in states that have these protections reported significantly lower rates of verbal harassment than their peers (Kosciw et al. 2010). In addition, eight states have legislation that prohibits the positive portrayal of homosexuality in school curricula (Alabama, Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah), and students in these states reported being verbally harassed at a higher frequency than students from states without such legislation (47.6% compared to 37.2%; Kosciw and Diaz 2006, p. 86). In 2011, the state of California passed the FAIR Education Act. This is the first law of its kind as it requires the inclusion of LGBT people and people with disabilities across the K-12 social stud-

ies curriculum and prohibits lessons and materials that reflect negatively on members of these groups. When the Supreme Court ruled in 2015 that same-sex marriage was legal in all 50 states, it provided further impetus to include lessons on family diversity.

Even when there are policies in place, there are often other institutional barriers to implementation. Canada has federal and provincial laws protecting individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation, and the Toronto District School Board has one of the most innovative and inclusive education and intervention programs to address issues of gender and sexuality in their schools. However, in a research report evaluating the program, Goldstein et al. (2005) identified the following obstacles to this type of equity work:

1. Time restrictions,
2. Limits on language peer educators could use,
3. Lack of ongoing institutional support and follow up to anti-homophobia education,
4. Fear of being reprimanded for conducting anti-homophobia education,
5. Fear of being harassed or threatened by parents, colleagues and school administration,
6. Fear of not being able to respond to student queries about homosexuality,
7. Conflicts between educators' commitment to equity and personal religious beliefs,
8. Issues with students not being prepared for an anti-homophobia workshop so they entered hostile and unreceptive. (p. 4)

These factors are important to understand and address if we want to have any hope of ending bullying and harassment in schools—particularly forms linked to gender and sexuality. Getting legal and policy support is an important step to ending gendered harassment and other forms of bullying, but it is not essential for implementing a queer pedagogy that can transform attitudes, behaviors, and the overall school climate. The next section introduces suggested approaches to taking reflective action by applying principles of queer pedagogy.

4.4.2   Praxis—Teaching Queerly

To create a school or classroom environment that is a safe and inclusive space where multiple perspectives and ideas are encouraged and valued, teachers must work explicitly and consistently to meet this goal. Some effective classroom management and instructional strategies can be slightly modified to reduce incidents of bullying and harassment by applying a queer pedagogical lens. These approaches include (a) constructivist (or student-centered) teaching, (b) inquiry or problem-based instruction, (c) democratic or citizenship education, (d) auto-ethnography or self-study, and (e) addressing issues of equity and diversity related to gender and sexuality in the official curriculum.

Constructivist models of education are gaining in popularity across North America (DeVries et al. 2001; Steffe and Gale 1995). Constructivist pedagogy places the students at the center of the learning process and actively engages them in ways that more traditional, didactic, teaching methods cannot. Classroom activities that encourage students to ask questions, pursue their own interests, and work at their own pace all fit the constructivist model of teaching. By placing students' experiences and questions at the center of the learning process, educators make space to address issues that are relevant to students' lives and interests. During adolescence, issues of identity, relationships, and sexuality are very important to students. Teachers can incorporate these concerns across the curriculum by using students' questions, stories, and interests as texts for discussion and exploration. By making space to discuss issues of gender and sexuality across the curriculum, educators can challenge the "normalcy" of heteronormative teen life that is presented in the popular media and shift the culture of a class or the school. Project or inquiry-based learning is a form of constructivist teaching that allows students to pose questions, discover answers, and teach each other along the way.

Project or inquiry-based activities allow students to work individually or in small groups to learn about a particular issue or problem and then share their knowledge with the rest of the class. This approach allows students to bring in new sources of information and allows multiple perspectives to be heard. Rather than students listening to the teacher or reading from a textbook, they are able to interview their families and community members, read books, and conduct searches in the library and on the Internet for additional sources of information. By shifting away from using textbooks for learning, teachers can inspire students to think outside the box, and again challenge dominant, or "normal" ways of seeing the world. With the careful guidance of the teacher, students learn to evaluate various sources of information and make informed decisions about the perspectives that make the most sense in the context of what they are learning. These inquiry and critical thinking skills are higher-order skills than those of memorization and repetition that are practiced in a more traditional teacher-centered classroom. Although the topics may not be explicitly queer, the approach of exploring marginalized experiences and decentering dominant discourses is an exercise that is consistent with queer pedagogy.

A third approach to teaching that is informed by queer pedagogy is democratic or citizenship education. Democratic theories of education argue that students should be encouraged to talk through their differences with adult support and learn from their divergent points of view. Teachers should establish basic expectations early in the school year through a classroom contract or code of conduct that is co-constructed with the students in the class so they feel ownership over the support and reinforcement of the rules or guidelines. By establishing clear expectations for behavior and participation early on and in a collective way, teachers not only model the behaviors they seek to develop in their students but also engage them in a collective classroom activity that allows them to play a central role in creating the classroom community they will be learning in all year long. These styles of teaching create a classroom environment that allows students to experience the democratic decision-making process. It encourages students to share their ideas, debate the

ones that evoke some controversy, and arrive at a decision that the entire class can live with. Democratic education isn't just about voting and majority rules. It is about participating in the process and being given the opportunity to frame the debate and have one's own perspectives considered by others. Structured debates are one effective approach to discussing controversial issues in a class, school, or town community. Activities where students are encouraged to look at issues from multiple viewpoints and take a stand to defend a perspective on an issue can allow important learning to occur: not just on a particular subject but on the process of learning and engaging in political processes.

Another citizenship activity can involve getting students involved in local or national social justice issues such as environmental concerns, poverty, immigration reform, LGBTQ rights, or school reform. Supporting students' engagement in real-life problems that affect the students' communities can contribute to students' life-long learning in ways that studying an issue in a textbook cannot. Teachers can suggest activities such as letter-writing campaigns, drafting and circulating petitions, attending school board and city council meetings, or planning and participating in a public demonstration. Although many teachers might shy away from such political involvement, there are compelling reasons to support such work with students. First, if the students choose the topic and the activities, then the project will engage the students personally and reflect their interests and perspectives. Second, students often complain that what they are learning in school has no connection to real life, and this is one way to address that concern. Third, as mentioned above, when students are asked to create their own ideas, carefully evaluate others' ideas, and construct an appropriate and reasoned response, they are using much more advanced academic skills than the ones they are called on to use in a more typical classroom environment. There are many stories of students using such skills to advocate for a Gay-Straight Alliance in their school (*East High GSA v. Salt Lake* 1999; Griffin et al. 2004; Macgillivray 2005; Mayo 2017) to plan a "Day of Silence" (*Harper v. Poway Unified* 2006; Skowronski 2008; Wegwert 2011), or to take an organized stand against bullying and homophobia in their school community by coordinating a "wear pink day" (Mills 2007). Engaging in real-life work also demonstrates intersectionality—that gender and sexuality issues are always connected to other communities' struggles for justice.

A fourth approach to teaching involves engaging students in a form of research called auto-ethnography, or self-study. This approach encourages participants to carefully examine their own identities and community affiliations as well as the privileges and biases that accompany them: what is valued and what is not in one's own family, school, or religious institution. This kind of teaching asks teachers and students to engage in reflective identity-work, much like that which was illustrated in the film *Freedom Writers* (LaGravenese 2006). It asks students to "analyze their own lives in order to develop their practical consciousness about real injustices in society and to develop constructive responses" (Sleeter and Grant 1994, p. 225). Although this approach might seem more appropriate at the secondary level, it can be done with younger students in different ways using visual arts, drama, storytelling, and other media to help students articulate their stories and perspectives. Some

excellent examples of this are displayed in the film *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School* (Chasnoff 1996).

A final approach is to incorporate lessons that ask students to talk about issues related to gender and sexuality and how they are connected to issues of equity and diversity. Students of any age can talk about "what it means to be a boy/girl," or conduct a survey of media texts (books, comic books, magazines, TV shows) and how various gender identities and expressions are represented. By giving students the language and opportunity to talk openly about the variety of gender identities and expressions and how they are valued or devalued, you offer them the tools to begin critically evaluating their entire social world. One interesting study examined what happened when teachers gave elementary students scenarios of children being excluded or teased for their gender. The study found that when students were given practice and experience confronting these situations, the students were able to effectively challenge other incidents of gender bias at school (Lamb et al. 2009). Additional resources for ideas of texts and activities are listed at the end of the chapter.

4.5 Conclusion

Many educators and parents feel fearful and threatened when the topic of gender and sexuality is addressed in the school setting. The threat of personal and professional backlash often keeps caring and motivated educators from acting on these issues. However, to change the current reality in schools, courageous and motivated leaders are needed in every school community. This chapter was written to offer readers the information and support to become a leader in their community and to begin taking on a more comprehensive approach to reduce bullying and harassment. If you choose to take on this role, it is important to be aware of potential obstacles and ways that you can sustain your energy and spirit to engage in this work for the long haul. Systemic change happens slowly and only with the concerted effort of many stakeholders. Therefore, I encourage you to build coalitions with other people in your community engaging in this work. If you have a strong support network and a growing pool of concerned, active citizens, then you can reduce the risk of feeling depleted, overwhelmed, and burnt out in the process of transforming your school and community for the better.

At the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in 2009, Catherine Lugg, a leading queer scholar at Rutgers University, poignantly demanded, "How many dead queer kids will it take" for responsible adults to take action on their behalf? The answer for me is zero. We have already lost too many lives to suicide, drug abuse, and homelessness as a result of the homophobia and transphobia in schools. Almost a decade later, Lugg (2016) continues to argue against the systematic erasure of queer youth and pedagogies from US schools. Now is the time for action, and I hope you will finish this chapter and identify one thing you can do today to "make it better" for all youth in America's schools.

Action ideas:

1. Contact your local high school and ask them if they have a bullying and harassment policy that explicitly includes gender identity and expression and sexual orientation as protected classes. If not, find out what the process is to add or amend a policy.
2. Find a local chapter of GLSEN (www.glsen.org) or Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG; www.pflag.org) and ask how you can support their work on these issues in your state.
3. Contact the LGBT caucus of your local teachers' union and ask what issues they are currently working on and how you can get involved.
4. Plan a professional development workshop for your school community on issues related to gender, sexuality, bullying, and harassment.
5. Initiate a social justice task force or school safety committee and invite representatives from various constituencies, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members.
6. Start a book group with colleagues and read one of the titles suggested at the end of this chapter.
7. Design and implement a lesson or unit plan that applies one of the pedagogical approaches listed above.
8. Work with colleagues to develop an interdisciplinary unit on gender and sexuality (collaborate with Language Arts, Social Sciences, Math, Art, and Science teachers).

Additional Resources:

- The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's K–12 curriculum site: http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/2461.html?state=tools&type=educator
- Human Rights Campaign's Welcoming Schools K–6 curriculum kit: http://www.welcomingschools.org/
- Media Awareness Network K–12 lesson plans: http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/
- Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance K–12 lesson plans: http://www.tolerance.org/activities
- Bryan, J. (2012). *From the dress-up corner to the senior prom: Navigating gender and sexuality diversity in PreK–12 schools.* New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
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Chapter 5
Mathematical Inqueery: Queering the Theory, Praxis, and Politics of Mathematics Pedagogy

Kai Rands

The juxtaposition of queer pedagogy and mathematics may at first seem rather uncanny; mathematics and mathematics education have traditionally been positioned as outside of cultural influences. Recent work in critical mathematics education, however, opens new space to consider how queering mathematics education can address not only the normativity of mathematical processes, but also normative messages about subjectivity, family, and economics contained within mathematics education. This chapter examines the queer impulses in mathematics as a discipline and elaborates on "mathematical inqueery" (Rands 2009) as a queer theoretical perspective on mathematics education. The theory, praxis, and politics of mathematical inqueery are considered in relation to queering family, citizenship, and "financial literacy" in the "global economy."

5.1 Setting the Stage: Social Turns in Mathematics Education

The focus on mathematics pedagogy as an area of study is a fairly recent development that began in the 1970s out of conversations between psychologists interested in cognition and educators interested in mathematics (de Corte et al. 1996). It is not surprising that cognitive psychologists chose mathematics as an "ideal" subject for examining cognition; the cognitive realm and the social realm have often been viewed in contrast to one another, and the images of mathematics and mathematics education have traditionally placed them squarely inside the cognitive realm and outside the social realm. As D'Ambrosio (1999) noted, "During the first half of [the 20th century] … mathematics and mathematics teaching were considered to be

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independent of the sociocultural context" (p. 48). In fact, Skovsmose (2009) pointed out that "[i]t is precisely mathematics that is assumed to strip away all those elements that can be associated with subjectivity" (p. 68). The traditional view of mathematics is that it is neutral, universal, and uninfluenced by the social and cultural realms. Hence, as Stemhagen (2006) observed, many math teachers see social justice issues as "out of their hands" (p. 1). However, in the past quarter-century, a growing number of mathematics educators have reframed mathematics and mathematics education within the social realm. Valero and Zevenbergen (2004) identified two versions of a "social turn" in mathematics education. The first turn is toward social constructivism and draws on Vygotsky's work. Theorists and researchers in this line of thought assert that mathematical knowledge is socially constituted within the social milieu of a classroom culture. The second "social turn" is toward a view based on sociology and critical theory. In this case, mathematics education is assumed to be a social and political practice, which is "historically constituted in complex systems of action and meaning in the intermesh of multiple contexts such as the classroom, the school, the community, the nation and even the globalized world" (p. 2). This line of thought addresses issues of power and raises questions about the ways in which mathematics can be and has been oppressive. Gutiérrez (2002) contrasted "dominant" and "critical" mathematics in the following way: "dominant mathematics" is "mathematics that reflects the status quo in society" (p. 150), whereas "critical mathematics" is "mathematics that squarely acknowledges students as members of a society rife with issues of power and domination" (p. 151). Despite these two versions of "social turns" and the development of critical mathematics education, queer perspectives on mathematics education had been remarkably absent until recently (Rands 2009). Numerous scholars have contributed to an emerging body of work drawing on queer and trans perspectives. Mendick (2006b) used queer theory to critique the masculinity of mathematics and mathematics education. In addition, Mendick (2006a) staged an encounter between queer theory and mathematics education. In 2009, I wrote an article that introduced "mathematical inqueery" as an approach to math education using a queer theory perspective (Rands 2009) and later expanded on the approach (Rands 2016). Esmonde (2010, 2011) used the lens of genderism to critique the ways in which mathematics education centered mathematics achievement as a boys' issue. In 2013, James Sheldon and I organized a working group at the Psychology of Mathematics Education-North American Chapter conference entitled "Queering, Trans-Forming, and Engendering Mathematics and Mathematics Education" (Sheldon and Rands 2013). Since then, others (e.g., Dubbs 2016; Fischer 2013; Kersey 2018; Pennell 2016; Rands 2013; Rubel 2016; Sheldon 2019; Sheldon and Courey 2016) have written about math education from queer and trans perspectives. The uncanny juxtaposition of queer pedagogy and mathematics education provokes the production of new forms of inquiry in and through mathematics, that is, "mathematical inqueery."

5.2 Theory: Mathematical Inqueery as a Queer Theoretical Perspective on Mathematics Education

Mathematical inqueery, like other queer pedagogies, proceeds from new directions in queer theory. Originally a derogatory term directed at lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, the term "queer" has been reappropriated in the last several decades and has taken on two distinct meanings. First, "queer" is used as an all-encompassing term for a set of minority sexual and gender identities—as a more compact way to refer to the ever-expandable list lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex …(LGBTQI …). This use is based on the view in liberal theory of identity as a fixed, uncontested, essential self. Second, "queer" has taken on a complex network of signification in the context of queer theory in which identity is viewed as contingent, unfixed, and in a constant process of reconstitution through discursive practices (Butler 1990, 1993; Curran 2006; Foucault 1978; Sedgwick 1993; Sumara and Davis 1998; Talburt and Steinberg 2000; Warner 1999).

The tensions between the two uses of the term "queer" align with tensions between "gay/lesbian pedagogy" and "queer pedagogy." Examining the 1994 *Radical Teacher* issue on gay/lesbian/queer pedagogies further illuminates this tension. Phillips (1994) refers to the "queer debate" in an article on "pedagogy, theory, and the scene of resistance." The "Forum" delves into this debate by posing the questions, "Is queer pedagogy the same as lesbian/gay pedagogy? Why? If not, which is to be preferred, and why?" (p. 52). Although two respondents (Sillanpoa 1994; Woodhouse 1994) took "deep and abiding exception" to the term queer or answered that queer pedagogy did not exist, many of the respondents delineated differences between gay/lesbian pedagogy and queer pedagogy. For example, Hoad (1994) stated that lesbian/gay pedagogy "looks more like a consciousness raising pedagogy, entailing alerting students to questions of homophobia, creating tolerance of diversity in the classroom, scrupulously avoiding a recognition of the classroom as an eroticized space" (p. 54). On the other hand, he viewed "queer pedagogy as something more risky and explosive; it requires a radical interrogation of all social analyses, particularly in areas that appear to have little to do with sex. It should favor questions over answers. It should shock and titillate, not just inform" (p. 54). The queer, according to Holmes (1994), "is not a positivity but an interrogative and frequently interventionist position taken on the basis of a skepticism toward the supposedly 'natural' understandings of human society such as sexuality, race, class, and gender" (p. 54). Queer pedagogy is not merely the *inclusion* of queer students, families, and issues in the curriculum but rather entails questioning and interrogation (also see Nelson 1999).

Another tension within gay/lesbian/queer pedagogy consists of the simultaneous pulls toward a focus on sexuality and toward a broader focus on normativity. While "[q]ueer pedagogy insists on the importance of sexuality, of definitions and understandings worked through sexuality, as constitutive of everyone and everything in this (post)modern moment of Western history … [and] points to the problems any sexual categories have in defining all individuals" (Shepard 1994, p. 56), it also

"takes its bearings in defining itself against normativity, not heterosexuality" (Parker 1994, p. 55). As Warner (1993) asserted, queer "rejects a minoritizing logic of toleration or simple political interest-representation in favor of a more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal" (p. xxvi). This tension inheres in queer theory and queer pedagogy, as Parker (1994) explained:

> [I]n another discursive framing, gay and queer can and do coexist—more or less (un)easily—since they are, and at the same time are not, substitutable for one another … [G]iven the fact that heterosexuality is nothing if not normative, this means that there is always a possible (and indeed a predictably huge) overlap between these terms. But this is neither airtight nor inevitable: think, for example, of the variously normative aspects of gay and lesbian identities. (p. 55)

Parker's (1994) statement pointed out the ways in which gay and queer exist in a dynamic relationship. At times, people use them interchangeably; other times, they are used in distinct ways. Parker's (1994) explanation also addresses the ways in which gay and lesbian identities can also be normative. Following this line of thought, queer scholarship has introduced heteronormativity's gay twin, homonormativity. Duggan (2003) conceptualized homonormativity as a "new neoliberal sexual politics … that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them" (p. 50). While queer liberalism (Eng with Halberstam and Muñoz 2005, p. 10) is a rights-based approach that challenges heteronormativity, queer pedagogy contests both heteronomativity and homonormativity alike.

In "Queering/Querying Pedagogy? Or, Pedagogy Is a Pretty Queer Thing," Luhmann (1998) critiqued discourses of pedagogy that entail the typical "worry over strategies for effective knowledge transmission that reduce knowledge to mere information and students to rational but passive beings untroubled by the material studied" (p. 126). In challenging models of knowledge as transmission, Sheldon (2017) has pointed out that queer pedagogy is not simply a switch from passive to active as in mainstream discourses of active learning; rather, receptivity is just as important. In introducing the queer idea of versatility to education, Sheldon (2016) also observed that queer pedagogy is about dynamic subject-positions, not just about making the student agent. While keeping these complexities in mind, pedagogy might be "posed as a question (as opposed to the answer) of knowledge" (Luhmann 1998, p. 126). Pedagogy conceived in this way "is a pretty queer thing," as indicated by the title of Luhmann's chapter. Queer theory and pedagogy "desire to subvert the processes of normalization" (Luhmann 1998, p. 128). Similarly, one might assert that math "is a pretty queer thing." In fact, the impulses in queer theory to challenge normativity, question boundaries, and move to inquiry resonate with certain impulses in mathematics as a discipline.

Although the public image of mathematics tends to be that it is a dry, uncreative discipline focused on following rules, memorization, and quickly finding "right answers," (Frank 1990; Kogelman and Warren 1978; Mtetwa and Garofalo 1989; Paulos 1992; Sam 1999), numerous mathematicians and mathematics educators have challenged this image. For example, the nineteenth-century mathematician Sonya Kovalevsky (also known as Sophia Kovalevskia) is quoted as saying, "Many

who have never had occasion to learn what mathematics is confuse it with arithmetic, and consider it a dry and arid science. In reality, however, it is the science which demands the utmost imagination" (quoted in Curnutt n.d., para. 1). At first glance, the mathematical process of proof—with the nightmarish memories of high school geometry it may evoke for some people—perhaps seems as far from queer theory as one can get. However, Quinn (2012) pointed out that like physical sciences that "all went through 'revolutions': wrenching transitions in which methods change radically and become much more powerful" (p. 31), mathematics also underwent a revolution between 1890 and 1930. Quinn (2012) noted that, for various reasons, the mathematical revolution was much less visible than those in the physical sciences.

Despite the lack of public attention, shifts at the beginning of the twentieth century profoundly affected the way in which mathematics proceeds. A central change concerned what was accepted as a mathematical proof: "Old proofs could include appeals to physical intuition (e.g., about continuity and real numbers), authority (e.g., 'Euler did this so it must be OK'), and casual establishment of alternatives ('these must be all the possibilities because I can't imagine any others'). Modern proofs require each step to be carefully justified" (Quinn 2012, p. 32). Although some may perceive this shift as a shift toward rigidity, an alternative perspective points to the way this shift in what "counts" as proof allows for the critique of common sense assumptions—as does queer theory (for example, substitute "heterosexual people" for "these" in Quinn's quote: *heterosexual people* must comprise "all the possibilities because I can't imagine any others"; the result is the basic assumption of heterosexism). Due to this revolutionary shift in the conception of proof, according to Quinn (2012), "[i]t became possible, for instance, to see that some intuitively outrageous things are nonetheless true. Weierstrass's no-where-differentiable function (1872) and Peano's horrifying space-filling curve (1890) were early examples, and we have seen much stranger [*queerer?*] things since" (pp. 31–32). Peano's space-filling curve is certainly not a "normal" curve (in either the lay meaning of "normal" or the curve determined by a normal distribution in mathematics). Such an invention resonates with queer theory's impulses to challenge normativity, question categorical boundaries (what counts as a "curve") and move to inquiry. It is perhaps not too surprising, then, that Sedgwick (1990) chose for her seminal introduction to *Epistemology of the Closet* the mathematics term "Axiomatic." Although Sedgwick's work is a work of literary criticism, certainly not mathematics, the choice of title underlines the similar impulses in queer theory and modern mathematics. Until the nineteenth century, the term "axiom" referred to a truth taken to be self-evident (Folina 2010). With the mathematical revolution described by Quinn (2012), the meaning of the term "axiom" also shifted; "axioms as truths that simply reflect prior meanings thus yielded to the idea of axioms as determining meanings … by stipulating truths" (Folina 2010, para 3). As Canadian mathematician Robert Milson (with Eric Tressler) explained, "[i]n the modern understanding, a set of axioms is any collection of formally stated assertions from which other formally stated assertions follow by the application of certain well-defined rules" (2004, para. 14). This subtle shift in the meaning of "axiom" allowed

mathematicians to challenge assumptions that had previously been taken as "self-evident" or as accepted common sense, such as Euclid's fifth postulate or common-sense definitions of dimension, just as Sedgwick's axioms did so as queer theory came into being.

When I suggested that space-filling curves are "pretty queer things" at a Teaching Mathematics for Social Justice conference, one participant in the session insightfully pointed out that work on such "queer" mathematical objects did not necessarily mean that the mathematicians (in this case Peano and Hilbert) were any less homophobic or heterosexist than others of their time. This insight again emphasizes the tension in queer studies between pulls toward a focus on sexuality and toward a broader focus in normativity. Challenging taken-for-granted assumptions in mathematics may not automatically transfer into challenging taken-for-granted assumptions about sexuality. The pull to the other side toward a minoritizing focus on sexuality is evident in such groups as the Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Mathematicians (ALGBTM), a group of "gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender mathematicians, statisticians, math educators, and math theorists, and allies thereof" (ALGBTM 2012, para. 1). The mission of the group is "to establish and cultivate a vital and supportive community of LGBT mathematicians and their allies" (para. 3) through such means as publicizing "the historical and current contributions of LGBT mathematicians to mathematics" and promoting "an image of mathematicians as an appropriate vocational choice for future LGBT mathematicians" (para. 3). Although the risk in following the first pull is to lose the focus on sexuality in the struggle to challenge normativity, the risk in following the second pull is to lose the interrogatory edge of the impulses in queer theory in settling for inclusion and representation within mathematics.

In the pedagogy of mathematical inqueery, the queer impulses in pedagogy (Luhmann 1998), queer theory, and mathematics converge. Mathematical inqueery challenges normativity, continuously questions the boundaries of social, identity, and mathematical categories, and follows Nelson's (1999) call to move beyond inclusion to inquiry. Mathematical inqueery attempts to move toward a universalizing view that challenges normativity without completely losing the minoritizing focus on sexuality. Mathematical inqueery brings queer theory's interrogatory edge into the intersection with pedagogy and mathematics to mathematize the queer and queer mathematics.

5.3 Praxis and Politics: Queering Family, Citizenship, and "Financial Literacy" Through Mathematical Inqueery

In 2009, the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) announced that 49 U.S. states and territories had joined the Common Core Standards Initiative (National Governor's Association and the

Council of Chief State School Officers n.d.). In 2010, the Common Core standards for mathematics were released (Common Core State Standards Inititiative n.d.-a, n.d.-b). Within another year, by June 2011, 44 states and territories had formally adopted the standards (Common Core State Standards Inititiative n.d.-c). As of 2018, 41 states, four territories, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and the District of Columbia had adopted the standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative n.d.-c). Although the mathematics standards' description of *what* students in kindergarten through high school should learn about mathematics spans 90 pages, the answer to the question, *why* students should learn these concepts and skills, is answered in a single repeated statement in auxiliary documents: "The standards developed … must ensure **all** American students are prepared for the global economic workplace" (National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers n.d., p. 1). Similarly, in 2011, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) stated in bright red lettering at the top of its homepage, "The Partnership … is a national organization that advocates for 21st century readiness for every student. As the United States continues to compete in a global economy …" (Partnership for Twentieth Century Skills 2011, para. 1; this statement has since been removed). In these conceptualizations, the purpose of mathematics education has narrowed to a single purpose: to maintain U.S. economic world domination while simultaneously preparing students to be workers under global capitalism. (Such a purpose for mathematics education is not new; for example, see Gardner et al. 1983). To that end, one of five twenty-first century interdisciplinary themes put forth by the Partnership is "financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy," with the following subcomponents: "knowing how to make appropriate personal economic choices"; "understanding the role of the economy in society"; and "using entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity and career options" (Partnership for Twentieth Century Skills 2011, "Financial, Economic, Business," para. 1). In testimony to the Congressional Committee on House Financial Services, Voyles (*Empowering Consumers* 2010) cited Mike Hagerty and Kevin Clevenger as saying in support of mandated personal finance education:

> Can the Missouri required Personal Finance Course prevent another financial crisis? In our opinion; no, but nothing can actually prevent it. However, if one is asking whether the personal finance course can make a substantial difference for the future of citizens in our state and our country, absolutely yes! (para. 6)

This quote is interesting because it links education, personal finance, and citizenship in connection to "financial crisis." Queer scholarship in a special issue of *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* focused on "Queer Studies and the Crises of Capitalism" provided insights into the ways in which sexuality is implicated in these connections. Editors Rosenberg and Villarejo (2012) pointed out that financial "crisis … is not new" (p. 1). In fact:

> [I]t is a tried-and-true tactic of the consolidation of class power and imperialist nationalism that extends back at least to the Panic of 1893. As with our contemporary crisis, the capitalist classes reaped the real benefits in 1893, interrupting the momentum of the thriving populist and labor movements in the United States and justifying a redoubled wave of imperial expansion. (p. 1)

In the words of David Harvey, "Financial crises serve to rationalize the irrationalities of capitalism" (Rosenberg and Villarejo 2012, pp. 1–2). Furthermore, texts foundational to queer theory such as Foucault's (1977) *Discipline and Punish*, D'Emilio's (1993) analysis of gay identity in conjunction with wage labor, and Rubin's (1975) "political economy of sex," rely on Marxist and historical-materialist methodologies. Works in queer of color critique such as that of Ferguson, Muñoz, Melamed, and Eng "take up the legacies of historical materialism to think through the relationship of racialization, imperialism, and neoliberalism" (Rosenberg and Villarejo 2012, p. 3) as well. This collection of works laid the groundwork for a queer critique of neoliberalism embedded in contemporary calls for increased financial literacy education. Jakobsen (2012) made explicit the role of heteronormativity in the way in which contemporary neoliberal financial policies have come to be. She argued that the contemporary notion of "freedom" in the U.S. has roots in the Protestant Reformation:

> For the Reformers the meaning of freedom is first and foremost freedom from the Church, and the sign of this freedom, certainly for Martin Luther and John Calvin, is marriage over and against celibacy. Celibacy represented the moral ideal of the Church before the Reformation, and the Reformers' emphasis on marriage provides a counterpoint to this ideal. We do not always associate marriage with sexual freedom, but for the Reformers marriage represented not just freedom from the Church but a form of freedom that developed into what Michel Foucault has diagnosed as peculiarly modern: freedom that involves not wide open libertinism but disciplined activity. And this type of disciplined activity that both regulated and produced freedom, is precisely how the Reformers understood marriage. (pp. 23–24)

Marriage, according to Calvin (1536/1960), frees a householder from "greed, ambition, and other lusts of the flesh, keeps before him the purpose of serving God in a definite calling" (p. 1258; quoted in Jakobsen 2012, p. 24). Not only does marriage free the householder from "lusts of the flesh," but it also connects this sexual ethic with an individual's economic vocation as part of God's will: "The individual who fulfills his calling can know that this economic activity, including his economic gain, is in the service of God" (Calvin 1536/1960; quoted in Jakobsen 2012, p. 24). This Protestant (hetero)sexualization of personal financial gain as duty means that "insofar as US politics is informed by this tradition, the autonomous individual is the basis for other forms of social relation, including families, communities, and the nation-state" (Jakobsen 2012, p. 24). This view challenges the claims of mainstream economists that "their conceptual building blocks are objective, value-free, and scientific" (Barker and Feiner 2004). Instead, according to Barker and Feiner (2004), "the concepts of, for example, rationality and scarcity, maximization and equilibrium, commodities and exploitation, embody historically specific visions of normative masculinity, femininity, whiteness, and heterosexual orientation that are particular to the West" (p. 28). Jakobsen (2012) gave two interesting examples of the ways in which heteronormativity structures economic policies. The first consisted of the World Bank's set of development programs in Ecuador whose "express purpose [was] to create heteronormative relations" (Jakobsen 2012, p. 28). These programs distribute pamphlets on the benefits of companionate marriage and

provide small business loans to women in impoverished Ecuadorian communities based on the rationale that "women will have some access to economic resources and men will be drawn into household labor and child care" (p. 29). This policy attempts to switch the provider role to women instead of men, but nevertheless is based on heteronormative presumptions of relationships that are "directed in the end not toward local development per se but toward better integration of Ecuadorian communities into a privatized labor pattern, including privatizing household labor that is part and parcel of neoliberal globalization" (Jakobsen 2012, p. 29). The second example comes from the Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, whose stated task was to improve American communities irrespective of religious or political beliefs. Given this fairly specific task, the Office's statement of its top priorities makes some interesting expansions. The statement began by identifying economic recovery and poverty as the top priorities. Within two sentences, the statement echoed the Protestant aggregation of normative heterosexuality, economic duty, and gendered expectations: "The Office will strive to support fathers who stand by their families, which involves working to get young men off the streets and into well-paying jobs, and encouraging responsible fatherhood" (Jakobsen 2012, p. 36). The statement then rounded out the Protestant aggregation by suddenly jumping to the topic of religious tolerance among different "faiths"—not in American communities—but through fostering "interfaith dialogue with leaders and scholars around the world" (Jakobsen 2012, p. 36). As Jakobsen (2012) pointed out, "the overall effect … is to create a traditional vision of American gender roles, family structures, and their implications for policy … women are tied to children, and while they need to be supported so that abortions are not necessary, they, unlike fathers, apparently do not need well-paying jobs" (p. 37).

Approaches to teaching financial literacy in schools often reflect the same Protestant aggregation of notions identified by Jakobsen. One example came from a lesson plan entitled "Every Penny Counts" (n.d.) provided by the Council of Economic Education's (CEC) website. The main task in the lesson involved reading and discussing the story "Josh Has Many Wants" (Council of Economics Education [CEE] n.d.) In the story, a young boy named Josh receives birthday money from a neighbor and debates what he should buy with it. As written, the story omits information about how much money Josh has received and the cost of the various items he considers buying, but it would be easy for a teacher to add this information or ask students to use resources to find out typical prices. Determining whether characters have enough money to buy various items, finding different combinations of items characters can afford to buy, and exploring different coin combinations that can make a certain amount are common mathematical tasks in the primary grades. However, such tasks alone leave the impression that financial activity is neutral and apolitical and reflects the influence of "the forces of neoliberal multiculturalism, [which suture] liberal antiracism to U.S. naturalism" thereby "depoliticize[ing] capitalism by collapsing it with Americanism" (Melamed, quoted in Jakobsen 2012, pp. 2–3). Mathematical inqueery, on the other hand, brings to the task the interrogatory edge of queer theory. In this case, the teacher and students could read the story with an eye toward the normative. As it turns out, Josh's story embeds many

normative aspects contained within the Protestant aggregation. The story begins with Josh sitting in the car next to his mom, dreaming about "all the things he can buy with all the money he now has," (Council of Economics Education n.d.) birthday money from a neighbor. Already, the image created of Josh places him most likely within the normative economic category of middle class, with regular access to a family car and with plenty of birthday money. Next, Josh's mom takes him to the grocery store to buy food, fulfilling the middle-class White Protestant gender expectation of women as consumers of groceries and food preparers for their families. Josh continues to daydream about all of the different items he could buy and decides that he *really* wants a hamster. Meanwhile, he uses some of his birthday money to buy a candy bar on impulse, suggesting a possible classroom discussion on avoiding impulse buying. A reading based on Foucault (1977) notes the discipline-freedom connection in the story—Josh is "free" to choose what he will buy with his money but must maintain discipline and avoid buying on impulse. At the same time, Josh is positioned as an autonomous individual in two ways. First, when he asks his mother if he can have a candy bar, she replies, "Josh, I am buying food for our meal tonight. If you want the candy bar, you can use some of your money" (Council of Economic Education n.d.). Josh's mother affirms his autonomy to spend his money as he likes. Second, the clerk reaffirms Josh's autonomy to spend the rest of his money however he wants by asking Josh how he plans to spend the rest of it. Soon Josh and his mother arrive at home and eat dinner as a family—Josh, Mom, and Dad, the epitome of heteronormative family structures. Josh's father repeats the clerk's question about how Josh will spend his money—once again positioning Josh as an autonomous individual. Josh expresses his desire to spend his money in many different ways, but emphasizes that he "really, really" wants a hamster. Interestingly, Van Houtte and Javis (1995) found that students in grades 3–6 reported higher autonomy if they were pet owners; perhaps the desire for a hamster taps into a cultural longing for autonomy. Josh's father serves as a nonjudgmental facilitator of Josh's autonomy and disciplined freedom: "Sounds to me like your money is burning a hole in your pocket … I mean you want to spend your money NOW because you have so many wants … You want to go places, but it seems like a hamster is most important to you" (Council of Economic Education n.d.). Josh's dad then takes the next step in facilitating Josh's disciplined freedom by asking Josh to explain why he wants a hamster. Josh explains that the reason he wants a hamster is because his friend has one that "even has a ball to run around the house in" (Council of Economic Education n.d.). Reference to a house in which the hamster can run around solidifies the image of Josh and his friends as individual units in middle-class heteronormative families living in personal single-family detached houses. Josh's freedom to fulfill his wants as quickly as possible as long as he does so in a disciplined manner is affirmed when his mother quickly says yes to his request to go to the pet store the next day. Josh's discipline is tested once again at the pet store the next day, when a goldfish sale tempts him to change his mind about which pet to purchase. The decision is left up to the reader, shifting Josh's middle-class, heteronormative, disciplined autonomous subjectivity to the reader: "It seems Josh must make a decision. He needs help. What do you think Josh should do? Does thinking

about 'trade-offs' help?" (Council of Economic Education n.d.). Returning to the lesson plan, Melamed's neoliberal multiculturalism that depolititizes capitalism by collapsing it with Americanism stands out in sharp relief in the lesson's take away message: "Everyone must choose. People, rich and poor, young and old, must address the problem of wanting more than they can have" (Council of Economic Education n.d.). This statement suggests that everyone is positioned within capitalism in the same way.

Interestingly, the Consumer and Financial Protection Bureau (2016) in its report on "financial capability" acknowledges that structural and contextual factors contribute to financial well-being, and hence not everyone is positioned in the same way within the economic system; however, the report then dismisses these factors as not being feasible to address: "Indeed, [these] broad factors that contribute to adult financial well-being are outside the scope of this report … This report identifies individual abilities and characteristics that financial education organizations and policy and community leaders can seek to influence" (p. 4). Such a view is in contrast to recent research and programs that take into consideration economic factors that affect queer youth. For example, while certainly many queer youth are not in the child welfare system or living unhoused, queer youth are overrepresented in both of these populations (Forge et al. 2018, p. 47). Approximately 20–40% of youth living as unhoused identify as LGBTQ (Choi et al. 2015; Cochran et al. 2002; Durso and Gates 2012; Forge et al. 2018; Quintana et al. 2010; Van Leeuwen et al. 2006; Wright et al. 2016). In a study that modeled needs assessment and program planning, (Berberet 2006), 39% of LGBTQ youth said that they had been "kicked out" of their home based on their gender identity or sexual orientation (p. 373). A mathematical inqueery approach to economics recognizes that the economic strategies that work for middle-class housed youth such as Josh may no longer work in other situations such as for queer youth living unhoused. Berberet found that economic strategies such as couch surfing, dumpster diving, selling and trading drugs, and squatting came to the forefront as survival strategies. For many LGBTQ youth living unhoused, shelters are inaccessible due to homophobia/transphobia. For example, one 16-year-old youth explained, "'It's better on the street. You can fight … or run. But in those shelters you're trapped'" (Berberet 2006, p. 380). In Berberet's (2006) needs assessment, 100% of the queer youth said that they often did not share their sexual orientation with staff due to fears of how they would be treated. Of those who did disclose their sexual orientation 74% said they had experienced harassments and threats (Berberet 2006, p. 380). The needs assessment/program planning project described by Berberet resulted in the Sunburst Apartments, the first permanent housing program with adjunctive services for LGBTQ youth. While teaching math for social justice perspectives often encourage learning about structural inequalities in the classroom (e.g., Gutstein and Peterson 2013; McCoy 2008), the Sunburst Apartments program can be seen as an educational process that addresses structural inequalities directly. The program involved numerous layers of economic education. For example, service providers became learners of financial literacy as they became more aware of the economic strategies youth used to navigate living unhoused. Stakeholders learned ways to leverage for funding by sharing

the specific needs of queer youth living unhoused. Stakeholders also learned ways to collaboratively obtain funding for the project. It is worthy of noting that in this framing, the program positioned stakeholders and service providers as learners of financial literacy inverting the typical positioning of youth as learners from adults. It would also be possible to involve youth more in the financial aspects of the program planning.

5.4 Theory, Praxis, Politics

James Sheldon (personal communication 2018) observed that critiquing financial literacy reveals the ways in which (hetero)normativity is embedded within the structure of mathematics. While educators often assume that "context" is overlaid onto "math," these two entities are in fact inseparable. As an example, exponential financial formulas are structured to embed neoliberal capitalist assumptions about interest. Interest relates to personal financial gain, and in this way serves an ideological function of maintaining a focus on the individual and on accumulating wealth (or accumulating debt, depending on one's vantage point). The vantage point matters: queer young adults (especially those of color) are likely to have accumulated more debt than their straight peers (Poirier et al. 2018). Mathematical inqueery presses us to question the assumptions undergirding financial literacy and ultimately to invent new formulas and new ways of relating to one another in the world.

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Chapter 6
"That Wasn't Very Free Thinker": Queer Critical Pedagogy in the Early Grades

Kim Hackford-Peer

One February morning a few years ago I found myself unexpectedly sitting in the audience of a "wedding" performance. I was at an assembly at a local elementary school to support my kindergartener, Riley,[1] who was being recognized as a Student of the Month. I quickly learned that there was more to the assembly than the awards presentation when the second graders noisily arranged their costumed selves and their props on the stage. One of their teachers announced that the second graders were excited to share some of what they were learning with the rest of the school. The second graders were particularly excited about being responsible for delivering some sort of performance at the February assembly, since Valentine's Day is in February. They were going to perform a play that focused on the themes of love and literacy by showcasing the way that the letters *Q* and *U* are almost always coupled in the English language. The second graders went on to demonstrate their knowledge of this rule to their schoolmates by performing a play called *The Marriage of Q and U*, which their teachers had adapted from a children's book.[2] Each second

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[1] All names, except for Riley's, are pseudonyms. Riley is adamant that whenever I use examples from his experience in school in the classes I teach I use his real name so my students know that they are "kind of learning from him." He feels similarly about my writing. My partner and I also recognize that providing him with a pseudonym when writing would do little to protect his identity as he already has a presence in the public arena with his own name. For example, he has given a speech at the Utah State Capitol, appeared in a documentary and a photo exhibit, been on the front page of statewide newspapers, and been part of the lead story on local newscasts.

[2] A cursory Internet search yields variations of this story (Dillon-Hreha 2007; Nagus 2010; Gavin 2014) and many links to lesson plans for elementary school teachers, particularly those working in grades K–2, to incorporate the book into their curricula. Many of the lesson plans suggest acting out/performing the wedding (Gavin 2014) of *Q* and *U,* and a number of news outlets around the country have stories about elementary school children doing so. Additionally, YouTube has a number of videos of these wedding performances. For news coverage, see for

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grader played a role, most of them were other letters, but a select few were invited wedding guests. There were "queens" on one side of the aisle and "quarterbacks" on the other side. In the middle, the beautiful bride—the letter *Q*—stood beside her groom—the letter *U*—and the principal, dubbed a minister, married the two.

It was cute, creative, and tied into their curriculum. It captivated the audience, drew laughter and applause, and seemed to make the second graders and their teachers proud. Even so, I could not get past the sexism, the stereotypical gender roles, the compulsive heterosexuality, or the strong Christian undertones. Of course, it was the bride who could not function without the groom. "*U* doesn't need *Q,* but *Q* always needs *U.*" *U* was the groom who was often needed elsewhere—"like in the word underwear." But *Q* (who stays home watching over the other letters) cannot go anywhere without *U*. Additionally, all of the queens were girls and all of the quarterbacks were boys. And the principal showed her support of the second graders by performing the part of a minister, not a justice of the peace. These are just the most obvious symbolic representations, but the messages they sent—messages glaringly apparent to me and a few other audience members—seemed to be lost on the majority of those in the fully packed gymnasium.

After the assembly was over, my partner and I found our son to congratulate him. His teacher came over to say hello and share her accolades while we were talking with Riley. She walked into a brief discussion about the play. Riley noticed his teacher's presence, turned to her and said matter-of-factly, "Ms. J., that was not a very free-thinker[3] play—I think we should have a talk about it when we get back to class." To my delight, she agreed with him and promised to do just that. That evening Riley informed us that they had indeed engaged in a discussion, and together his kindergarten class decided they should have let some of the queens be boys and some of the quarterbacks be girls. Riley also shared that when he reminded his classmates that in families like his the *Q* and the *U* would both be girls, they said "Oh, yeah," and decided it would also be possible for the *Q* and the *U* to both be boys.

Ultimately, this kindergarten class was able to, at least for a moment in time, destabilize the heteronormativity of their school. They were able to engage in a process that I am calling *queer critical pedagogy*. I see this as a pedagogy that utilizes elements of critical pedagogy to engage in theoretically queer projects—projects aimed at naming, interrupting, and destabilizing normative practices and beliefs. In this chapter I will return to the example provided by this kindergarten class in order to further consider what queer critical pedagogy *might* mean. I will weave this moment together with other moments and propositions offered by queer theorists and critical pedagogues. In doing so, I will grapple with the ways that the

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example: http://www.myfoxtampabay.com/dpp/news/local/polk/marriage-of-q-and-u-022412, http://www.observernewsonline.com/content/q-marries-u-shuford-elementary, or http://savannahnow.com/west-chatham/2011-02-23/wedding-q-and-u#.T2EUtHj5bao

[3] *Free thinker* is a concept Riley uses to describe thinking that is free from the status quo, or as he puts it "free from having to think like everybody thinks you should think." It is a common part of his vocabulary and has helped him articulate his feelings about friends who chide him for wearing pink socks or having longer hair. "I'm trying to help them learn how to be free thinkers, so they can wear what they want or have their hair how they want, without worrying about what other people will say."

moments and propositions are always contingent upon other moments and propositions that simultaneously multiply and close off possibilities and that trouble normativity while depending upon it.

In considering queer critical pedagogy—what it could look like, what possibilities it might allow for, and what ways it may be limited—I understand queer pedagogy as a way to augment critical pedagogy. Queer pedagogy extends what is possible to talk about, question, and analyze because, while critical pedagogy calls on students to read the world and pose problems about what they read, queer pedagogy requires that problems are posed that specifically take up the limitations of hegemonic and normative ideas about gender and sexuality. Malinowitz (1995) claims that "critical pedagogy seems like an inevitable component of any gay-affirmative classroom practice" (p. 26). She bases this claim in the way critical pedagogy positions education as emancipatory and an agent of social change. It is antiassimilationist in that students and teachers work to read against normative and hegemonic sociocultural discourses.

Malinowitz posits that many LGBTQ students are already engaging in critical pedagogy since they "*must* read against the hegemonic discourse of homophobia in order to come out" (p. 26). Malinowitz writes about her work as a professor for a college composition class entitled *Writing about Gay and Lesbian Experience*, so it is to be expected that at least some of the students enrolled in the class are already engaged in critical pedagogy in the way Malinowitz explains it. Indeed, it seems that they are already engaged in what I call queer critical pedagogy, since they are reading and writing against heteronormativity, and they are being encouraged in the class to queer their reading of and writing about the world and their experiences.

In a similar vein, Sears (1999) explains that queering elementary education, or teaching queerly, "Is creating classrooms that challenge categorical thinking, promote interpersonal intelligence, and foster critical consciousness…. [And it] demands we explore taken-for-granted assumptions about diversity, identities, childhood, and prejudice" (p. 5). Sears and the other contributors to the book *Queering Elementary Education* write against (and teach against) the heteronormativity that permeates elementary schools and classrooms. Sears is posing a problem for educators to grapple with, the problem being the way elementary school classrooms leave queerness out; there is little room for LGBTQ identification or considering LGBTQ issues or people in the curriculum and even less room for questioning heteronormativity and its rigid binaries defining gender and sexuality. Further complicating how we bring queerness and complexity into schools is the approach to childhood development that neglects the complexities of gender and sexuality among youth (Farley 2018). Granted, there are examples of teachers or items of curricula that do in fact meet Sears's call for teaching queerly, but these examples (including Riley's experience) are exemplary in that they stand out as uniquely commendable examples of a merging of queer pedagogy and critical pedagogy—they are queer critical pedagogy.

Queer critical pedagogy is not common in elementary schools, particularly in the elementary schools in largely conservative areas of the country; therefore, I find Riley's experience that much more instructive given the fact that it happened in Utah, which at the time of this writing is one of the most politically conservative states in the US. In what follows, I will continue to work with the idea of queer

critical pedagogy and the way I see queer pedagogy augmenting critical pedagogy. I will do this by first making connections between critical pedagogy and queer pedagogy, then discussing the ways that queer critical pedagogy is simultaneously possible and impossible, full of possibility yet constrained by limited discursive possibilities. Then I will engage with some feminist critiques of critical pedagogy, mainly those concerning the tenets of empowerment, student voice, and dialogue in order to consider the (im)possibility/ies of queer critical pedagogy. I will return to Riley's experience throughout the chapter as a practical example to work through, problematize, and think out from.

It is my goal to sketch—with something as impermanent and changeable as chalk—the potentiality of bringing queerness to critical pedagogy in elementary school classrooms. This is not to say that critical pedagogy is always unqueer or not queer friendly; rather, it is to say that critical pedagogy with its focus on questioning and problematizing the status quo is queer friendly and can be (or in some cases already is) quite queer. By calling this queer critical pedagogy, I hope to foreground the importance of engaging in educational projects that are built around posing problems about the heteronormativity of our schools and the surrounding communities.

6.1   Connections Between Critical Pedagogy and Queer Pedagogy

"If it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings" (Freire 1998: 69). Freire is among the most influential educational philosophers involved in the development and spread of critical pedagogical theory and practice, the combination of which Freire calls praxis (Darder et al. 2003). Central to his concept of critical pedagogy is the role of dialogue, which is founded upon love, humility, faith, hope, and critical thinking. For Freire, it is only through this type of dialogue that true education can occur—true education being education for the practice of freedom. This type of dialogue works for an educational process that is emancipatory and empowers students to become subjects of their world. Students and teachers alike engage in a process of reflection and action together in a dialogical problem-posing process in which all parties have something to give to the process and all parties take something away from the process. It is essential that teachers learn from students, just as students learn from teachers.

The approach is grounded in posing problems that are significant to the students and teachers participating in the educational process. Thus, lived experience becomes central to the dialogue and is part of the way that current conditions and knowledge are explored genealogically in an attempt to imagine new and different possibilities for freedom. Conscientization is the ultimate goal of this process. It is defined by Darder et al. (2003) as:

> The process by which students, as empowered subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities that shape their lives and discover their own capacities to re-create them. [It is] a recurrent, regenerating process of human interaction that is utilized for constant clarification of the hidden dimensions of reflections and actions, as students and teachers move freely through the world of their experiences and enter into dialogue once more. (p. 15)

In many ways this process of conscientization is similar to the project of queer theory which, according to Britzman (1995), "offers methods of critiques to mark the repetitions of normalcy as a structure and as a pedagogy…. [it] insists on posing the production of normalization as a problem of culture and of thought" (pp. 153–154). Kopelson (2002) explains that queer theory is assumed to rupture and often-times "*strives* to confuse, as it strives to push thought beyond what can *be thought*" (p. 20). These explanations of a theoretical approach can certainly be read as calls for praxis and as pedagogical approaches to teaching. They are invitations to create classrooms where teachers and students can work toward a kind of queer conscientization where students and teachers "achieve a deepening awareness of the [ways that heteronormative discourses and socio-cultural practices] … shape their lives and [grapple with] their own capacities to [undo] and re-create" (adapting Darder et al. 2003: 15).

Given the shared interest in posing problems about normalized social circumstances and working to recreate or imagine new possibilities, it is not surprising that some educators find ways to bring both critical pedagogy and queer theory into their daily classroom pedagogies. This is especially the case for educators who are themselves invested in destabilizing the common, comfortable, and generally unquestioned heteronormativity in school spaces—including K–12 and postsecondary educational institutions—and society in general. There is a paradox though, because the elements of critical pedagogy utilized to create possibilities to disrupt heteronormativity are taken up in the context of a society rife with heteronormativity. People's ability to use these elements relies on their understanding and acceptance of this heteronormativity in order to make sense of the very problems they pose, the experiences they have, and the dialogues they engage in.

In other words, if stereotypical gender roles and compulsory heterosexuality were not the norm, Riley would not have felt the need to ask his teacher to engage the class in a dialogue about the elements of the play that were not representative of "free thinking." If these were not already the norms, he would not have felt the need to pose the outright performance of the desirability, naturalness, and general acceptability of these norms as a problem. Therefore, it is essential to read the story about Riley's classroom dialogue about the play in multiple ways. One important reading provides an example of the possibilities created by queer critical pedagogy. We must also read it to gain a deeper understanding of the complex elements that came together to create the momentary destabilization of heteronormativity, as well as the ways that the dialogue reinforced heteronormativity. In doing so, we must read it with context in mind because a number of elements came together to allow the possibility of the existence of this discussion—a discussion that perhaps could not, or would not, have happened in a different context.

6.2   Possibility/ies of Queer Critical Pedagogy?

That said, the question becomes, *to what extent is queer critical pedagogy possible?*
This question requires that we explore the limitations of critical pedagogy for dis-
rupting heteronormativity and also understand the complexities of queerness
(Gilbert 2014). Many of the questions about the place of queerness in critical peda-
gogy offered in this chapter are connected to critiques of critical pedagogy put forth
by poststructuralist feminists such as Mimi Orner (1992), Alison Jones (1999,
2004), Jennifer Gore (1993, 2003), and Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989, 1997). The ques-
tions and critiques will help us take a closer look at the moment of queer critical
pedagogy that occurred in Riley's kindergarten classroom.

I'd like to begin by considering the use of the word *critical* to describe pedagogy
as it has essentially become one of many code words used to make the political
agenda of a course invisible or at least less visible. This has allowed educators to
access public resources in order to further the goals of social justice in education,
which they believe will ultimately serve the greater good of the general public.
However, it has also served to prevent the critical education movement from having
to or being able to make their agenda explicit or consistent among the community
of practitioners (Ellsworth 1989). This can mean that some issues are taken up in
some places while others are further marginalized. It can also mean that issues one
might expect to be marginalized are actually foregrounded in strategic, sometimes
stealth, ways.

Heteronormativity, for example, is not always overtly named as one of the ide-
ologies or systems critical pedagogy intends to put under the microscope (Malinowitz
1995). This can mean that queerness is silenced in the name of critical liberatory
pedagogy. It can also mean that queerness and queering are so much a part of the
pedagogy that they need not be overtly named. This points to the importance of
queer critical pedagogy as it requires that the normalization of heteronormativity be
removed from its secure location in the realms of the status quo, the unquestioned,
the taken-for-granted, and the unnoticed. It requires that the normalization of het-
eronormativity be brought out into the open and publicly interrogated out loud.
Queer theory in a sense has made the pedagogical goal of disrupting heteronorma-
tivity thinkable and sayable. And critical pedagogy can, and in many instances does,
open up spaces for such interrogations, in various ways ranging from individual
writing assignments to stumbled-upon classroom discussions, to intentionally inte-
grated curricula that center questioning norms.

Key tenets of critical pedagogy such as empowerment, student voice, and dialogue
have been taken up in order to bring the process of critiquing the normalization of
heteronormativity to the front of the class. These tenets are not necessarily very
queer though, as they oftentimes perpetuate binaries or at the very least hierarchies.
For example, a student is empowered or not, or one student's voice is more hearable
(intelligible) than others, or some dialogues are more productive than others. A queer
pedagogy works against binaries and hierarchies, and so too must a queer critical

pedagogy. At a conference dedicated to critical pedagogy in 1993, Britzman offered the following thoughts:

> A queer pedagogy, [is] one that refuses normal practices and practices of normalcy, one that begins with an ethical concern for one's *own* reading practices, one that is interested in exploring what one cannot bear to know, one interested in the imagining of a sociality unhinged from the dominant conceptual order. (p. 165)

I believe that "imagining … a sociality unhinged from the dominant conceptual order" requires educators to carefully consider their own beliefs about and use of empowerment, student voice, and dialogue in their classrooms. This does not mean that these are not useful and indeed important pedagogical tools; it does mean that they must be used with intentionality and in such a way that they never become unquestioned or unquestionable. I find it instructive to continually grapple with feminist critiques of critical pedagogy, as they push me to never be satisfied or complacent with the possibilities I see in queer critical pedagogy. My commitment is to continuously work the possibilities (and the limitations) in an attempt to prevent them from becoming new boundaries drawn around what is acceptable or appropriate thinking for students and teachers.

Ellsworth (1989) claims some of the most fundamental tenets of critical pedagogy—"dialogue," "student voice," "empowerment," and "critical" elements—are "repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination" (p. 298). She reports that when she and her students engaged in the practices of dialogue, student voice, and empowerment, as defined by the literature concerning critical pedagogy, the outcome often produced results that reinforced the very situations they were working against such as racism, classism, and sexism. Bryson and de Castell (1993b) enter this discussion when they make the claim that "despite our explicit interventions, all of our discourses, all of our actions in this course were permeated with the continuous and inescapable backdrop of white heterosexual dominance" (p. 285). If it is true that problems can only be posed in the language that is available to us, that we can never escape racism, classism, sexism, or heterosexism, then how do we rupture the discourse and speak outside of it?

In Riley's classroom, the discussion was fundamentally grounded in the students' attempts to redefine possible gender roles and options for marriage. Marriage is at its heart a concept and practice that is all about heterosexuality—there was no problem posed regarding the very necessity of marriage for anyone. Additionally, the students said that girls could do boy things and vice versa, but the things were still understood to be girl or boy things. So they were posing problems, but they were posing problems within the norms they already understood regarding gender and heterosexuality. I would argue that they were also pushing back (or maybe out) against those norms though, since they were using the available language in ways that they had not before used in their classroom, in ways that made sense to them in that moment but were not necessarily commonsensical.

Kumashiro (2002) posits that "education involves learning something that disrupts our commonsense view of the world" (p. 63). Riley and his classmates did engage in disrupting the commonsense messages heralded by the play *The Marriage*

of Q and U, but there were other commonsense notions that they did not disrupt. Is it the case that they were empowered to disrupt some commonsense views of the world and not others? My guess is that this is indeed the case. Their empowerment and lack of empowerment could have come from their homes, the media, their teacher, or somewhere/one else. Regardless of the roots of un/empowerment, it played a significant part in the ways that the students used their voices and engaged in their dialogue about free thinking. Certainly, in this case, empowerment seems to be of central importance to this moment of queer critical pedagogy and as such must be interrogated.

Since the discussion occurred within a kindergarten classroom I will primarily focus my considerations of empowerment on the ways that teachers and students are empowered or not in educational spaces. In this particular situation it seems that empowerment allowed for Riley, as well as some classmates and their teacher, to speak up, pose problems, and engage in dialogue. I am particularly interested in grappling with the issue of empowerment and the way it allowed for (and to a lesser extent was supported by) student voice, problem posing, and dialogue. In other words, how was empowerment an essential component for these kindergartners to navigate a heteronormative discourse in order to speak new ideas and identities into existence in their classroom? And how is empowerment simply not enough on its own to do this work?

6.3 Empowerment

One of the goals of critical pedagogy is to reconceptualize the institutionalized power imbalances between students and teachers as well as the "essentially paternalistic project of education itself" (Ellsworth 1989: 306). Central to working toward realizing this goal are notions of student empowerment, which are tied closely to an interrogation of the ways that teachers are in power. Gore (2003) claims that there are three general presuppositions used to give meaning to the concept of empowerment: "(1) an agent of empowerment, (2) a notion of power as property, and (3) some kind of vision or desirable end state" (p. 333).

In critical pedagogy, teachers are typically positioned to empower their students to use critical thinking skills to tackle the problems of the world. This of course implies that teachers have agency in their classrooms, and there is a risk that presupposing this agency allows us to underestimate the contexts in which the teachers live and work. For example, Bryson and de Castell (1993a, b) remind us that the heteronormative context in which they live and work causes them to run the risk of losing the power that they do have once they come out as lesbians in their classes. In many ways their agency is connected to the ways students read their identities, which is also connected to their effectiveness as educators. This understanding of empowerment also positions power as something that can be possessed as well as "given, provided, controlled, held, conferred, [and/or] taken away" (Ellsworth

1989: 334). Finally, the end goal of empowerment is presupposed as liberation from oppression or as Freire puts it, freedom.

There is a connection between being a critical teacher who can empower students and acknowledging that education is a political act; thus, critical teachers are also assumed to be politicized teachers. McWilliam (1997) explains "'Good' (i.e., politicizing) teachers were heralded as *transformative intellectuals* who *empower* and *emancipate* themselves and others, while refusing the role of passive recipient of top-down reforms" (p. 220). While I agree that education is a political act and that neutrality is a farce, I also wonder what the goals of emancipation and empowerment mean in the context of sexuality. It seems that critical pedagogy equates emancipation with the freedom LGBTQ people find through the act of coming out of the closet. It would follow, then, that LGBTQ teachers who come out in the classroom are emancipated and can empower their LGBTQ students to also come out.

The problems associated with this expected type of politicization among LGBTQ educators are that (1) this is not always possible and (2) this is not always desirable. For example, in an essay about teaching English composition at a conservative public college in Utah where over 90% of the student population are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), Wood (2005) discusses her struggles with the silence she invites by existing as a lesbian on the campus through performing heterosexuality. Wood works to empower her students to be less dependent on the unexamined hegemonic assumptions they rely on to structure their lives. She uses critical theory and queer theory in her classes as pedagogical tools but is conscious that her heterosexual colleagues who also do this while mentioning their spouses, children, or families are not read the same way as she is since she does not reveal her personal or political self in the classroom. She is aware that in the context in which she teaches, coming out could trigger resistance not only to her as a teacher but also to the material. She is also aware of the threats to her personal and professional safety that accompany the decision to come out and to be a politicized educator in this context. So for Wood, coming out in the classroom is not emancipatory but neither is remaining closeted by performing heterosexuality. "Coming out allows the dominant culture to define—and therefore control— me, my life, and my ability to teach. But so does not coming out" (Wood 2005: 437). The assumption that teachers are emancipated and can empower their students to find freedom is troubling when we begin to grapple with the context in which LGBTQ teachers work and the assumption that coming out is emancipatory in the first place.

In Riley's case, his classmates have always known him to have two moms, so his reminder to his classmates that if the play were about his family both the *Q* and the *U* would have been girls, was not an act of coming out nor was it emancipatory. I do believe that it was empowering though, not because of the phrases he uttered, but because his teacher made space for him to utter the phrases, and she validated the utterances by engaging in the dialogue herself and inviting the other students to engage as well. At the same time, this empowering moment also relied on Riley's entering it already feeling empowered to some extent. It was necessary that he walk into the school assembly and then his classroom with a strong sense of being empowered to continually remind his teacher and his classmates that he does not

have a dad and that he has two moms. It also relies on my and my partner's feeling empowered to continually challenge his teachers and his school to recognize our family and the specific needs we have, like on school emergency contact information forms that leave space for the primary contacts to define their relationship with the student and do not simply say *mother* and *father.*

Another component of troubling the institutionalized power asymmetries in the classroom involves the redefinition of the teacher. The teacher can no longer be seen simply as the teacher but must now be a learner as well. The teacher must learn from the students' knowledge and experiences. This approach is said to allow teachers to learn from new and different perspectives as well as to relearn the material from the position of the students engaged with it in order to develop better methods for meeting the specific needs of the students in the class at the time. This is a theoretically queer positioning of the teacher as it invites fluidity, movement, and uncertainty, but classroom reality does not typically leave room for a queerly positioned teacher given the responsibilities placed on the teacher. Grading, planning curriculum, and enforcing rules are perhaps the most obvious examples that require at least a certain amount of rigidity and certainty.

This raises questions about whether a teacher always knows the subject better at first; for example, Ellsworth (1989) states that she, as a white professor, cannot know the subject of racism better than the students of color in her class who have experienced it their whole lives. Oftentimes LGBTQ students have developed oppositional voices through movements, media, and other social settings. These students do not necessarily need the teacher to help them develop these voices in opposition to heteronormativity and may in fact know this subject better than their teachers, heterosexual or LGBTQ, closeted or out (Malinowitz 1995). Or maybe they just know the subject differently, and it might be productive to view each way of knowing how to oppose heteronormativity as valid and as an important contribution to the class.

Ellsworth (1989) encourages us to ask questions like "What is it that critical pedagogy is asking teachers to learn from their students?" I would add, how are teachers encouraged to expect their students to teach them? It is a common practice for critical teachers to want to "get to know" their students on a more personal level so that they can find ways to meet the needs of the students, bring the students' funds of knowledge into the classroom, and structure the curricula around problems which are relevant to the students in the class. In this sense the teacher expects the students to reveal who they understand themselves to be to their teacher—to teach the teacher who they are. Barnard (2004) reminds us that considering sexuality as a component of our students' identities might be a troubling expectation for teachers to have of their students. He claims that LGBTQ students might be unlikely to reveal their gender identity or sexual orientation to their teachers and that the experience of either revealing or hiding this aspect of their identity can reinscribe marginalization or self-censorship, both of which are painful experiences. This practice does not allow teachers to learn from their students nor does it break down the hierarchical relationships between teachers and students.

Teachers who believe they can bring subjugated knowledges to the forefront of classroom discussions must ask themselves how they can do this when they are not themselves free from their own learned and internalized oppression. This includes both internalized domination and internalized marginalization. Further, how can one bring the knowledges subjugated by heteronormativity to the forefront? And who possesses these knowledges? Is it only queer people, or gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals? Is it people overtly transgressing the binaries embedded within the strict gender system that calls for masculine men and feminine women? What about heterosexuals who are in nonmonogamous relationships or who choose not to marry their life partner or have children? Heteronormativity perpetuates so many rules people (must) live by that any number of us can claim to be subjugated by it. We have certainly all internalized its messages, and these messages have an impact on the way we understand ourselves and perform our identities. So which of these subjugated knowledges gets to move to the front of the classroom? And how can we talk about/through these knowledges without essentializing them because of our own internalized heteronormativity?

When Riley's subjugated knowledge as a "free thinker" gets to come to the front of the classroom, what does this mean? It means that a white boy gets to practice learning the art of taking the floor in his kindergarten classroom, a role he will likely experience over and over again in school given his whiteness and his maleness. It also means that a little boy who wears pink socks and recently expressed fear that someone who does not like gay people might find out that *we* (meaning his moms, and by extension his family) are gay and try to hurt us or take our house away, got to take the floor without fear because he trusted his teacher to value his subjugated knowledge. Critical pedagogues pay special attention to the ways that student voice enters the classroom, which is connected to the use of dialogue as a tool for learning. In this case, Riley spoke up and asked for his teacher to engage his class in a dialogue. He centered his request around a problem he saw with the play he and his classmates watched, and they worked with the problem while identifying additional problems and ignoring or not noticing other problems.

6.4   Student Voice and Dialogue

Riley's subjugated knowledge did move to the front of the classroom because of his ability and willingness to use his voice. Student voice is a central tenet in critical pedagogy, and the call is for students to be able to speak in their "authentic voices" so that they may define themselves—to make themselves visible and intelligible by authoring their world. It is believed by critical pedagogues that this process of self-definition will give students both an identity and a political position, which they can use to be/act as agents of social change (Ellsworth 1989). Students from different social identity groups (including but not limited to race, class, and gender) are encouraged to "speak in self-affirming ways about their experiences and how they

have been mediated by their own social positions and those of others" (Ellsworth 1989: 309).

One problem with encouraging students to use their voices in such a way is the presupposition that the student is "a fully conscious, fully speaking, 'unique, fixed and coherent' self" (Orner 1992: 79), rather than the partially unconscious, fluid, incoherent, and performative self that poststructuralist, performative, and queer theorists have suggested. Another problem is the assumption that there is an "authentic voice" at all; according to poststructuralists this is an impossibility. Calls for the inclusion of "authentic student voices" do not consider the mediating features of language and the unconscious or the ways students, voices, and identities are always multiple, contested, and changing due to the impact of the context in which the speaking occurs (Orner 1992). Orner claims that it is "impossibly naïve" for educators to actually believe that it is possible for a "genuine sharing of voices in the classroom" (p. 81) to exist. Instead she suggests that it is possible to attempt to recognize and acknowledge the power differentials present in the classroom and to make transparent the ways that these power differentials make certain things sayable and doable and other things not so in that particular classroom context. Here is one place where I find queer pedagogy to be a particularly important augmentation for critical pedagogy. Queer pedagogy does invite multiplicity, incoherence, and fluidity by challenging norms that are themselves singular, coherent, and fixed. So, it adds to the ways students are called on to use their voices so that they can speak from multiple positionalities and speak themselves into existences previously unknown, unthinkable, and unspeakable.

Another problem with the call for student voices is the fact that some voices might actually do harm to students in the classroom or to the classroom community. Even in classrooms dedicated to disrupting heteronormativity, homophobia exists. In some cases, a call for the diverse student voices and perspectives to be heard can be read as permission for homophobia to be claimed and defended aloud. Wood (2005) found that students might not do this out loud but rarely held back in their writing. When asked to write a paper exploring a personal dilemma, many of her students wrote about their inability to accept homosexuals because they believe that homosexuality is "wrong," "immoral," "impractical," "against the laws of science," and "perverted" (pp. 432–433). The absence of queerness from critical pedagogy can be damaging, and this is another reason I believe queer pedagogy is a necessary and fruitful augmentation to critical pedagogy.

I do not know if queer critical pedagogy is a complete remedy or prevention for the possible difficulties students can face, but I do believe that it does offer new kinds of possible ways for students to learn to negotiate their voices and to gain a deeper meaning of multiple identities. I am not aware of the kind of harm Wood discusses occurring in Riley's classroom during this discussion. I trust that his teacher would have interrupted overt homophobia, just as I have heard her challenge racism, sexism, and classism within the walls of the school. I do wonder, though, about some of Riley's classmates who are growing up in politically conservative and/or strict religious (primarily LDS or Catholic) families. How are they learning to negotiate using their voices? They seem to genuinely like Riley, and when I see

them in their classroom, my queer identity does not seem to be an issue for them. They chat with me about their day, tell me stories, and ask for help with their work, just as I see them doing with other parents. Do they go home and keep Riley and our family a secret? Are they learning how/when to use silence as a tool for negotiating different spaces populated by competing ideologies? I am left wondering about the ways these students are finding to negotiate differences in beliefs, in identities, and in experiences in order to navigate a multiplicity of spaces, and furthermore what skills they are gaining in terms of critical thinking, communication, and strategic silence through these pedagogical encounters.

It is important to note that calls for student voice can diminish the possibilities for teachers to understand the role of silence in the classroom. A teacher who is primarily concerned with student voice might read silence as either resistance (to the subject matter, the teacher, the class, or the school) or as an inability to intellectually or ideologically engage with the subject matter. Such a teacher is not likely to pay attention to the contextual nature of all classroom interaction or to take note of the ways silences and utterances occur in "complex conjunctures of histories, identities, ideologies, local, national and international events and relations" (Orner 1992: 82). These teachers primarily understand calls for student voice as a way to correct the current and historical silencing of marginalized people including students in schools and in society at large. In this way calls for student voice are linked to empowerment, since "breaking these silences" is empowering. However, without paying careful attention to the context of the classroom and the power dynamics embedded within it, these educators are likely to reinforce the very oppressive practices they are trying to disrupt. For example, asking LGBTQ students to discuss their experiences as LGBTQ people might allow for their voices to be heard and the subject to be discussed, but it might also reinforce the spectacle of LGBTQness and allow heterosexual and cisgender students to listen passively to the painful experiences of their peers without acknowledging their own role in the continuation of heteronormativity (Mayo 2017).

This points to dialogue as a fundamental component of critical pedagogy. As such, dialogue presumes to bring empowered student voices into the classroom in a way that allows all participants—students and teachers—to learn about and from one another. According to Freire (1998), dialogue is the process through which participants are able to name and rename their world. This also means that dialogue allows participants the opportunity to name themselves and their multiple identities. However, there is a tension here, as naming oneself is simultaneously an act of not allowing others to name you and naming yourself based on the discourses available to you—discourses that have been created by others. The question becomes whether one really can name oneself or not. People can pick which words to use to describe themselves, but these words are not their own and their meaning is always contextual. So LGBTQ students who come out in the context of dialogue in a class dedicated to disrupting heteronormativity most likely choose to come out to make themselves visible as a means of disruption, but in doing so they also reify the LGBTQ/non-LGBTQ and out of the closet/in the closet binaries that exist in and perpetuate heteronormativity.

It is further assumed that dialogue "provides the opportunity for the development of tolerance, understanding, and ultimately unity; it can decrease instances of ignorance and racism and other prejudices that are the basis of social division" (Jones 2004: 57). Democratic dialogue attempts to disrupt the usual power dynamics in the classroom so that previously marginalized or silenced voices can be centered, empowered, and heard. However, as Jones points out, context is important here too, for "wider social inequalities" have a significant impact on the possibilities for dialogue in the classroom (Jones 2004: 59). Bryson and de Castell (1993b) discuss how during the dialogues in their class the lesbian and bisexual students and teachers felt like "every ounce of our emotional, intellectual, and social energies were consumed by the problem of accommodating the white heterosexual women's discomfort … despite our repeated insistence that this was not something we would do" (p. 294). The fact that these women had to expend so much energy in the context of the dialogues in the class speaks to the lack of progress made toward the ultimate goal of unity. While the social divisions may have been understood in more complex ways, they certainly were not broken down through the dialogues that were meant to break them down.

Like Orner (1992), Jones (2004) also discusses the importance of silence in the context of a classroom engaged in dialogical practices. In many cases, dialogue centers on the responsibility of the marginalized students in the class to teach the privileged students about themselves and to make the privileged students understand what it is like to be marginalized. Often, the privileged students do not really want to know this, as this knowledge would force them to acknowledge the privilege they have and the impact their privilege and power have on their fellow classmates. It is also common for marginalized students to feel that the privileged students do not understand them because they do not know the same language. In many cases, this is because the language of the classroom is the language of the dominant culture and may not be the primary language of the marginalized students. In other cases, this is because the privileged students do not understand the codes, jargon, and terminology used by the marginalized group. For example, when discussing homophobia and heterosexism, LGBTQ students might have to teach or translate the "language of gay culture" (Leap 1999: 259) for their heterosexual counterparts. Likewise, Riley had to translate his free-thinking language for his teacher and classmates.

"Given that [marginalized] students seldom have the duty, desire, or ability to take on the task of teaching slow or recalcitrant [privileged] classmates, many of them sensibly avoid its demands and remain silent" (Jones 2004: 61). Others, like one student in Bryson and de Castell's (Bryson and de Castell 1993b) class, speak up against having to teach their privileged counterparts. One student pointed out her lack of interest in doing this teaching and the lack of time and patience she had for being expected to do so. She stated, "Straight women have had all of their lives to deal with their homophobia and their privilege. I now have 6 weeks to learn everything about my life" (p. 294). Students and teachers are invested in and empowered by dialogue to varying degrees and for a host of reasons, and when queerness enters

the equation this is perhaps even more emphatically the case given the powerful grasp of heteronormativity.

It is true that Riley initiated the dialogue and in doing so created a space for his own voice as well as the voices of his classmates. His teacher did have to sanction and facilitate the dialogue, but she could do so by opening it with a phrase like, "Riley told me he did not think the play we just saw was a very 'free-thinker' play." She could then invite Riley to explain what he meant by that and then ask others to add their opinions to the discussion. Jackson (2010) discusses what she refers to as "naturally queer" moments in the classroom. These are moments during which heteronormativity is destabilized through everyday (seemingly mundane) interactions, instructional examples, or student discussions. She points to the "effort and courage it took for [LGBTQ teachers] to foster an atmosphere where 'natural queerness' can occur" (p. 46). This is not just true for LGBTQ teachers though, as in many states all teachers run the risk of censure for including queer issues in their curricula. It is true that the regulations and responsibilities teachers must negotiate in order to create opportunities for queer critical pedagogy in their classrooms are confusing and even contradictory.[4] When teachers are left to sift through these policies with little institutional support, many choose to take no risks and disallow discussions like the one Riley and his classmates and teacher engaged in.

Other teachers find ways to weave these conversations into their daily classroom practices by instigating them themselves or by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by students who instigate the conversations. One important question becomes: how are Riley's teachers and classmates finding ways to position Riley as a spokesperson when issues related to "free thinking" come up (because they know he will speak up, and they therefore do not have to)? Is his presence letting them off the hook in some ways? And is the net gain afforded by his diligent reminders about "free thinking" worth the emotional toll it might take on him and the responsibility it relieves his peers from having to shoulder?

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[4] Riley attends a public school in Utah, where the State Board of Education Rules prohibit "the advocacy of homosexuality." Further Utah State Board of Education Rule R277-474-6-D states, "Utah school educators may … respond to spontaneous student questions for the purpose of providing accurate data or correcting inaccurate or misleading information or comments made by students in class regarding human sexuality. An educator may not intentionally elicit comments or questions about matters subject to parental consent requirements under this policy. Responses permitted under this section must be brief, factual, objective and in harmony with content requirements of this policy regarding the importance of marriage and family, abstinence from sexual activity before marriage, and fidelity after marriage." At the same time, Rule R277-515-3 includes sexual orientation in the list of student identities that are protected from exclusion from programs or denial of benefits. Further, "an educator … may not engage in a course of conduct that would encourage a student(s) to develop a prejudice on these grounds or any others," and Rule R277-515-4 makes educators responsible for preventing harassment or discriminatory conduct and for "demonstrat[ing] respect for diverse perspectives, ideas, and opinions and encourag[ing] contributions from a broad spectrum of school and community sources."

6.5 Growing Queer Growing Critical—Pedagogy, Voices, Thinkers, Moments

Whatever we think about the roles that Riley, his teacher, his classmates, and others played in this scenario, it is true that the moment did not happen in a vacuum. It was not spontaneous and it was not isolated. This moment required many prior moments of preparation. It required Riley to teach his teacher what he meant when at various times throughout the school year he said "We need to have a lesson on free thinking." It required his teacher to incorporate his language about free thinking into her vocabulary and to be willing to listen for him to use it and to use it herself. It required my partner and me to support Riley in developing an identity as a free thinker and to help him create a language he could use to describe and operationalize this identity. I think it also required that Riley be a student in a school that is not predominantly LDS and that has many teachers and administrators who are dedicated to projects of social justice (at least to some extent), which required that we move across town for him to attend this school.

That said, there is probably something to be said for the queer-raised child and our family's commitment to questioning the norms we bump up against as well as the ones we rely on. We actually talk about these things at the dinner table, in the car between home and school, in the grocery story, and at the playground. As parents we pose problems and question norms, and we teach our children to do this as well. Most importantly I believe we listen intently to them when they engage in this behavior, and we participate in their thinking and acting. This is part of how we nurture ourselves and survive places and times that feel terribly hopeless or troublesome. It is how we grow more queer and more critical together, as a family, and in our own individual ways.

So, while this moment of queer critical pedagogy definitely happened in such a way that it offered possibilities for the disruption of heteronormativity in this particular kindergarten class, it did not happen solely because of a commitment to critical pedagogy or queer pedagogy. These commitments are not enough given the heteronormative contexts in which we exist. I do not know if this moment had an obvious lasting impact. Later that day when I picked Riley up from his after-school program, his friend Arlene asked the same question she asks every day when I pick him up, "Why does Riley have two moms?" Riley smiled at me with anticipation—he and Arlene both know that I have a different answer every day. That day I simply said, "Because he's lucky." Again, we can see the paradox. This daily ritual has created many moments to critically disrupt heteronormativity, but only because Arlene, Riley, and their friends already understand this heteronormativity all too well. I think, though, that they also have an understanding about this heteronormativity as harmful and as something that they can challenge in all sorts of surprising and delightful ways. For example, in Hartmann 2017, Jack Hartmann's *Kid Music Channel,* the relationship of Q and U is shifted to friendship.

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Chapter 7
Thinking Queer About the Space of School Safety: Violence and Dis/Placement of LGBTQ Youth of Color

Lisa Weems

In the last 20 years, public discourses regarding sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) underscore a progress narrative in terms of the general status, and popular cultural attitudes toward LGBTQ (herein referred to as queer and trans) youth (Brown 2017). For example, survey results from the Pew Research Institute indicate that "Americans are becoming more accepting of LGBTQ people" and that "more people identify as LGBT," in part, because of this growing acceptance (Brown 2017: n.p.). More specifically, a report from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found a dramatic increase (72%) from 2010 to 2014 in the number of middle and high schools that offer "safe spaces" for LGBTQ youth (Rappaport 2018). However, data from the same study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* contextualized their findings by concluding that "many states have seen no significant change in the implementation of school practices associated with LGBTQ youth's health and well-being" (Demissie et al. 2018: 557).

Similarly, some educational scholars point to the addition of anti-bullying initiatives within schools as further evidence of the improved climate for queer and trans youth. Though aimed at enhancing the educational landscape, some school-based initiatives regarding sexual orientation and gender identity have resulted in the category of LGBTQ becoming "a placeholder for worries about bullying" (Gilbert et al. 2018: 171). As such, the emphasis on anti-bullying merely solidifies one-dimensional constructions of both queer and trans youth, as well as the praxis of school safety. Moreover, casting our attention on anti-bullying policies in schools fundamentally misses the mark in understanding the systemic marginalization and violence against queer and trans youth in schools and society within a social justice framework (Quinn and Meiners 2013; Payne and Smith 2013).

First, we can see a familiar (and one might argue formulaic) narrative about schools, diversity, adversity, and redemption. In this narrative, LGBTQ students

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(and educators) may be somewhat ambivalent, but are generally hopeful about the opportunities afforded within safe spaces in schools and schooling in general. This rhetoric imagines that safe spaces (or brave spaces) allow queer and trans students to "be themselves" to express their diversity. As Cris Mayo (2017) has so eloquently elaborated, Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) (and other forms of school-sanctioned safe spaces) represent places of identification and difference ripe with dynamics of desire and connection as well as exclusions and omissions. While some youth (queer, trans, and "straight") find refuge in GSAs as islands of hope and pleasure, the mitigating factors of hetero/sexism, transphobia and racism remain difficult to navigate (both inside and outside spaces deemed to be safe). Second, issues related to sexuality are merely "attributes" of individuals rather than embedded in the institutional practices of the school and education more generally. Democratic ideals of diversity and equity in schools are expressed through hollow platitudes like "No Child Left Behind" or explicitly written out of curriculum and pedagogy if perceived as "special rights" for minoritized "Others." Thus, one of the central aims of this chapter is to investigate discourses of violence and safe space in schools through the lens of transnational sexuality studies (Gopinath 2006; Puar 2007; Mizzi 2008).

Educational researchers have begun to address the ways in which class, race, and gender further compound the specificities of violence, and especially sexual violence against queer and trans youth (McCready 2010; Weems 2014; Kosciw et al. 2018). Furthermore, some of these authors suggest that epistemological bias operates in framing issues of "violence against gay youth" especially in the context of urban education in the United States (Pritchard 2013; Quinn and Meiners 2013). Yet to be fully explored is the relationship between white supremacy and colonial capitalisms in the framing (and shaming) of violence against queer and trans youth of color.[1] For example, Namaste (2009) argues that Anglo-American feminist theory fails to analyze the role of labor and global capitalism violence against youth of color and/or LGBTQ youth of color, in that the theory erases the realities of prostitution among transsexual and/or transgender youth of color (p. 21).

Grounded in Gayatri Spivak's framework of transnational literacy (1992, 1999, 2000), I question how issues of neocolonial knowledge production might be at work in the contemporary framing of issues of violence, sexuality, and education for the nation. According to Schagerl:

> To be literate under globalization requires more than mastery of reading and writing as traditionally constituted. Following from Spivak's original deployment of the term, transnational literacy has come to be used as an extension of critical literacy, which pays particular attention to the intersections of knowledge and power in pedagogical practices. (quoted in Brydon 2004)

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[1] There are several fabulous examples of organizations and/or grassroots movements that foreground praxis and advocacy for Black, Indigenous and People of Color that are critical of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, colonial capitalisms, the school to prison pipeline, immigrant/citizenship rights and abolition politics. Two concrete examples include the #Black Lives Movement founded by three queer Black women, Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi and the Native Youth Sexual Health Network co-founded by Jessica Yee. To my knowledge, neither of these movements specifically focus on the intersections of violence against queer and trans youth especially in the context of schooling and education.

Thus, transnational literacy can be a way to think through concepts of the nation (in both symbolic and material terms) as well as "a retelling of histories and stories, from different vantage points" (Schagerl n.d.).

My aim in this chapter is to deploy a transnational literacy toward the purpose and practice of decolonizing queer pedagogies that may reproduce epistemological bias by foregrounding the realities of "violence, schooling, and gay youth" within the material realities of white, middle-class youth. A crucial component in doing so is to propose a rethinking of the imagery of "safe space" used in social justice educational reform efforts. In contrast, I argue for a more productive metaphor of "camp," in that it foregrounds the politicized nature of the classroom, school, and education more broadly.

At the end of this chapter, I will return to an explicit discussion of how some queer and trans youth have organized for gender justice and queer activism both inside and outside schooling. But for now, I want to suggest that part of what shapes a person's response to anti-queer and trans bullying policies (as a primary intervention of "safety") is his or her embodied and ideological relationship to the institution of education and the physical space of schooling. As Barb Stengel (2010) notes:

> To study emotions like fear and feeling safe requires that we attend to processes of movement and attachment of the objects of fearfulness and security, but also attend to the "past histories of association" that caused these affects to be attached to a particular object. (p. 523)

Specifically, I want to interrogate the spatial metaphors used in discourses on diversity, social justice, and "safety" for queer youth. Moreover, I aim to illustrate the paradox of creating praxis of safe space for many LGBTQ and/or youth of color, whose relationship to schooling is often constituted by material and symbolic forms of violence.

In this chapter, I explore the second term in the construct of "safe space" to consider how perceptions of space (conscious or unconscious) play a role in our feelings about safety in educational encounters. Mobilizing insights from contemporary queer, feminist, and transnational discourses on the relations between time, space, and affect, I argue that "safe *space*" itself may be one of the particular "objects" around which emotions, feelings, and attachments are oriented. Furthermore, in the case of educational spaces that are presumed or designed to promote equity, inclusion, and/or social justice, the space of the classroom is itself a contested object. Historical legacies of inequality, exclusion, and education for social and economic reproduction (hegemony) not only haunt the walls of particular classrooms but also circulate through classroom dialogue in ways that condense "past histories of association" and "generate effects" (Ahmed 2004: 13). Working within the problematic of what Sara Ahmed terms the "cultural politics of emotion," I would like to "spatialize" Ahmed's argument by suggesting that "structures of feeling" (Williams 1977) saturate classrooms with specific regard to heteronormativity and racialization given the multiple and differential "past histories of associations" to schooling and education in general. In other words, part of what embodies dialogue and debate (whether implicit or explicit) in classrooms are the affective responses and imagined

aims of the educational encounter bound within a particular place and space.[2] Put simply, if school is imagined to feel like home, one may approach the classroom space quite differently than if school is imagined to feel like prison. Whereas the former conjures emotions such as care and openness toward others, the latter invokes feelings of fear, anger, or perhaps resentment. However, what emotions might be invoked if we substitute the metaphors of home and prison to make way for the image of classroom space as camp?

To explore this question, I first discuss how the space of the classroom is a contested object constituted by historical, cultural, political, social, psychological, and discursive practices (Lefebvre 1991). I then employ Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "assemblage" to characterize the ways in which educational spaces cohere "content and affect" (quoted in Puar 2007: 193) into discursive figures of the heteronormative and racialized national "family." Finally, I argue that to advance contemporary theorizing on safe space we might consider shifting the metaphor of the classroom (and/or schooling) as a situation of home (in loco parentis) to that of a metaphor of camp. As a discursive practice, "camp" is like "home" in that it has multiple associations of past histories. However, the advantage of the metaphor of classroom as camp allows for a more capacious range of histories of association: from recreational activity to performative subterfuge; from forced relocation to temporary inhabitation. Though each of the preceding manifestations of camp signal a multiplicity of affective dimensions, they all possess political implications of theorizing space. Moreover, the metaphor of camp implies transience (whether real or imaginary) while keeping in mind the partial and situated nature of particular places and spaces. Foregrounding the transient component/feature of safe space allows us to make visible and explore the possibilities and limitations of conceptualizing relations of power as circuitous, contested, and performative through competing claims to particular places as objects of safety. In other words, how is the contextual nature of safety intimately tied to the contextual nature of space and the contingent safety of space?

7.1   Space, Assemblage, and Schools as "Home"

In the past three decades, there has been growing attention to theorizing space as it relates to ontological, epistemological, and social issues as well as geographic, political, and cultural dimensions of human and nonhuman life (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Lefebvre 1991; Puar 2007). One effect of recent theorizing is a reconceptualization of the previously held distinctions between space and place.

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[2] As I will explain in more depth in the following section, I make the distinction between *place* and *space*. In the most basic form, the term *place* typically designates a particular geographic or material location, whereas the term *space* typically connotes an abstract concept or phenomena. Central to my argument is a desire to playfully problematize the distinctions, tensions, and slippages between the terms place and space in the educational theory.

Indeed, as feminist geographers Liz Bondi and Joyce Davidson (2005) argue, characterizing space as "abstract geometry" and place as "sites of *shared experience*" "conveniently ignore(s) the ways in which differences of gender, age, class, 'race' and other forms of social differentiation shape peoples' lives" (p. 17). While "asking where" is still a central concern, the emphasis on difference, multiplicity, and power requires a slight movement away from analyses of "place" (Nelson and Seager 2005: 7). What is needed is a "geography of placement" (Pratt and Hanson 1994: 25, quoted in Bondi and Davidson 2005: 19) that moves beyond the "flatness of mapping" (Puar 2007: 152). One such framework comes via Eyal Weizman's concept of "the politics of verticality" that "oscillates from representational space to informational space, from epistemological comprehensions of space to ontological presences and experiences" (Puar 2007: 152). Thus, if historical distinctions between place and space have rested on the epistemological grounds of the "shared experiences" of its inhabitants, the shift toward theorizing the "politics of verticality" foregrounds the movement between material and symbolic, real and imagined bodies, boundaries and borders. Of particular importance, here, are the ways in which the politics of verticality render space as "about networks of contact and control, of circuits that cut through" (Puar 2007: 154). Central to this formulation of space, then, is the emphasis on power and control with attention to symbolic as well as material networks of bodies in contact within particular boundaries that may or may not be "visible" in the current geography of placement. In other words, the boundaries of the place may be sedimented yet the network of contact and control may permeate across time, place, and space.

A useful heuristic tool for analyzing how networks of contact and control permeate across time, place, and space is the term "transnational optic." Yeoh (2005) discusses the transnational optic as "a bifocal lens which brings into view ordinary people on the move and at the same time frames them within contested historical and geographical contexts as socially and spatially situated subjects" (p. 62). According to Yeoh, the transnational optic allows for engagement with the "embeddedness" and "mobility" of "socially and spatially situated subjects" (p. 62). She writes:

> The terrain opened by the transnational "optic," while uneven and fragmented, offers a salient opportunity to rethink key concepts underpinning contemporary social life, from notions which serve to "ground" social life, such as "family," "community," "place," "nation," and "identity," to those which "transgress" or "unmoor" including "mobility," "migrancy," and "transience." (p. 62)

Thus, theorizing space must take into account the ways in which subjects are constituted by processes and practices of "grounding" and "unmooring." Extending this spatialization of "social life," I suggest that safe space must take into account the ways in which "socially and spatially situated subjects" necessarily stabilize and destabilize the progressive assemblage of educational spaces as the model "home" of Republican motherhood and classrooms as microcosms of US democratic "community" (Weems 2004). In other words, appeals to "safe space" must negotiate historical, material and symbolic linkages between education with heteronormative,

racialized, and nationalist agendas, yet recognize discontinuities and slippages within totalizing narratives.

The term assemblage comes from Deleuze and Guattari's attempt to think beyond the "presumed organicity of the body" (Puar 2007: 193) and to articulate how biopolitics fuse image with information, bodies and affect, representation with regulation. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) write:

> On a first, horizontal axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both territorial sides, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it, and cutting edges of deterritorialization, which carry it away. (p. 88)

This philosophical concept of assemblage underscores a poststructural framework of subjectivity that emphasizes how identities get mapped onto particular bodies in particular contexts through (relatively stable) discursive arrangements and relations of power (Foucault 1982). Thus, it is the particular positioning (of identities) within discursive fields that enables and constrains what can and can be stated or enacted. Yet since identities are performative and relational, every enunciation is an interpretation that contains the possibility to re-cite and re-write the very discourses that authorize it (Butler 1993). What is key in Deleuze and Guattari's conception of assemblage is the emphasis on the "intermingling of bodies reacting to one another" and the connectivity of the "actions and passions" that are affixed and unfixed through enunciative events. John Philips (2006) clarifies that for Deleuze and Guattari, the assemblage refers to "the connection between a state of affairs and the statements we can make about it" (p. 108). He uses the example of the wound-assemblage that brings together the knife and the flesh through the act of cutting; in this event, it is impossible to decouple effect from action (this is what is meant by territorialization). Yet statements about the wound contain the possibility of reterritorialization and deterritorialization—such as the current phenomenon of young women's resignification of the practice of "cutting." The assemblage of the wound is overdetermined by discourses on harm, yet statements by young women regarding this practice illustrate an attempt to interrupt, or unfix the coupling of "incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies."

In the case of US formal education, the metaphor of schooling as home has been reified for centuries. This is evident from the creation of nineteenth-century common schools modeled after Pestalozzi's invention of the "pedagogy of love" (Weems 1999) to the sentimentalist tradition of progressive education in the early twentieth century (Weems 2004; Moyer 2009) to Noddings's (1984) prolific construction of the ideal teacher as one who models a (maternal) "ethic of care." This symbolic characterization of the school as home, coupled with the social, economic, and political conditions that drive the aims of modern schooling as democratic education for masses, has crystallized the biopolitics of creating "order" through classification and regulation of bodies, acts, and statements of governmentality or what Popkewitz (1998) has referred to as the "cultivation of the soul."

Part and parcel of the biopolitics of schooling is the figure of the schoolteacher as Republican Mother and construction of progressive education as the site of nation-building through the imagery and institutionalization of practices of "domesticity" (Weems 2004). In doing so, modern US schooling not only reinscribes enunciations of civility (order) through the "incorporeal transformation" of the "uneducated" to civil "student-subjects," but also reinscribes the US imperialist narratives of whitening, rationalizing, and desexualizing the "intermingling of bodies" associated with the "dangerous populations" created in a Western (white/Anglo) colonial imaginary (McClintock 1995; Stoler 1995). Thus, the assemblage of "schooling as home" rests on a semiotic coupling of family and domesticity that has its roots in the particular histories of heteronormative constructions of teaching and motherhood as well as racialized constructions of schools as sites of (colonial) civilization. For these reasons, imagining schools as sites of safe space would appear to be impossible. Yet to be sure, millions of students have found "refuge" in the discursive formation of schooling as home. This point reflects Stengel's point that safety is contingent and contextual and Ahmed's treatment of the cultural politics of emotion. However, if we dislodge the metaphorical association of schools as either a reproduction or extension of "home," we might consider how multiple and competing past histories of association with space always intermingle with feelings of safety.

I turn now to a discussion of the metaphor of school as camp for reimagining the space of education and classrooms with particular attention to the possibilities and constraints of "safe space." Elsewhere, I explore three specific iterations of "camp" that may be useful in reimaging the school assemblage: (a) camp as a space of queer disidentificatory practices, (b) camp as a space of leisure and learning often rooted in pastoral environments, and (c) camp as a temporary space of protection from harm (Weems 2010). Within and among all three of these conceptualizations lie the possibility of multiple epistemologically and sociospatially situated bodies, statements, and ideas to impress, intermingle, and collide. Given the hybridity of such spaces, we may consider camp as a form of "contact zone" (Pratt 2008) in which clear demarcations between social identities and stable relations of power give way to fuzzy identificatory practices that are discursively produced yet subjectively experienced. For this chapter, I focus on the third iteration of camp as a geographically bounded place of physical dwelling, which by design is constructed as a "shelter."

The notion of educational space and/or the classroom as a form of contact zone is not new. Indeed, many of the authors of Megan Boler's edited collection *Democratic Dialogues: Troubling Speech, Disturbing Silence* explore the im/possibility of classrooms as a haven for free speech. Boler (2004) claims that "universities in general function as 'white men's clubs' and by default function to empower those who already hold privileged positions within the 'real world'" (p. 5). Thus, she calls for critical educators to create "unreal" spaces that allow students and teachers to dialogue and debate on the grounds of "affirmative action pedagogy" (Boler 2004).

Similarly, Claudia Ruitenberg (following Derrida—as well as Deleuze and Guattari) employs the framework of "nomadism" and the logic of the contact zone to imagine educational spaces and experiences that might inaugurate and sustain the practice of "leaving oneself ajar" to the possibilities of learning (Ruitenberg 2005). In a similar vein, I suggest that the metaphor of camp *may* facilitate the (uncertain and unpredictable) possibilities of connection, cognitive and/or affective transformation, or something we might call learning. However, I would like to take the metaphor of camp in a slightly different direction than Ruitenberg by foregrounding the explicitly politicized "geographies of placement" including those spaces that are by design intended to provide psychological, physical, and/or sociological "relief"— that is, the metaphorical geography or architecture of safe space. In essence, I want to question the im/possibility of creating educational spaces with the freedom to enact affirmative action pedagogy and/or nomadism given the discursive conditions that coalesce and sediment to reproduce the metaphor of teaching as protective mothering and the classroom as idealized home. As I will argue below, spaces of refuge are not outside the historical, political, and social networks of meaning and action governed by asymmetrical relations of power. Furthermore, historical examples illustrate how the very practices of "protection" can undermine sovereignty or empowerment for subaltern populations who are unintelligible as citizen-subjects or as agents of knowledge production (Lomawaima 1994). If the space of schools has operated from/within the assemblage of US heteronormative and racialized constructions of the family, community, and national citizenship, how might a metaphor of camp be deployed to rethink the discursive practices of classrooms as "safe spaces"? Moreover, how might we reterritorialize the assemblage of educational space as home by unfixing its constitutive elements, and how might the metaphor of camp be useful in this project?

7.2   The Schooling as Camp Assemblage

In this iteration, we might think, then, about the possibilities of safe space given the limits of visibility that are not just a result of social location or epistemological viewpoint but that are also an effect of the idealist notion of a camp designed to provide refuge (safe from) the very politics of verticality that produces the map and mapping to begin with. Put simply, if safe spaces are imagined to be free of the discursive practices of heteronormativity and racialization that govern US public institutions (including schools), it does not follow that schools might provide the space of "innocence" or "transparency" if this is where and how we all learned the whitening, rationalizing, and desexualizing processes as "civilized" learning through the assemblage of US schooling. How can those bodies, ideas, and affective states that have been consolidated into "knowledge as data" move beyond the logics of colonization and management from the very institutions that interpellate them as "beyond human rights"? (Agamben 1998).

Quoting Agamben, Seshadri (2008) notes, "When our age tried to grant the unlocalizeable a permanent and visible localization, the result was the concentration camp. The camp-and not the prison-is the space that corresponds to this originary structure of *nomos*" (p. 49). At the base of her analysis, Seshadri challenges the goals of "humanitarianism separated from politics" (Agamben in Seshadri 2008: 49). She concludes:

> in the completely organized world, where there are no more unpenetrated areas left, where sovereignty is global, political agency as such can only be legible within the purview and epistemological framework of the law; it is impossible for us to think or perceive agency that emerges from a place outside the referentiality of the law. (p. 50)

In using Seshadri's framework of how internally displaced persons are unintelligible as human bios as well as citizen-subjects who are granted particular rights (or not) in the seen/scene of global sovereignty, my aim is to highlight the necessity of politicized accounts of theorizing space by purposefully focusing on how particular "camps" designed out of/for humanitarian goals can (and have) become sites of deregulation and reregulation, beholden to a series of political, economic, and juridical arrangements that engender the abjection, silence, and/or expulsion of the "bottom layer of society" from which it claims to protect.

Let's return to the earlier point that biopolitics fuse image with information, bodies, and affect. In the case of LGBTQ persons, consider how the dominant image of the "unhappy queer" provides a causal logic to explain why and how individuals "should" (and "should want to") submit to a heteronormative lifestyle as an ideal. Sara Ahmed (2010) characterizes this biopolitical directive "the promise of happiness." Furthermore, using Weizman's concept of the "politics of verticality" requires us to attend to the ways in which stratification exists within epistemological "groundings." In other words, relations of power shape how and when "knowledge can be made data" (Spivak 2000: 332). We can then ask why and how do *some* queer youth become "legible" as unhappy and, moreover, worthy of school efforts to provide protection within a safe space. To consider these questions, theorizing the space of safety must take as its object of investigation what Gayatri Spivak (2000) terms "the bottom layer of society, not necessarily put together by capital logic alone" (p. 324). For Spivak, the bottom layer of society does not necessarily include (only) those in poverty; rather, "subaltern" population(s) are rendered powerless as invisible and disposable by mechanisms of elite knowledge and knowledge production. Within the context of US education, I suggest that LGBTQ youth of color constitute a subaltern population largely because of the exponential power of many forms of violence that occur in the contact zone of the school.

However, like postcolonial ethnographers, we can argue for a type of pedagogical transience that operates from the assumption of spaces as contested territory in which boundary-maintenance is concomitant with knowledge production and cultural practices. In other words, if the pedagogical space is viewed as a contact zone (as I have argued above), it involves multiple and competing claims to knowledge about the particular place, its historical and physical contours, the perilous terrain, and the dangerous markers of intelligibility and life itself.

7.3   Dis/Placement and LGBTQ Youth of Color

In the context of US framing of safe space, GSAs are posited as an idealized space where sexual minority students can congregate, rally, and mobilize a collective identity of students who oppose heteronormative practices (Macintosh 2007). These heteronormative practices, however, are often described as bullying and/or violence based on gender and/or sexual non-normativity. Yet within these spaces, other forms of epistemic violence or biopolitics occur such as the prevalence of white supremacy, homonormativity (through a collective focus on marriage rights and/or other assimilationist projects), or a depoliticized understanding of sex/gender/desire as a locus of social control. What is at stake in these constructions of GSAs as idealized safe spaces is the extent to which multiple and competing orientations to the place of the GSA are allowed to be articulated, secured, and transgressed by persons who are interpellated as "beyond human rights"—the persons who are under the radar as the future citizen-subjects in the community-to-be. As many queer theorists argue, the politics of visibility reproduces the tensions of inhabiting the position(s) of Otherness: to gain legitimacy requires recognition through liberal political discourses that normalize whiteness and heterosexuality as the basis for full citizenship (Eng 2007). And the very discourses of political agency and citizenship classify, discipline, and regulate bodies in the public sphere of schooling and even GSAs (Macintosh 2007: 38). Thus, the "freedom to create 'unreal' spaces" (Boler 2004: 5) is somewhat of an oxymoron, for it requires a recognition or authorization by the school or the classroom that one has the right to not only inhabit, participate, and/or produce a (safe) educational space.

7.4   Beyond the Rhetoric of Schools as Safe Spaces: Responses from LGBTQ Youth of Color

Schools are sites of contestation in real and imagined terms. As I have argued above, the assemblage of schools as home rests on the semiotic coupling of family-home-maternal-care, which has had the effect of creating a visible population of students "to be cared for" and "protected from harm." I have suggested that, although efforts have been made to create schools and classrooms that might resemble a safe space, the care and protection may be conditional on the ability to be considered a "citizen-to-be" who possesses a life worthy of living (Butler 2003). In this purview, LGBTQ youth are rendered invisible, in part, because of the ways in which citizenship is aligned with whiteness, heteronormativity, and aspirations of social mobility. In this section, I present two examples of how queer and trans youth of color have challenged their status as displaced and disposable subjects in schools and society (Mitchum and Moodie-Mills 2014; Sykes 2016; Giroux 2012).

   The most visible exemplars of contemporary queer and trans youth activism include the proliferation of movement-building activities in response to police

brutality, militarization within communities of color, and the criminalization of Black and Brown bodies. The agenda and platform of #BlackLivesMatter puts Black women, femmes, trans and queers front and center.[3] Though primarily located in the United States, the Black Lives Matter Global Network and its focus on a transnational beloved community, aims to "disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family," that includes a "queer-affirming," "intergenerational and communal network free from ageism."[4] Its founders are clear that #BlackLivesMatter is both a response to state-sanctioned violence and anti-Black racism as well as a visionary model of coalitional politics based on principles of "freedom and justice for Black people, and by extension all people" (Khan-Cullors et al. n.d.).[5]

A local manifestation of a #BlackLivesMatter related event took place in the 2017 Columbus Gay Pride Parade. A group of four Black queer and trans youth (Deondre Miles-Hercules, Wriply Bennet, Ashton Braxton, and Kendall Denton) staged a protest during the Columbus Gay Pride Parade on June 17, 2017 sponsored by Stonewall Columbus. These youth (who came to be known as the Black Pride 4) stepped into the street to block the path of the parade for 7 min to "protest the acquittal of Jeronimo Yanez, the Minneapolis police officer who killed Philando Castile as well as shed light on the lack of safe spaces for Black and Brown people in the LGBTQIA+ community" (Shakur 2018: n.p.). Unfortunately, the four were arrested that day and cited for impeding the First Amendment Rights of Stonewall Columbus. Two things are particularly interesting about this example. First, the immediate response by some White parade goers ranged from unwelcoming to downright hostile. A video from that day shows two White women spitting on one of the protesters. The second and equally troubling response is from the lack of support (financial, legal, or otherwise) from the leadership of Stonewall Columbus in dropping the charges against the Black Pride 4, facilitating reflexive dialogue, or even acknowledging any complicity.[6] The situation regarding the Black Pride 4 illuminates the impossibility of safe space through normative (White/Western) understanding of social justice and safety. Remember that the whole point of the seven-minute demonstration was to protest the lack of safe spaces for Black and Brown people (especially youth) in the LGBTQIA+ community. The State (police) established clear boundaries that rendered certain bodies disposable/displaced by the fundamental rights of the Free Speech of Stonewall Columbus. Thus, as the State established the biopolitical structure of the situation (e.g., who has the right to have rights), the response (or lack thereof) by Stonewall Columbus (as a metaphorical safe space) reinforced its allegiance to the cultural politics of homonationalism and respectability. In other words, Stonewall Columbus retained its place and space in the center of the GLBTQ community and further displaced queer and trans youth of color. Yet, rather than total erasure this local gesture articulated the possibility

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[3] https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/what-we-believe/

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] One of the board members, Lori Gum, did resign in an effort to amplify the voices of the Black Pride 4.

and power of reclaiming space. And, thanks to the mass circulation possible by social media, a seven-minute protest by a small group of people catalyzed national conversations and organizing among queer and trans youth of color. The case of the Black Pride 4 suggests how displacement can become a site of reterritorialization and affinity-based organizing.

The second example is a group called Gender JUST from Chicago, Illinois that illustrates how queer and trans youth of color identify and mobilize as a subaltern group to collectively articulate their platform on the status of "safety" and schools. In doing so, Gender JUST represents how LGBTQ students of color are individually and collectively displaced within the schooling system, as well as how they imagine themselves to be an ideological "camp" from which to articulate their concerns and issues.

> First off, we would like to note that what we have seen of late is an increase in the reporting and discussion of school violence—not an increase in the violence itself. Young people of color face violence consistently. As queer and transgender youth of color in public schools, violence is a reality we live daily in our schools, on our streets, in our communities, and in our lives. Whether the violence is self-inflicted, gang-based, based on pure hate and ignorance, or the systemic violence perpetrated by the state and our institutions such as our schools, police, welfare system, non-profits, and hospitals, we need to have an ongoing analysis of violence that lasts longer than our brief memory of the deaths of a select grouping of queer youth.
>
> It is critical to remember that we face violence as youth, as people of color, as people living in poverty, as queers, as trans and gender non conforming young people. We can't separate our identities and any approach to preventing violence must be holistic and incorporate our whole selves. We have seen an overly simplistic and unnuanced reaction to the recent violence; from Dan Savage telling young people to wait it out until "it gets better" and from Kathy Griffin declaring that passing Gay Marriage and overturning Don't Ask Don't Tell would somehow stop the violence in our lives, we have found this response to be as misguided, irrelevant, and offensive as the conservative LGBT Movement itself.
>
> While youth violence is a very serious issue in our schools, the real bullies we face in our schools take the form of systemic violence perpetrated by the school system itself: a sex education that ignores queer youth and a curriculum that denies our history, a militarized school district with cops in our schools, a process of privatization which displaces us, increasing class sizes which undermine our education and safety. The national calls to end the violence against queer youth completely ignore the most violent nature of our educational experience.
>
> Our greatest concern is that there is a resounding demand for increased violence as a reaction, in the form of Hate Crime penalties which bolster the Prison-Industrial-Complex and Anti-bullying measures which open the door to zero-tolerance policies and reinforce the school-to-prison pipeline. At Gender JUST, we call for a transformative and restorative response that seeks solutions to the underlying issues, takes into account the circumstances surrounding violence, and works to change the very culture of our schools and communities.[7]

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[7] http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Gender-JUST-News%2D%2DResponse-to-Recent-Suicides.html?soid=1103464106540&aid=YqPPAJt0NS8

The statement by Gender JUST exemplifies the assemblage of school as camp generally, and in particular, the characterization of camp as a space constituted by violence rather than safety. In contrast to the school as home assemblage, this group describes how LGBTQ youth are not only unprotected as part of the educational family but also displaced within the mainstream LGBTQ movement. Gender JUST notes that schools, pedagogy, and curriculum are not politically neutral, and instead suggests that LGBTQ and gender nonconforming youth of color are targets of a larger national agenda of a school-to-prison pipeline. Their statement locates schools as part of the prison industrial complex in the United States. Although schools may claim to provide refuge or shelter, the students of Gender JUST connect the systemic violence of/within schools to the violence on the streets, prisons, nonprofits, hospitals, and welfare system. Remember that for Spivak (and Foucault), part of the subaltern condition is being subject to the embodied management, control, and surveillance by elite knowledge and the institutions that authorize it. Thus, for LGBTQ youth of color, schools may be one of the various camps created through the violent "humanitarianism" and biopolitics of the State and the prison-industrial complex.

Yet even though Gender JUST is highly critical of schools and the police, this does not prevent the organization from engaging in multiple campaigns targeted at "educating teachers, administrators, students, cops, and others on *the root causes* of racial, economic and gender justice." One of the most active components of the organization is the Safe and Affirming Education campaign that seeks to "smash the system" of oppression reproduced in schooling:

> Queer and gender-non-conforming young people experience a great deal of oppression at the hands of educational institutions, which often leads to homelessness, poverty, and disempowerment. Gender JUST seeks to smash this system of violence by organizing for safe and affirming education, struggling against the privatization of education, and fighting militarization in schools.[8]

Using their subject positions as students who are displaced, members of Gender JUST speak back and to the agents of elite knowledge production by insisting on the question, "safety for whom?" In this way, we can see that LGBTQ youth of color are staking out new boundaries of safety and justice within and outside of classroom and school walls.

In this chapter, my aim has been to introduce the metaphor of "camp" as a way of theorizing the politics of verticality, geographies of placement, and biopolitics of the assemblage of safe space. I argue that camp is a useful metaphor, not because it holds the promise of a "pure" or "pristine" history of past associations or a model for a community-to-be. Rather, I argue that camp, precisely because it signals a wide range of ontological and epistemological orientations (ranging from subversive performativity to the political economic formulations of the limits of liberalist juridical notions of subjectivity and citizenship) allows us to interrogate the real and imagined space of safety. The metaphor of safe space as "camp" certainly provokes

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[8] Ibid.

the embodied past histories of association with schooling, education, and pedagogy depending on how one is socially-spatially situated in terms of normative bourgeois biopolitics and/or regulation. The task that lies before us is to successfully stake out and navigate the markers of knowledge and cultural production that create and sustain normative views of schooling, violence, and safe space.

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Chapter 8
Queer(y)ing Teacher Education: Ignorance, Insecurity, and Intolerance

Janna Jackson Kellinger

Until recently, the phrase "queer youth" was thought to apply only to teenagers. Subsequently, any attention to queer topics in schools, including Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), mainly occurred at the high school level. However, youth are coming out at younger ages (American Friends of Tel Aviv University 2011) and a chronological look at media reports about youth who commit suicide due to anti-gay bullying reveal that this is occurring at younger and younger ages. In 2018, Jamel Myles was just 9 years old when he committed suicide because of anti-gay bullying. This highlights the need for educational systems to take better care of queer youth at all grade levels. Those of us who have been reading queer media, however, know that, unfortunately, Jamel Myles is representative of too many other youth whose tragedies do not make the mainstream news. Statistics from the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) 2017 National School Climate survey bear this out as 70% of queer youth surveyed reported being verbally harassed, 29% physically harassed, and 60% feeling unsafe at school due to homophobia (Kosciw et al. 2018: xvii-xix).

As educators, we also hear about and interact with youth whose views on gender and sexuality are much more fluid than the butch/femme binary—youth who flirt with various categories, trying on one identification and then another, or even defining their own gender/sexuality. In a study of online behavior of queer girls, Driver (2007) found a whole range of self-definitions, including "[i]n the middle of fem and butch," "[a] tom boy with a princess stuck inside of me," "andro," "fem-androgynous," "in-between," "boi," "birl" (pp. 41–42). All youth, not just queer youth, embody Judith Butler's (1990) notion of identity as performativity, with many creating their own gender/sexuality identity moment to moment. However, for the most part, queer youth, just like youth in general, are just trying to make it through school, worried about grades, worried about dating, and worried about their

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future. Unfortunately, all too often they have added worries stemming from transphobia and homophobia.

Whether queer youth are seen as victims, resilient survivors, or average Joe's, unfortunately by and large schools are underprepared for students who identify as anything other than heterosexual and cisgendered. Particularly in this era of high-stakes testing, accountability, and standards that tend to narrow the curriculum and focus instruction on teaching to the test (Taubman 2009), the official curriculum of schools excludes, erases, and ignores queerness (Lipkin 2002: 15), with the notable exception of California who in 2018 adopted legislation that explicitly directs educators to use curriculum that includes LGBTQ contributions to history, literature, and art. Teachers, unfortunately, often lack the knowledge and skills to make queer topics an integrated part of their delivered curriculum—only 20% of queer K–12 students surveyed encountered positive queer representation in their classes with 18% being taught negative content about LGBTQ topics (Kosciw et al. 2018: xxii). In addition, not enough schools have policies, or enforce the policies they do have, to make schools safe spaces for queer youth (Kosciw et al. 2018; Meyer 2009). GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey found that, of students who reported homophobic incidents to school administration, nearly 60% stated that no action was taken (Kosciw et al. 2018: xix). This lack of attention to queer topics, issues, and concerns results in a hidden curriculum that reinforces feelings of invisibility for queer youth and sends messages to all youth that queer people are unimportant and undeserving of protection from homophobia and transphobia. To demonstrate the effects of homophobia on *all* students, Kevin Jennings (Caiola 1996), founder of GLSEN, tells a poignant story of a straight male whose father discourages him from participating in ballet, chorus, and drama because those are activities that "queers," "faggots," and "homos" do. The son concludes by saying, "My dad's taken away everything I'm good at in life."

However, all is not bleak. GSAs are popping up everywhere, even in unlikely places. Some school districts do provide professional development that addresses queer youth and related topics. Several resources such as Jennings's (1994) high school textbook about queer history, Meyer's (2009) book on bullying, and books on GSAs (Macgillivray 2007; Mayo 2017) exist, but it is unclear how many schools and teachers take advantage of these resources. GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey found that the steps described above—policies to protect queer students, GSAs, queer-inclusive curricula—have positive ramifications for queer students (Kosciw et al. 2018). In addition to these steps, one evident place of change that has not received much attention is in teacher education programs (Kissen 2002). If schools are to become more supportive and affirming of their queer students, one of the first steps should be to address these issues in schools of education so that future teachers will be better prepared to do this work. Unfortunately, what evidence does exist suggests not much has changed since Sears's (1992) study that found that 80% of preservice teachers in his survey "harbored negative feelings toward lesbians and gay men" (p. 39). Changes so far have largely developed from the activist efforts of students themselves, not teachers or administrators (Mayo 2017). If schools are to live up to their rhetoric about teaching all children, teacher education

needs to step up to make sure future educators know ways in which they can make schools more inclusive for queer students and children of same-sex couples, which, in turn, will make schools more inclusive for all students.

8.1 Silence in the Scholarship: What Literature on Teacher Education Programs Says About Queerness

Several high-profile books about teacher education have been published since 2000. Unfortunately, the ways these books address sexual orientation and gender are very limited, if they address them at all. For example, in two reports prepared by the National Academy of Education that make recommendations for teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 2005; Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden 2005), teaching diverse learners is high on the list, but students whose diversity is based on gender identity or sexuality and children of same-sex couples are not included: "We consider aspects of diversity including culture and racial/ethnic origins, language, economic status, and learning challenges associated with exceptionalities" (Banks et al. 2005: 233–234).

The National Academy of Education is not the only organization that omits queerness from diversity. The recent report by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) panel on research and teacher education does not report on how teacher education addresses sexual orientation, sexuality, or gender identity and expression even though the panel was asked to "outlin[e] topics that need further study, identifying terms and concepts that require clarification and consistent usage, describing promising lines of research, and pointing to the research genres and processes most likely to define new directions and yield useful findings for policy and practice" (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner 2005: 1–2). Despite its attention to diversity, the panel focuses on students "whose cultural, language, racial, and ethnic backgrounds differ from the mainstream and . . . those who live in poor urban and rural areas" (p. 20), a definition of diversity that persists throughout the 750-page report. In discussing "traditionally underserved student populations" (p. 20), the report does not acknowledge that queer students have been so underserved that in many cases they have either not been served at all or negatively served, such as in states with "no promo homo" laws—laws that prohibit teachers from portraying homosexuality in anything but a negative light. Nowhere in the research agenda, even under "unexplored topics related to teacher preparation" (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner 2005: 35), does the panel mention sexual orientation, sexuality, or gender identity and expression. The panel concludes that "traditional preservice and in-service teacher education has not done an adequate job preparing teachers to teach diverse populations" (Hollins and Guzman 2005: 478), but when queerness does not even make the "What the AERA Panel Project Did Not Do" section, it is clear queer students were not even a speck on the largest educational organization's radar screen.

However, AERA did publish a book in 2011 titled *Studying Diversity in Teacher Education* by Arnetha Ball and Cynthia Tyson. In it is a chapter by Therese Quinn and Erica Meiners devoted to LGBTQ concerns. Ironically, the title of the chapter is "Teacher Education, Struggles for Social Justice, and the Historic Erasure of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Lives" as the rest of the book fails to mention queer people except a few times as an item in a list of diversities. Confined to just one chapter in this book of 20 chapters, at least we finally have a seat at the table. To their credit, AERA also published a book in 2015 titled *LGBTQ Issues in Education: Advancing a Research Agenda*; however, none of the chapters address teacher preparation. It is evident, that we are still not integrated into the larger conversations about teacher preparation.

Other books on teacher preparation such as Saleh and Khine's 2011 book *Teaching Teachers: Approaches in Improving Quality of Education* largely ignore queer issues. Even books devoted to multiculturalism such as Banks and Banks' 2007 *Multicultural Education* devote only a paragraph to sexual orientation concluding that "sexual orientation is often a difficult issue for classroom discussion [but] if done sensitively, it can help empower gay and lesbian students and enable them to experience social equality in the college and university classroom" (p. 17). Not only does this treat queers as controversial, it also presumes that these discussions would only take place in higher education. Not until 2009 did this broadly circulating multicultural education textbook include gender identity and sexual orientation: now that chapter is included in each new edition.

8.2 Queer Quotient: What Teacher Education Textbooks Say About Queer Topics

How queer topics are presented in teacher education programs have a lasting impact on the teachers the programs produce (Macgillivray and Jennings 2008). Because "course curriculum is often guided by textbook content" (Sherwin and Jennings 2006: 216) and "rely[ing] upon instructors' supplementation of textbooks is potentially flawed because it relies on expertise and sensitivities that many instructors may not have without support from a text" (Macgillivray and Jennings 2008: 171), examining textbooks used in teacher education programs may give some insight into the ways these issues are presented and the potential attitudes of the teachers these programs produce. Unfortunately, the queer quotient in these texts is limited. Young and Middleton (2002) and Macgillivray and Jennings (2008) describe the treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) topics in textbooks they examined as either "problematizing gayness" (Macgillivray and Jennings 2008: 172)—placing discussions of queer topics in the midst of discussions of problematic behavior such as sexually transmitted diseases and sexual abuse (Young and Middleton 2002) and drug abuse, violence, depression, and suicide (Macgillivray and Jennings 2008)—or "marginalizing gayness" (Macgillivray and Jennings 2008: 172)—using heterosexuality as the norm by which to compare homosexuality.

In terms of "problematizing gayness," Young and Middleton (2002) found that only one book they studied integrated LGBT topics throughout the text instead of ghettoizing them in a separate section. One book positioned its discussion of homosexuality under the heading "Risky Behavior in Context" (Young and Middleton 2002). AIDS was commonly associated with homosexuality, with five texts listing AIDS under homosexuality in their indices (Young and Middleton 2002). Gayness was further pathologized in some texts by presenting it as a "phase"—something to be gotten over like a disease (Macgillivray and Jennings 2008; Young and Middleton 2002). Macgillivray and Jennings (2008) describe the effects of placing discussions of gayness adjacent to negative subjects as "stigmatization through association" (p. 182).

Textbooks marginalized gayness in various ways as well. For example, discussions of homosexuality in several texts were written as if answering the question "how and why are people gay?" without asking the same of heterosexuality (Young and Middleton 2002: 95). In some cases, the authors were attempting to portray gays and lesbians in a positive light, such as stating that gay relationships were similar to straight ones, but this "has the effect of reinforcing heterosexual relationships as the norm by which to judge and compare all others" (Macgillivray and Jennings 2008: 175). Although a few books in the Young and Middleton (2002) study and all in the Macgillivray and Jennings (2008) study addressed the discrimination against gays and lesbians, this still positions gays and lesbians as victims. In one of the books examined by Macgillivray and Jennings (2008), adjectives attached to gay youth included "outcasts," "frightened," and "high risk" (p. 180). Macgillivray and Jennings (2008) point out that relying on the "victim narrative" has the effect of "rendering [gay youth] as hapless victims with no self-determination or agency" (p. 182).

Although Macgillivray and Jennings (2008) state that it is difficult to determine if progress has been made, their findings suggest educational textbooks' treatment of LGBT issues has improved since the Young and Middleton (2002) study, with all eight textbooks they studied addressing LGBT issues in some way. The themes they identified were broader and included discussions about LGBT identities and experiences; LGBT families; LGBT history; safety and support strategies for LGBT students and allies; legal and policy issues in regard to LGBT rights and topics; and professional responsibilities to LGBT students, allies, and families. Unlike the dismal treatment of LGBT topics in the Young and Middleton (2002) study, one of the books examined by Macgillivray and Jennings (2008) "described the hostile climate of schools without focusing on a self-destructive victim narrative" (p. 180) and two discussed including LGBT topics in the curriculum. Unlike the findings of the Young and Middleton (2002) study, Macgillivray and Jennings (2008) found that photos of LGBT people were not limited to White people. Unfortunately, neither study found textbooks that included "conceptual terms and frameworks such as homophobia, heterosexism, and heteronormativity that equip future educators with the language and concepts to critically interpret and analyze power relations and educational contexts surrounding LGBT people and issues" (Macgillivray and Jennings 2008: 178). A 2012 study of multicultural education textbooks found that

while the topics about queerness were broad, they were not very deep and presented the various groups under the queer umbrella as unitary (Jennings 2014). Even though educational textbooks have made progress, they still have a ways to go.

8.3   Standardizing Silence: What Teacher Education Standards Say About Queer Topics

Teacher education programs are beholden to many masters, including various standards—national standards for teacher education programs, professional standards for teachers in their subject areas, and national and state standards for what teachers should teach K–12 students. As a testimony to their influence, one teacher education coordinator stated that their program did not address LGBT topics because they are not included in the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards (Sherwin and Jennings 2006). Searching through these standards shows that in all the national and state standards for K–12 students in the United States available online, the keywords "sexual orientation" and "sexuality" are rarely mentioned with no mention of "gay," "lesbian," "homosexuality," "gender identity," or "queer" with a few exceptions. In social studies, these exceptions include a reference to some LGBT resources and acknowledgment of "people of diverse genders" (Rhode Island), mention of "individuals with gender preferences" (New Jersey), and evaluating campaigns against hate crimes targeting LGBT people (Washington). In the health standards, the exceptions include respecting differences based on sexual orientation and gender identity (California, Vermont), examining the media's influence on perceptions of LGBT people (California, Colorado), standing up to bullying (California), comparing theories about what determines sexual orientation (Washington, DC), and studying discrimination against LGBT people (Washington, DC, Massachusetts). Although these exceptions are positive, or at least meant to be positive, the one exception to these exceptions is Arizona's state health standards, which have "no promo homo language." Considering that these are the only mentions of queerness across six subject areas, 50 states plus Washington, D.C., and two different proposed national standards for a total of 318 standards and one forbids portraying the "homosexual lifestyle" in a positive light, teacher education programs need to drive home the importance and impact of this work if there is any hope of teachers integrating queer topics into the curriculum in this era of teaching to the test.

Among all the professional standards in the United States at the time of the writing of this chapter, sexual orientation is mentioned only in four out of 23 professional standards—for teachers of environmental education, middle school teachers, physical educators, and school librarians—and only in a list of identities in clarifying what is meant by "all students." Sexuality is in the health educators' standards stating that teachers should understand young adolescents' health and sexuality. According to these standards, queer contributions are seen as not as part of the

curriculum. Instead, queers are listed as one of many potential students—that is when they exist at all.

In some cases, standards that previously included these keywords have been purged of these references. For example, in Massachusetts, the equity standard that read "masters effective strategies for the classroom and other school settings to address discrimination based on each student's race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic class or disability" no longer mentions these identities and instead says, "encourages all students to believe that effort is a key to achievement." In other words, instead of acknowledging oppressions that undermine equal opportunity, teachers are supposed to promote the myth of meritocracy. On the national level in the United States, in 2006 NCATE removed "social justice" and, subsequently, "sexual orientation" from its diversity standards, and a new professional disposition was added that read, "fairness and the belief that all students can learn." Quinn and Meiners (2009) point out the implications of this change: "Social justice connotes movements and people acting together; it aims at systemic change. Fairness . . . is suited to the needs of those who wish to avoid conflict and can transform public policy issues into individual concerns" (p. 32). Indeed, Arthur Wise, head of NCATE at the time, made these changes precisely because of these differences in connotation: "I have come to learn . . . [social justice] has acquired some new meanings, evidently connected to a radical social agenda. So lest there be any misunderstanding about our intentions in this regard, we have decided to remove this phrase totally from our vocabulary" (quoted from Quinn and Meiners 2009: 37). In the fall of 2007, however, the executive board of NCATE approved a section about social justice that includes the statement "understands the impact of discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability/exceptionality, sexual orientation, and language on students and their learning" (NCATE 2008: 7), but, in the rest of the document, sexual orientation is relegated to footnotes and the glossary. This is better, however, than the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), previously the other national accrediting agency in the United States, which has no mention of any of the keywords in its 191-page guide to accreditation despite one of the agency's three cross-cutting themes being "multicultural perspectives" (TEAC 2005). When NCATE and TEAC merged to create CAEP, CAEP did not adopt the use of "multicultural perspectives" from TEAC, but rather folds everyone under the umbrella of "all P-12 students" (CAEP 2016). This "in one year, out the next" demonstrates that, unfortunately, the inclusion of queer topics is subject to the current political climate and/or those in power in particular organizations.

8.4   Ignorance, Insecurity, and Intolerance: What Teacher Education Programs Do

Across the literature, there is consensus that teacher education programs do not adequately address sexuality (Briden 2005; Kissen 2002; Macgillivray and Jennings 2008; Quinn and Meiners 2009), and often address it only when there is a

"champion" (Athanases and Larrabee 2003; Page and Liston 2002; Straut and Sapon-Shevin 2002). As North (2007) points out, however, when these efforts are located in only one class or by one professor, students can dismiss them as being "'the idiosyncrasy of the lone individual'" (p. 224). Macgillivray and Jennings (2008) explain that many teacher education programs do not address queer topics either out of ignorance, insecurity, or intolerance and conclude that "[t]he systematic neglect of the needs of LGBT youth and families within teacher preparation coursework is rooted in heteronormative assumptions that present heterosexuality as the only legitimate sexual orientation" (p. 171). When programs do recognize queerness, "colleges of education . . . consider questions of sexual diversity to be outside their purview, a matter better relegated to the realm of morality and personal opinion than curriculum" (Briden 2005: 15), demonstrating Quinn and Meiners's (2009) assertion that educators assume that assigning queerness to the private realm "absolves" (p. 4) educational entities from their responsibility of addressing queer topics. Meanwhile, preservice teachers are left to their own devices to figure out how to address, or even if they can address, queer topics in the classroom in an era when gayness is deemed controversial. Unfortunately, several studies have found that preservice teachers, particularly those planning to teach at the elementary level, tend to be more homophobic than the general population (Page and Liston 2002) and that teachers report less homophobia in their schools than students do (Mayo 2013; Page and Liston 2002), indicating a general lack of awareness of the problems queer youth face.

One indication of the attention teacher education programs pay to queer topics is the amount of coverage given in their advertising. In the past (the 1993–1994 school year), a survey of the hardcopy materials of 16 graduate education schools showed not only a paucity of references to LGBT issues but also an active covering up of queer research done by professors by using vague terms in their research interests sections such as "multicultural education" (Rofes 2005). Notably absent, however, was mention of any queer topics in the many courses on diversity, multicultural education, and contemporary issues in education (Rofes 2005). More recently, a survey of 57 Illinois institutions of higher education on the web presence of LGBT topics not just within the teacher education programs but also across the university found these schools did not do much better than Rofes's (2005) review: 72% received failing grades based on Quinn and Meiners's (2009) criteria. Only 35% of the teacher education programs included sexual orientation in their conceptual framework or disposition statements, with only one program addressing gender identity. Interestingly, at one presentation of the findings, some audience members criticized the research stating that "web presence" is hardly indicative of a university's commitment to queer issues, whereas some graduate students present joked "that scoffing at the value of analyzing websites was a quick way to show one's age; it was something that only older, not fully web-literate individuals would do" (Quinn and Meiners 2009: 78). Surveying the top ten teacher education programs in the United States using the same keywords as the standards search found that nine out of ten thought queer topics worthy enough to be included in their web presence at the time this chapter was written, an improvement upon Rofes's (2005)

and Quinn and Meiners's (2009) studies. Ironically, one of the programs with the least number of references was the only one that included a reference to sexual orientation in its mission/conceptual framework.

A survey of 77 coordinators of secondary education programs (Sherwin and Jennings 2006) and 65 coordinators of elementary education programs (Jennings and Sherwin 2008) found only 60% of secondary education programs and 56% of elementary education programs "explicitly" addressed sexual orientation in their curriculum, with explicitly being defined as "the topic has been generally agreed upon by full time faculty and is expected to be covered in particular courses" (Jennings and Sherwin 2008: 213). The coverage, however, was concentrated in earlier theoretical classes such as foundation courses with only 18% (secondary) and 20% (elementary) reporting coverage during student teaching so "the closer preservice teachers moved to actual interactions with sexual minority students and parents/guardians (as well as homophobic/heterosexist school cultures), the less instruction regarding sexual orientation diversity they received" (Sherwin and Jennings 2006: 213–214). Considering that 92% (secondary) and 93% (elementary) reported addressing other aspects of diversity during field experience seminars, this suggests that incorporating queer topics tends to be discussed theoretically but not expected to be applied in reality. This could be because the coordinators demonstrated a lack of awareness of the academic and personal risks homophobia poses to queer youth as the coordinators ranked students with diversity in terms of sexual orientation and gender as the students with the least amount of risk of academic failure and destructive behaviors compared to those with diversity in regard to race/ethnicity, class, language, and special needs (Sherwin and Jennings 2006).

Because Sherwin and Jennings (2006) also asked about how other areas of diversity were treated in the curriculum, they were able to see that:

> while other efforts in multicultural education have expanded educators' understanding of the cultural and intellectual contributions made by diverse groups and individuals, little is being done to prepare teachers to reform curriculum content to affirm gay and lesbian youth or demonstrate to all students the contributions of gays, lesbians, transgendered, and bisexual individuals in the content areas. (p. 214)

An analysis of the topics covered led Sherwin and Jennings (2006) to conclude: "Given the emphasis on factors such as risk and attitudes, it appears that more attention was focused on how sexual minority issues conflict with heterosexism rather than attention being given to the etiology of homosexuality or the myriad contributions of gay people" (p. 214). This was also seen in programs for educational administrators, where the emphasis was on legal issues administrators may face in this arena (Jennings 2014). Although teacher education programs at the elementary level included a focus on gay and lesbian families, in general these education programs did little to prepare students to integrate these topics into their teaching (Jennings and Sherwin 2008). Sherwin and Jennings (2006) acknowledge that these results may be skewed as coordinators who are uncomfortable may not have responded to the survey at all; thus, the results may overrepresent programs with coordinators who are more comfortable and thus more likely to head programs that include these topics. Even if Sherwin and Jennings's surveys are not

completely accurate, they do suggest an improvement on the mere 12% of preservice teachers who reported being in education programs that addressed LGBT topics in Page and Liston's (2002) study.

8.5   Queer Pedagogy: What Teacher Education Programs Can Do

"For homophobia in schools to lessen, teacher education programs must interrogate homophobia and the naturalization of heterosexuality" (Swartz 2005: 125); queer pedagogy provides the tools to do so. Some people conceive of teaching as creating order out of chaos; queer pedagogy creates chaos out of order by making visible and calling into question the false binaries that structure society. Jennings (2014) provides the example of a queer approach moving schools from being reactive, e.g., chastising anti-gay bullies, to being proactive, e.g., viewing bullying as a means of policing gender and sexual norms and subsequently examining the school structures that marginalize queer youth (p. 407).

O'Malley et al. (2009) found that doing "prep work" before dismantling students' notions of sex, gender, and sexuality paved the road for more productive discussions. This prep work included examining the complexity of gender and sex by capitalizing on "students' assumptions of the neutrality of biology" (p. 97) while at the same time challenging biological determinism as well as clarifying relevant terminology. Prep work for Goldstein (2004) involved using "performance ethnography" to redirect discussions to characters in a play instead of the students themselves, thus providing a "less threatening" (King and Brindley 2002) entry point into discussions that "disrupt what they already know" (Kumashiro 2002a: 73).

Many scholars recommend that teacher educators (Grace 2006) and preservice teachers begin with a critical examination of themselves and "the way heteronormative discourses shape their taken-for-granted assumptions" (Petrovic and Rosiek 2007: 211). Autobiography can be a means to do so, however:

> [s]ome educators use autobiography in ways that reinforce classroom representations of a knowable, always accessible conscious self who progresses, with the help of autobiographical inquiry, from ignorance to knowledge of self, other, and "best" pedagogical and curricular practices. Such normalized versions of autobiography serve to limit and to close down rather than to create possibilities for constructing permanently open and resignifiable selves. (Miller 1998: 367)

To avoid autobiographies that "obscure" and instead prompt students to create ones that "illuminate" (Johnson 2002: 164), Cochran-Smith (1995) suggests having preservice teachers "rewrite their autobiographies by shifting the story from one that was morally neutral to one structured by unearned privilege that disadvantaged others" (p. 549). Another tactic is to have students write "thrice told" autobiographies—the first the "morally neutral" one in which students recount their achievements, the second examining ways in which they have been marginalized, and the

third examining their unearned privilege, thus progressing from "less threatening" (King and Brindley 2002: 203) to more challenging.

Reading student autobiographies also helps teacher educators start where students are—for some preservice teachers, this means realizing that queer students exist as well as students with queer parents, the extent of homophobic violence that occurs in schools, the depth of the damage homophobic name-calling can inflict, and that people come out at young ages (Swartz 2005). One of the more prevalent misunderstandings that students have to unlearn is "[t]he discourse of childhood innocence [that] is used to maintain ignorance, to perpetuate longstanding heteronormative norms, and is applied selectively" by having students realize that they "did not problematise early childhood displays of 'heterosexualisation' such as 'boyfriend/girlfriend' games and relationships" (Curran et al. 2009: 165). Biographies are another avenue of countering heteronormative assumptions. Jennings (2014) powerfully argues that studying Bayard Rustin can use intersectionality to disrupt the unified picture of queers that textbooks often present and depict a queer historical figure with agency to challenge the victim narrative.

Considering the common finding across the literature that queer topics were addressed in teacher education only when there was a "champion" (Page and Liston 2002), exploring how these "champions" are created may give insight into ways to inspire preservice teachers to become champions in their future places of employment. Mulhern and Martinez (1999) explain that their reasons for becoming "champions" were rooted in their personal experiences with gay and lesbian friends but that they became even more resolved after learning about the destructive effects of homophobia. Knowing someone gay and obtaining accurate information about people who are queer can change people's attitudes (Page and Liston 2002), pointing to the positive ramifications of bringing in queer guest speakers and the importance of teaching about the consequences of homophobia without defining queer youth by their victimhood. Goldstein et al. (2007) acknowledge the power of bringing in queer speakers, but also the dangers as it defines an "Other," suggests that queers do not already exist in that educational context, and "[coming out] stories do not necessarily address systemic issues of power and privilege" (p. 190). Straut and Sapon-Shevin (2002) also caution against presenting information about people who are queer as "factual":

> The idea that students can learn the "truth" about sexual orientation is problematic, however. There is little agreement about how each of us develops or accepts a sexual identity or about the fixed nature of such an identity. And there is little value in reducing a deeply personal and political issue to facts and statistics. At the very least, faculty can help preservice teachers become fully informed teachers who can approach the issues from multiple perspectives. This requires that faculty create an environment in which students at the university are able to question, listen, and learn. (p. 35)

Instead, Mulhern and Martinez (1999) found that presenting oneself as a "learner" opened up dialogue about queer topics. As learners, the authors found that reflecting on their evolving efforts to address queer topics in their courses with others doing the same was an invaluable aspect of their evolution (Mulhern and Martinez 1999). Reflection also applies to students as in-class time for reflection (Simone 2002) and

journaling (Kumashiro 2002a) that can give students the necessary space to grapple with any cognitive dissonance created by exploring these topics.

Essential to this work is making connections with other forms of oppression—for example, how Whiteness being presented as the norm and race as "that which is not White" is similar to ways heterosexuality and sexuality are depicted. Sometimes reflection leads students to make these connections on their own, sensing that how they have been oppressed in terms of race, gender, and so forth parallels homophobia (Athanases and Larrabee 2003; Davis and Kellinger 2014; Larrabee and Morehead 2008; Swartz 2005). In keeping with this, many advocate for integrating queer issues throughout teacher education courses and programs, but Robinson and Ferfolja (2008) found that this can result in watering down queer topics as they can get "lost in the integration" (p. 855). Macgillivray and Jennings (2008) suggest integrating queer topics throughout textbooks as well as having a section dedicated to them; this can work with programs of study as well.

Athanases and Larrabee (2003) found that when queer topics were addressed in teacher education programs, more than 75% of the nearly 100 preservice teachers they studied responded positively. Mulhern and Martinez (1999) found that more than half their students changed their attitudes about teaching queer topics after experiencing classes that involved discussions about homosexuality. Petrovic and Rosiek (2007) point out, and Szalacha (2005) and Athanases and Larrabee (2003) agree, however, that "it is not enough for teacher educators to turn out teachers with a critical conception of heteronormativity, they must also be able to envision ways, both small and large, to act on that critical consciousness" (p. 226). Modeling how to discuss and incorporate queer topics and discussing these models provide preservice teachers with strategies they can use in their own classrooms. Using the film *It's Elementary* "modeled the possibilities of classroom instruction" (Mulhern and Martinez 1999) not only for their preservice teachers but also for themselves as teacher educators.

Kumashiro (2002b) outlines specific ways teachers can counter hegemonic knowledge structures in various content areas in what he dubs "anti-oppressive pedagogy." Airton (2014) recommends using "murk[y]" case studies to teach teachers how to identify homophobia to begin with in their description of "Anti-Homophobia Teacher Education." Migdalek (2014) takes this a step further by describing ways drama workshops can disrupt assumptions about gender. Developing strategies in case parents or community members object better prepares preservice teachers to do this work (King and Brindley 2002; Swartz 2005). Most importantly, fostering students' abilities to teach queerly—that is, to question the structures of society and make changes accordingly—can translate into a teaching workforce that opens up space for all students to explore their identifications.

8.6 Removing Resistance: Potential Challenges and Barriers

Considering the perpetual problem of finding room for the vast array of topics that can help prepare preservice teachers to teach, time constraints offer an easy excuse for those unwilling to incorporate queer topics into teacher education curricula.

Not having enough room in the curriculum was cited as the number one barrier to including LGBT topics identified by teacher education coordinators in Sherwin and Jennings's 2006 and 2008 surveys of teacher education programs, despite many programs' attention to race, gender, and class. This is probably due to "the attitudes or preexisting knowledge among programs' faculty and students" (Sherwin and Jennings 2006: 215). Straut and Sapon-Shevin (2002) detail some of these possible assumptions, including that all students are heterosexual and therefore there is no need to address sexual diversity and that "counterhegemonic practices [are too] dangerous" because professors might be accused of "'promoting homosexuality' or the 'homosexual agenda' or 'forcing lgbt issues down students' throats'" (Straut and Sapon-Shevin 2002: 33). Indeed, as Straut and Sapon-Shevin (2002) point out, "there is no 'normal' visibility for members of oppressed or minority groups; there is only invisibility or hyper-visibility" (p. 33). Considering the connections among "isms" and that most teacher education programs include attention to racism, classism, and so forth, the excuse of curricular constraints is more likely to be a result of these attitudes and assumptions.

Lipkin (2002) encountered many of these same attitudes in implementing a module on gay and lesbian issues in education in Harvard's graduate college of education. Other faculty objected to the addition of the module, claiming that it "had more to do with politics than academics" (p. 21). When he made analogies in class between homophobia and racism, despite his assertions that he was not equating the two but simply drawing parallels, a number of Black students objected. He describes constantly walking a line where he did not want to push his students to the point where they would "shut down" and he was concerned about bringing too much of his own story into the classroom. In addition, he felt pressure to "have explicit instructions for fixing problems in the schools" and be a "model minority" (p. 23) for the queer students in his classroom. He describes an example of a trainer for GLSEN Boston showing the film *Gay Youth* and getting two different responses to the two segments—the first of a gay youth committing suicide that elicited sympathy and the second of a lesbian student wanting to attend prom with her girlfriend that resulted in educators expressing disgust (Lipkin 2002). Mulhern and Martinez (1999) found less resistance than Lipkin (2002), suggesting straight allies might face fewer challenges, but they also found they had to confront their own homophobia. Teaching about queer topics in teacher education requires not only moving students from where they are, which can be difficult when students range in their acceptance, but also paying attention to how the instructor's own identifications can impact students' receptivity of the content.

Particular cultural norms can also get in the way of addressing queer topics in teacher education programs. Kissen (2002) found that "in an effort to minimize conflict, the discourse of [Southern] civility ignores even the most blatant conflict" (p. 83). For Mulhern and Martinez (1999), the most daunting aspect of resistance was religious beliefs: "find[ing] it difficult to respond to [students religiously based homophobic comments] without coming across as putting down their religious beliefs" (p. 249) or "imposing my beliefs on my students" (p. 252). However, creating cognitive dissonance between students' belief that "all students should be

accepted and represented at school" (Mulhern and Martinez 1999: 253) and their religious beliefs gave teacher educators some leverage (Mulhern and Martinez 1999; Swartz 2005).

Goldstein et al. (2007) caution against certain types of antihomophobia education as they point out the dangers of the "safe schools discourse" that tends to portray queer youth as one-dimensional victims, promote tolerance but not acceptance, presents homosexuality as "just the same as" heterosexuality, and individualizes homophobia, thus "abdicat[ing] [teacher educators'] responsibility for challenging power systems and culture that privilege heterosexuality over homosexuality" (p. 185) and "fails to disrupt the heterosexual/homosexual binary" (p. 187). In addition, these discourses can "create an us/them polarization when they ask students to analyze other groups to find out what 'they' are like" (Simone 2002: 153), ignore the multiplicity and fluidity of identifications (Kumashiro 2000), and wash over privilege (Kumashiro 2000).

Because "students often desire learning that affirms their belief that they are good people and resist learning anything that reveals their complicity with oppression" (Kumashiro 2002a: 73) and anything that "will disrupt the frameworks [they] traditionally use to make sense of the world and [them]selves" (Kumashiro 2001: 5), teacher educators who do this work often had a handful of completely resistant students (Athanases and Larrabee 2003; Larrabee and Morehead 2008; Mulhern and Martinez 1999; Swartz 2005). Discourses about teaching such as teaching being solely about academics and that academics are neutral can bolster this resistance (Kumashiro 2002a). Providing students avenues to examine what kinds of learnings are made possible through the activities and assignments that challenge and those that affirm their beliefs can illuminate students' resistance (Kumashiro 2002a). Recognizing this resistance creates a crisis that can facilitate unlearning prior assumptions, but teacher educators need to provide the space and means for students to work through their crises by revisiting them with different perspectives to lead to a resignifying of the self. Thus, challenges can become opportunities for growth.

8.7   Conclusion

Although across textbooks, standards, and programs there is increasingly more attention to queer students and topics, there is still a lot of room for improvement. These changes are sometimes subject to the political climate or to the make-up of the faculty at the time. Unfortunately, this age of accountability tends to shut down discussions not only of queer topics but also of any "controversial" topic in K–12 education: "By forcing teachers to teach to tests measuring 'skills,' conservatives reduce time available to study 'uncomfortable' topics" (Pinar 2007: 175) because "[d]ialogue might lead to critical consciousness, which might in turn engender unity in diversity in our students, which might finally result in our acceptance and appreciation of each other" (Whitlock 2007: 84). Even when conversations do happen in K–12 classrooms, teachers need to be aware of how they frame them, as some queer

youth reported that "teachers opened discussions as if homophobia were an issue with pros and cons that students might debate" (Mayo 2007: 195). Finally, teachers need to realize that "it is more what we actually do" than "what we say that we should do" that makes lasting impressions upon students so that the "occasional lectures about, say, the importance of treating girls in the same ways that we treat boys will mean little if students observe that the teacher calls on boys to move tables and girls to sweep" (Kumashiro 2009: 718–719). Kumashiro (2009) reminds the reader that any lesson can be read in multiple ways, including "information meant to challenge bias can actually serve to reinforce that bias" (p. 720) and cautions against teaching in a way that prescribes what the students should think and feel. Rather, he suggests, "the goal should be to articulate a variety of lenses and examine what each make possible and impossible. Students might ask, 'How does this lens reinforce stereotypes or challenge them? What does this lens highlight, and what does this lens make difficult to see? What questions does this lens invite us to ask?'" (Kumashiro 2009: 720). The job of the teacher educator then becomes creating queer pedagogues—teachers who see situations from multiple perspectives and are unafraid to explore nontraditional paths and challenge the status quo. For this to happen, teacher education programs need to move from ignorance, insecurity, and intolerance to being informed, inquisitive, and inspired.

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Chapter 9
Introductions/Orientations: Queer Pedagogies, Social Foundations, and Praxis

Leila E. Villaverde and Dana M. Stachowiak

9.1 Introduction

A cursory review for syllabi at the undergraduate level on queer theories and education for education majors is dismal. Courses on queer theories are usually the purview of Women's and Gender Studies Departments/Programs. In education, one may find introductions to education, introductions to cultural/social foundations, and a few courses on critical pedagogy. Yet future teachers, specifically, are not exposed to course curricula preparing them to be responsive to the individuals before them, the ones whose learning they are responsible for/with. There is ample conversation in the public sphere around Black Lives Matter, the #MeToo movement, #wontbeerased, the HB2 bill, and white supremacy to ignore these issues. These dialogues also require a more expansive critical awareness in helping to navigate these conversations in the classroom. To this end, this chapter opens up space for this preparation. This work began many years ago in collaboration with a graduate student, now Dr. Brian Ammons. We worked on a redesign of an undergraduate course for all elementary education majors and theorized the majority of this work.[1] Our course proposal was never implemented, but the existing course was eventually reconceptualized to be inclusive of a range of critical issues in education. More work, especially around queer theories and education, would be useful.

Introductory courses on foundations, equity, diversity, or inclusion can be restructured through queer theories/pedagogy and focus on queering identity and knowledge,

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[1] Dr. Ammons was not available to continue/revisit this work at this time.

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regarding race/ethnicity, gender, class/culture, sexuality, exceptionalities, epistemology, and teaching/teacher-prep/schooling. Themes in popular and academic education discourses can be used to highlight how these function to produce and preserve heteronormative structures. Examples include girl/boy crises, nerd/geek performance, safe spaces, language, reading practices, intelligence, and multiculturalism/diversity. In discussing how queer theories reframe such courses, topics, and projects result in new iterations for queer pedagogies, emphasizing where norms are interrogated and deconstructed for critical praxis. The intent is to create courses for undergraduate students preparing to be teachers that question the perseverance of defining "good" teaching only through mastery of best practices in skills/methods, content, and classroom management. Often these skill sets dehumanize the prospective teacher and the student, leaving them deskilled and ill-equipped to deal with sociocultural political issues in the classroom and ways to prepare students for active citizenry. At the heart of this deskilling is also neglect of human relationships and attention to how the classroom space can be a rich source for community building and knowledge production. Students should have lots of opportunities to develop a critical consciousness and activist disposition as they prepare to be educators. Queer pedagogies/theories offer students a wealth of pedagogical tools to produce a deeper sense of respect and acceptance for all levels and degrees of difference in their classrooms. This chapter includes some curricular deliberations pertinent to enacting critical praxis. It provides an inroad to the critical analysis of teacher preparation and the obsolete adherence to singular definitions for excellence and success in schools.

9.2 Defining Queer Pedagogy

What do we mean when we speak of "queer pedagogy"? Defining the term is tricky and sometimes antithetical. Although it draws from previous discourses in curriculum studies and gender theories, the term is alleged to have first appeared in the academic literature with a 1993 article by Mary Bryson and Suzanne de Castell titled "Queer Pedagogy: Practice Makes Im/Perfect." The two reflect on their attempts to grapple with poststructuralist theories of subjectivity and essentialist constructions of identity in the context of a lesbian studies course the authors cotaught. The authors seek to "describe the goals, organizing principles, content, and outcomes of this engagement in the production of 'queer pedagogy'—a radical form of educative praxis implemented deliberately to interfere with, to intervene in, the production of 'normalcy' in schooled subjects" (p. 285). Ultimately, they conclude that despite their best efforts, all of their discourses were permeated with the backdrop of White heterosexual dominance and "lesbian identity" and remained fixed and stable within their institutional context regardless of the course's explicit attempts to disrupt monolithic constructions of the concept. The article successfully provides a working construct of what "queer pedagogy" might be:

> a teaching against-the-grain, or, in this particular case, an amalgam of "performative acts" (Butler 1990) enfleshing a radical form of what we envisioned to be potentially liberatory enactments of "gender treachery" (Bryson et al. 1993) with/in the always already (Derrida 1978) heterosexually coded spaces of academic women's studies programs. (p. 288)

The article also provides an analysis of the tremendous difficulty in realizing these goals.

Deborah Britzman's 1995 article "Is There a Queer Pedagogy?—Or, Stop Reading Straight" furthered the discourse as she considered the role of reading practices and psychoanalytic theory in encountering resistance to knowledge, or thinking the unthinkable. She argues queer theory when brought into conversation with pedagogy:

> insists, using [the] psychoanalytic method, that the relationship between knowledge and ignorance is neither oppositional nor binary. Rather they mutually implicate each other, structuring and enforcing particular forms of knowledge and forms of ignorance. In this way ignorance is analyzed as an effect of knowledge, indeed, as its limit, and not as an originary or innocent state. (p. 154)

Britzman is concerned not only with what *individuals* cannot bear to know but also what hegemonic *discourses of normalcy* resist knowing. Queer theory, she suggests, "can think of resistance as not outside of the subject of knowledge or the knowledge of subjects, but rather as constitutive of knowledge and its subjects" (p. 154). She looks to particular techniques through which queer theory is engaged and what they might offer in terms of rethinking pedagogy and knowledge itself. Specifically, Britzman considers the study of limits, ignorance, and reading practices, and in her consideration of each analyzes the ways in which hegemonic discourses produce certain knowledges and subjects as unintelligible.

Susanne Luhmann (1998), in "Queering/Querying Pedagogy? Or, Pedagogy Is a Pretty Queer Thing," also took on the challenge of articulating a queer pedagogy. Building from the growing discourse that Bryson, de Castell, and Britzman shaped, Luhmann asked tough questions:

> Is a queer pedagogy about and for queer students or queer teachers? Is a queer pedagogy a question of queer curriculum? Or, is it about teaching methods adequate for queer content? Moreover, is a queer pedagogy to become the house pedagogy of queer studies or is it about the queering of pedagogical theory? (p. 141)

The spirit of Luhmann's questions suggests a necessary inquisition into who or what is queer in this discourse. Following Britzman's line into considering resistance toward particular knowledges, Luhmann advocates an "inquiry into the conditions that make learning possible or prevent learning" through an interrogation of the student/teacher relationship and "the conditions for understanding, or refusing, knowledge" (p. 148).

Part of where Luhmann is particularly helpful is in pointing to the linked political strategies of reclaimed language in the cases of *queer* and *pedagogy*. Recalling that the term "pedagogue" conjures a pedantic and dogmatic schoolteacher, she draws a link to the historically derogatory usage of queer, "meant to shame people as strange and to position them as unintelligible with the discursive framework of heteronormative gender dichotomies and binary sexualities" (1998: 142). Although both terms are marked by repudiation, they have been "refurbished to serve critical functions" (p. 142), though from different social locations. While "queer" critically disrupts the production of normativities, with particular (though not exclusive)

attention to sexualities and genders, "pedagogy"—when aligned with descriptors like *radical*, *anti-racist*, or *feminist*—denotes a position critical of mainstream education "as a site of unequal power relations" (p. 142). Further, she suggests that the terms share the common fate of reduction, and in that reduction the risk of being rendered superfluous. *Queer* and *pedagogy* are susceptible to being usurped as convenient shorthand, suffering from "over-determination and under-definition" (p. 142)—queer standing in place of the ever-growing list of identity categories that cumbersomely are evoked to name the "community" (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, two-spirit, etc.), and pedagogy reduced to a referent for instructional methods, teaching style, and classroom conduct.

Pedagogy is more than an exploration of the "how-to" of teaching, but rather encompasses questions about how we come to know, and how knowledge is produced in interactions between multiple parties (student, teacher, and written text, for a traditional example). Luhmann argues that "this orientation to pedagogy exceeds education's traditional fixation on knowledge transmission, and its wish for the teacher as master of knowledge" (p. 148). Radical or critical pedagogies, categories to which queer pedagogy is undoubtedly related, are, she notes, commonly concerned with interventions in reproducing the power dynamics to reshape education toward politically empowering and liberating students.

Marla Morris (1998), in "Unresting the Curriculum: Queer Projects, Queer Imaginings," adds the importance of understanding a queer sensibility or queer aesthetic, and a text's radical political potential to interpellate the reader and vice versa. Morris, like Britzman, underscores the possibility in queer reading. Yet what Morris adds is a keen attention to the aesthetic, as an intentional decision to shift both relational sensibilities and visual ones. Through these concepts, Morris invites the reader to recognize the layers and multi-directions of the gaze pertinent to constructions of self and others, yet most productively to what is considered norm in teaching and learning/knowledge production.

Kevin Kumashiro's (2002) *Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Antioppressive Pedagogy* alerts readers to the incredible investment in teacher education programs to help students stay the same despite rhetoric and coursework to "learn" and "transform" as educators. Learning then is seen as conferring what we know, not as a crisis of what we have yet to know and why. Kumashiro intertwines the relational and theoretical in order to enact new praxis.

G.D. Shlasko's (2005) article "Queer (v.) Pedagogy" focuses on why we need a queer pedagogy and relies heavily on Luhmann, Britzman, Morris, and Kumashiro's work. Shlasko holds the reader accountable to using queer theories in developing queer pedagogies in practice, stating, ". . . only a 'queer lens' will suffice to examine it" (p. 123); therefore, questions and questioning are central to the complexity inherent toward intellectual growth.

Olivia Murray (2015), in *Queer Inclusion in Teacher Education: Bridging Theory, Research, and Practice,* addresses the importance of teacher education to embrace the use of a queer-inclusive pedagogy. She states, "Far greater numbers of children and adolescents question their sexual orientation and present their gender in creative, fluid, and nonnormative ways" (p. ix). We'd argue teachers are included

as well, and therefore, the need is ever-present to be better prepared to create inclusive and responsive communities. Murray's text offers a rich array of theoretical frames, field research and curricular ideas/resources.

Kai Rands (2016), in their chapter "Mathematical Inqueery," succinctly describes how queer pedagogy, like queer theory, "takes identity as unfixed, contingent, and performatively produced," (p. 187), thereby encouraging a lens of inquisition rather than direction through which to view pedagogy. In this way, queer pedagogy both dismantles and informs a "broader focus on normativity" (p. 187) by residing in the tension of possibility and limitation. Rands provides examples of how to queer mathematics by posing critical questions of representation, production, and power, rather than simply including queer representation in math problems.

Caitlin Ryan and Jill Hermann-Wilmarth's (2018) *Reading the Rainbow: LGBTQ-Inclusive Literacy Instruction in the Elementary Classroom* focuses on how inclusive teaching and literature "help create more equitable classrooms where LGBTQ students and their families are treated equally and all students are encouraged to learn about the diverse world around them in more nuanced and expansive ways" (p. 1). They address common questions and consider these valid starting points in their quest to better prepare educators to wrestle with the power of stories in shifting culture and community.

Queer pedagogy, with its links to a theoretic frame suspicious of liberation narratives, does not disregard the aims of other critical pedagogies; however, it does reorient the critical lens toward knowledge production itself. Ahmed (2006) articulates that "orientations are about how we begin; how we proceed from 'here,' which affects what is 'there' appears" (p. 8), meaning that reorienting our critical lens in a queer way necessarily involves questioning our inherent perceptions of what we believe to be true. So, if a direct response to the question of what is queer in queer pedagogy—the teacher, the student, the content, the curriculum, the theory— remains somewhat blurry, the aforementioned authors (with whom we concur) reach consensus in moving toward considering queer pedagogy to be particularly concerned with interrogating the production of normalcy and pushing against the psychological resistance to particular disruptive knowledges. Thus, the tendency in discussing queer pedagogy has been to focus on processes, practices, and positions that point toward those aims and de-emphasize the centrality of queer subjects or practitioners. Thus, the "queer" in queer pedagogy functions more in its verb form, "to disturb the order of things," (Ahmed 2006: 161), to indicate pedagogy concerned with queering, or disrupting the tyranny of normalcy, and reorienting our perceptions.

Yet, if queer pedagogy has a broader application than content specifically regarding sexual identities and practices, then perhaps it still owes a debt of loyalty to that curricular content. That is to say, although queer pedagogy can be strategically useful in a vast array of discursive analyses and education projects, its association (however loose) with queer (and/or queered) subjects necessarily invites a particular analysis of heteropatriarchal normativities wherever such pedagogy is employed. Ahmed (2006) reminds us that, "queer describes a sexual as well as political orientation, and to lose sight of the sexual specificity of queer would also be to 'overlook'

how compulsory heterosexuality shapes what coheres as given, and the effects of this coherence on those who refuse to be compelled" (p. 172). Thus, queer pedagogy in an introductory social foundations of education course might be used in considering the production of race and class in public schooling, but the implications for gender and sexual normativities would also be undeniably implicated in any such analysis. Ultimately, a queer pedagogical approach would further interrogate the limitations of categories such as race, class, gender, and sexual identity as products and producers of normativities—so the aforementioned intersectionality would be explored/troubled, and then the boundaries of the categories on which intersectionality depends would be stretched and transgressed.

It is important here that we not fall into the trap of reducing the concept to a list of particular strategies that can be easily packaged and implemented. Queer pedagogy is more than the strategies that might be employed in its pursuit. It is not a method but a methodology—not a strategy, but a stance and a compass.

9.3   Analysis of Current Curricula

Current undergraduate social foundations of education courses often offer the space for critical inquiry/interruption in teacher education curriculum, yet these are but one course in a sea of skill, content, management courses. At the universities where we teach, there are several foundations and introductory courses for preservice teachers. These have shifted over the years and offer a course to various teacher education and general education students. None of these specifically address queer pedagogies although these hold ample space to include a variety of necessary conversations. These courses, in particular, focus on exposing/engaging students in recognizing the ideological, ethical, and cultural dimensions of schooling and knowledge production within a democratic society. These aim to invite students into different ways of thinking about their practice within education. Within these courses, we are careful not to supplant one alleged "right" (or more appropriately left) analysis (vs a more conservative approach); we assert that students should learn to be more adept at resisting these as binaries and instead delving into the nuances of these perspectives. That is not to say that an approach concerned with liberatory aims in education is bad or necessarily wrong-headed, just that a lack of attention to a varied knowledge production praxis tends to be short-sighted and ultimately results in narratives dependent on maintaining the very injustices they seek to disrupt. These courses were designed with an emphasis on decoding processes of socialization and exposing a multitude of hidden curricula.

A more complex and nuanced approach that invites students beyond questioning and into the assumptions about knowledge and identity that drive them is critical. Typically, these courses privilege Freirian notions of conscientization, teaching about *repressive* power, with growing attention paid to *productive/discursive* power. Language and theories of "socialization" and "hidden curriculum" are emphasized as a means of coercing the "marginalized," and not enough analysis of the terms of

the conversation that produce and reinscribe that "marginalization" is engaged. The idea is to understand beyond face value, beyond what we have been led to believe in traditional education.

Pinar et al. (1995) remind us that Bacon's classic assertion "knowledge is power" rests on the assumption that "knowledge" is an undistorted representation of reality, of what is really real. "For poststructuralists," they explain, "discourse, which includes knowledge, does not *represent* reality. For poststructuralists, discourse *constructs* reality" (p. 463). Thus, the frame of analysis shifts from which parties hold power to considerations of how reality comes to exist within the context of particular discourses. Queer poststructuralists are particularly concerned with the power to produce realities that privilege *normalcy* in general, and *heteronormativity* in particular. Drawing from Foucault's (1980) critiques of Marxist and Liberal thought, we can come to understand the usefulness of a more capillary than linear analysis of power. Foucault challenged what he understood to be a simplistic rendering of power built on a singular center or focal point from which power flows as those in power repress those without. Instead, he posited that greater attention be paid to *disciplinary* and *normalizing* power, enacted in multidirectional networks functioning in producing and regulating knowledge.

Using a queer pedagogical approach to an educational foundation class, students would be invited beyond analyses of concepts such as race, gender, and class from the perspective of how "diverse learners" (those categorized outside of institutional norms) are repressed, and into an analysis of the productive power of educational discourse to construct realities around such notions as race, gender, class, and so on. The effect is a more complex understanding of power but not at the expense of the socially and politically progressive aims that characterize other critical pedagogies.

9.4 Identity and the Illusion of Cohesive Subjects or Clear Communities

Cultural/social foundation courses tend to consider education and schooling in relation to particular identity categories, sometimes grouped around themes such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability, as well as their intersectionalities. In the past, less emphasis was placed on intersectionality or assemblages (Puar 2005), yet we see this has improved significantly as new faculty/doctoral students teach the courses and other texts are introduced, thus leaving ample space for different questions to frame pedagogy. Some we suggest are, "How is 'normal' produced?" and "How do constructions of 'normal' function to produce other knowledge?" And the analysis of race, class, gender, sexual identity, and ability all serve as organizing principles, not subjects, of inquiry disrupting the tendency to tokenize/essentialize.

For example, as a unit on race might shift from being a collection of voices speaking to "the Black experience" with a nod toward White privilege, to a study of

race as a powerful construction, the possibility for complex, multiple, and fluid identifications erupts. That is not to suggest that the shift allows for a dismissal of the particularities of bodies constituted as Black, but that such scholarship be engaged with an eye to the concept of *Blackness* itself, and in relation to whiteness, Latinoness, Asianness, hybrid embodiments, etc. In such an approach, the queer emphasis on the production of gender and sexual identities is not divorced from the analysis of race but rather the ways in which these multiple discourses of power overlap in the production of normativities are privileged. Dorothy Allison (1994) might be helpful here also; as a class theorist, her work includes race, gender, and sexuality themes. The key would be a continual search for works that supports such assemblages.

Eng (2001) offers insight into how such an approach might be considered in relation to explorations of Asian American masculinities. He looks to Bhabha and Spivak in considering Asian American masculine subjectivity, particularly in relation to "agency" and "autonomy." He begins by suggesting that Bhabha underscores the impossibility of purity within the individual subject. Given the implications of Bhabha's articulation of "hybridity," Eng (2001) argues:

> The clear understanding, then, that Asian American male subjectivity is the hybrid result of internalized ideals and lived material contradictions that were once external allows us a compelling qualification to historical debates about authenticity—realness and fakeness in Asian American studies. (p. 25)

In clarifying his own positionality as a cultural theorist, he also argues that hybridity necessitates a clear distinction between subjectivity and agency in Asian American politics, holding that questions of subjectivity are situated within the theoretical realm of psychoanalysis, and quoting Bhabha in suggesting that racial identity politics are historically more "thoroughly examined in terms of domination and agency rather than subjectivity" (Eng 2001: 25). In other words, questions of domination, agency, and autonomy have largely driven the politics of identity, and the acknowledgement of hybridity undermines the terms on which those rules of engagement are founded.

In further problematizing the possibility of purist subject positions, Eng (2001) cautions against the "quest for a self-willed—an autonomous and transparent—subjectivity" as an illusory goal. He quotes Spivak's contention: "Why on earth should we be on that impossible ahistorical quest for purist positions, that's about as nonmaterialist as could be . . . Isn't it autonomy that is suspect?" (p. 25). Thus, the subject and the agent are neither one and the same, nor are they fully aligned. Eng resists the reduction of "progressive" Asian American male subjectivity in defining it as political agency, as such a move continues to "overlook the vexing question of conflicted and stranded identifications in both Asian American politics and movements for social justice" (p. 25). These shifts then usher a difference in teaching, seeing students, recognizing the relational cornerstone of teaching, and reflecting in one's own practice. Students exposed/engaged in such intellectual and practical deliberations, essentially doing thinking, are in a better position to actualize "making a difference" in the lives of their students and in their own.

Eng's analysis, while perhaps marked with theoretical language too complex for an undergraduate class, offers a model for the sort of critical disruptions on which our reconceptualized course depends. In the more traditionally, liberatory models of critical pedagogy, the Asian American male might be considered a unified population—perhaps in relation to the crisis facing Black boys. What Eng offers is a more nuanced understanding of how the intersections of discourses on race, gender, community, authenticity, (in his larger work) sexuality, and nation work to produce the Asian American male as such, and in ways that function to produce other identities in relation, all of which are infused with implications involving power and politics.

The intentional communities we seek to create in queering foundation courses are based on Mohanty's (2003) discussions of "imagined communities"[2] and Sanchez-Casal and Macdonald's (2002) "communities of meaning." Such communities depend on intersectional identities and ideologies, as well as a purposeful crossing of established, somewhat limiting boundaries of identity, politics, history, culture, and knowledge. According to Mohanty, she employs the notion of imagined community within Third World struggles to highlight the "potential alliances and collaborations across divisive boundaries . . . and a significant, deep commitment to . . . 'horizontal comradeship'" (2003: 46). Sanchez-Casal and Macdonald use "communities of meaning" as knowledge-making communities that "cultivate a diversity of socially embedded truth claims out of which epistemic wholeness develops . . . [but] reject[s] essentialist feminist and liberation theories that understand identity to be fully determinate of what and how we know" (2002: 3). They contend:

> that political coalitions aimed at dismantling oppressions can be most effective when differences are charted out and contextualized in the construction of diverse and shifting *communities of meaning* in the classroom. *Communities of meaning* are defined by a complex of factors including social location, cultural identity, epistemic standpoint, and political convictions. (p. 11)

Each concept lays the groundwork for the degree of assemblages we emphasize in the course. Prioritizing imagined communities and communities of meaning requires a different engagement and communication with ideas, theoretical constructs, and pedagogical actions. Not only must the preservice student have a critical understanding of inequity as a whole in society, but of the institutionalization of many "isms" that hinder access to knowledge production and agency. We would like students to have a more sophisticated fluent mastery of what both types of communities can offer to ward off the tyranny of community, that is, when community is essentialized and forced into a monolith that ultimately serves only temporarily if at all. Many times such tyranny only clouds one's understanding of solidarity and coalition, culture, race, class, and gender. In other words, community singularly defined creates a false consciousness of unity and similarity that obscures the complexity and richness of difference, as well as confuses the way power is disseminated to divide and conquer between positionalities. As one is asked to

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[2] "Imagined communities" was first coined by Benedict Anderson in his 1983 book *Imagined Communities*.

choose one position/identity factor over another, an artificial hierarchy is created and accepted. Power is then negotiated without a more critical discernment of its productivity and multidirectionality. We can no longer afford future teachers to have or perpetuate such limited literacies. The proposed course attempts to address these issues with the assistance of queer theory and its collisions with foundations of education and critical pedagogy.

So what might this course look like? How might it concretely address the interrogations we pose above? We now turn to sample projects/experiences and discussion of the underlying pedagogical/curricular decisions.

9.5   Curricular Wanderings

Following are curricular wanderings around what such a course might be, some readings, projects and experiences. These are purposefully not tied to a syllabus per se since we'd hope for any integration of these ideas whether wholesale or not. These are springboards for further critically queer imaginations.

9.5.1   *Course Context*

We envision a course potentially titled, "Queer Pedagogies, Social Foundations, and Praxis," as an elective course, taking many twists and turns to decenter knowledge and actions, sitting at the intersection of critical pedagogy and social foundations of education. The process of exposure, research, study, discussion, and insight is the roadmap of pedagogy for this course. We assert that unless students wholeheartedly believe they can learn (and change) no matter what they've learned and made out to be by that knowledge, any participation in the performance of learning is in vain; thus, we emphasize the importance of theory *and* practice, thinking *and* doing, in a course such as this.

Ideally, "Queer Pedagogies, Social Foundations, and Praxis" would introduce students to queer theory and its implications for everyday learning. The course would focus on the many facets of queer theory and pedagogy, its history, identity politics, theoretical tools, and activism. The discipline rests on the temporality, limitations, and indeterminacy of interpretation. We would invite students to ask these questions throughout the course: What do you do with what you know? Do you accept what you know and how you came to know it? What is your process for taking ownership of what you know and therefore do?

9.5.2 Course Goal

The goal of this course is simple: to use queer theory in ways that help one question existing foundations, norms, assumptions, and binaries that instigate a restructuring of pedagogy/action. There are core elements to a foundation course, such as exposing students to historical and curricular conversations about the process of schooling and socialization, the purpose of education, the construction of intelligence, the wider social context of education, and democratic education, how these relate to one's preservice teaching, professional identity as a teacher, and one's own pedagogical practice. This course would focus on modes of thought more so than specific content, and thus, we might ask students to:

(a) Recognize varied forms and uses of knowledge
(b) Assume conceptual instability (not everything is knowable)
(c) Focus on processes and production of knowledge
(d) Seek understanding beyond identities and play with constructions of subjectivities[3]

Essentially students would be required to question what they already have come to know as learning, education, and schooling, the nature of knowledge, who decides what and how we know (content knowledge and methods) and how we are evaluated, ultimately to better understand how our identities are produced in school and the impact on our lives. Using queer theory as an analytical tool will assist them in formulating a more engaged perspective of your role in education.

9.5.3 Course Readings

A compilation of readings and videos is juxtaposed to destabilize essentialist conceptions of sexual, gendered, racial, ethnic, embodied identities, and theories. These simultaneous inclusions and exclusions are meant to engage the complexities of lived, legislated, private, and public experience and/or critique. The varied readings are also intended to push your thinking and cover a variety of historical, cultural, and social issues and contexts. As a result, students should develop a range of analytical tools to help them examine the institutionalization of schooling and learning. Our collective responsibility with the students is not only to fine-tune these skills but also to discover and explore new ways of implementing and translating them into practice. It is also important to resist thinking that theory and practice are separate entities; they are integral elements of each other to be used in tandem.

   The following is a list of potential readings for this envisioned course. It is not exhaustive, but is meant to provide a foundation and a "jumping off point" for

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[3] Thanks to Kathy Jamieson for her collaboration in developing the concise goals for a potential future course in conversation with L. Villaverde.

choosing additional readings. We suggest some central questions be considered both when choosing readings and when doing close reads of the selections. These central questions are:

- What might be behind educational institutions' investments in "normalcy"?
- What's the function of schooling in contemporary American culture?
- How do identity constructs such as race, class, gender, and sexuality function in schooling?
- How do institutions of education produce students as raced, classed, gendered, and (de)sexualized subjects?
- In what are our ideas about school, education, and democracy grounded?

9.5.4 Potential Required Texts and Readings

Au, W., Bigelow, B., & Karp, S. (2007). *Rethinking our classrooms: Teaching for equity and justice*. Milwaukee: Rethinking Schools.

Biegel, S. (2018). *The right to be out: Sexual orientation and gender identity in America's public schools*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Blackburn, M. V., Clark, C. T., & Schey, R. (2018). *Stepping up! Teachers advocating for sexual and gender diversity in schools*. New York: Routledge.

Driver, S. (2007). Introducing queer girls and pop culture. In *Queer girls and pop culture: Reading, resisting, and creating media* (pp. 1–18). New York: Peter Lang.

Fisher, E. S., & Chiasson, J. (2013). *Creating safe and supportive learning environments: A guide for working with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth and families*. New York: Routledge.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2008). *Critical pedagogy primer*. New York: Peter Lang.

Lugg, C. A. (2015). *U. S. schools and the politics of queer erasure*. New York: Palgrave Pivot.

Miller, s. j. (2019). *Gender identity justice in schools and communities*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Mayo, C. (2014). *LGBTQ youth and education: Policies and practices*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Mayo, C. (2017). *Gay straight alliances and associations among youth in schools*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

McCready, L. T. (2010). *Making space for diverse masculinities: Difference, intersectionality, and engagement in an urban high school*. New York: Peter Lang.

Meiners, E. R., & Quinn, T. (2012). *Sexualities in education: A reader*. New York: Peter Lang.

Rodriguez, N. M., Martino, W. J., Ingrey, J. C., & Brockenbrough, E. (Eds.). (2016). *Critical concepts in queer studies and education: An international guide for the twenty-first century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rodriguez, N. M., & Pinar, W. F. (Eds.). (2007). *Queering straight teachers: Discourse and identity in education*. New York: Peter Lang.

Kramer, L. (2009, September–October 11–13). Queer theory's heist of our history. *Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* (Pair with Schneiderman).

Schneiderman, J. (2010, January–February 11–15). In defense of queer theory. *Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* (Pair with Kramer).

9.5.5 Assignments

We suggest a variation in the approaches to assignments and related expectations. In teaching a course driven by queer pedagogy, traditional notions of assignments should be disrupted, dislodged, disoriented—they should be *queered*. The following are descriptions of assignments that uphold the course content and goal, and challenge students to think queerly. We have written these in the language we would provide to students.

Queering Expeditions While you are visiting your usual places or hangouts, or are venturing into new ones, use queer theory and critical pedagogy to interrogate the taken for granted, mundane, and expected of environments and people within. Focus on what you have missed, have learned, are learning, or would be important to learn in this space. Write a one-page analysis of these places using class readings. In your posts, identify the place, day or week and time of day, purpose of place or event, and analysis. Cite class readings relevant to your inquiry. For example, while you are in the library gather K–12 textbooks or storybooks and analyze these through the themes of the course.

Learning Experience Unit Design a curricular unit lasting 2 weeks where queer pedagogies are central. You decide the level, audience, context, and subject matter. Discuss the purpose and rationale, your vision for this learning experience, along with a theoretical framework informing your work, duration, sequence, resources, and evaluation means. Include a conceptual map and timeline/schedule of events/experiences. Articulate how you are queering pedagogy and be specific about how this would look like for you. Think about connecting to the community, bringing history and politics to bear on current knowledge production.

Queer Documentary This assignment can be done individually or as a group. You will create a 5- to 7-min documentary. Choose a topic that you see as important to discuss for the age group you will teach. It can be from topics we discussed in class or related ones. This is not a simple recording of lived experience or specific contexts; rather, this is a visual documentation of your queer read, analysis, interpretation, and commentary on a topic you want youth to learn through particular critical lenses. You want to invite questioning and further thinking about these topics, their relevance, necessity, and significance in our learning. Reflect on which readings pushed you and in what ways. Think through how best to document the topic you have chosen. Will you interview different people about this? Will you explore this

issue in social spaces through inquisitive voice-overs? Think through not only what you will study, but how. Take into consideration your audience and what you want them to learn/do. Use your voice/perspective in visually powerful ways to socially engage and impact.

In preparation for the documentary, you must appropriately research and plan. These sub-assignments will help you to do that.

Proposal: conceptualize and discuss topic, rationale, objective/aim, research done and to be done (reading, interviewing, things to record), scope of investigation, and participants. Script your point; in other words, discuss the trajectory of your documentary.

Storyboard: plan and organize every step, briefly chronicle how you imagine the documentary proceeding. Visualize and sequence the scenes/images of your documentary. Consider what should open, transition, and end your narrative. Think through what skills you need to work on to pull it all together.

According to Barry Hampe, in *Making Documentary Films and Reality Videos: A Practical Guide to Planning, Filming, and Editing*, the following are key steps in creating documentaries:

– Research and planning
– Visualization
– Organizing a structure for the documentary
– Writing the words or editing

It is important that we reiterate here the benefit of providing students with options and somewhat open-ended guidelines and expectations for assignments. We have found that students gain deeper understanding and produce stronger work when they have choice and feel a sense of ownership over their assignments.

9.5.6 Course Schedule

Here, we provide a suggested course schedule for a typical 15-week semester. We also share with you our notes about sample curricular ideas within each theme.

Weeks 1–2: Introduction to theory, foundations, and praxis

Discuss the different modes of thought featured in the course. Invite students to question how their ways of thinking were constructed. What influences their thinking/values/actions? Link these to theory, foundations, and praxis while helping them define these terms for themselves. Watch clips from *Tea and Sympathy* and *The Children's Hour* focusing on the representation of identity, sexuality, and the consequences in schooling and learning when normalcy is interrupted. Push students to recognize exclusions, inclusions, internalized heteronormativity, and homophobia, and then have students brainstorm about

the impacts of knowledge production. Lingering question: How might our modes of thought narrow or widen our possibilities to enact change for ourselves and others in education?

Weeks 3–5: *Recognizing* varied forms and uses of knowledge (foundation readings)

Investigating what is already known, students will brainstorm 15 things they know—resist defining or further clarifying "knowledge" for them at this point. In small groups, students choose the 20 most compelling items from individual lists. Post those 20 on the wall for the whole class to see and look for commonalities or connections between items as a class. In small groups, invite students to find groupings of items across each small group's lists. Each grouping should be broad enough to include at least four items, but not so broad as to include more than 10. If an item might fit into more than one grouping, consider which grouping it fits best. Students then label each grouping, a synthesizing process that requires finding a word or phrase to clearly articulate the relationship between diverse items. When the whole class comes back together, each group presents their individual groupings. From there, ask, "Given what we have just done together, what might we be able to say about knowledge?" (The development of four or five broad generalizations is the objective.) A sample list of generalizations might be:

– Knowledge is always linked to time and place.
– Knowledge is socially constructed.
– Some knowledge is about skills, and some is about ideas.
– We "know" what we agree upon.

In the discussion, the teacher functions as facilitator, destabilizing students' assumptions about the predictability of what they know, opening the possibilities of further questioning what knowledge is deemed legitimate, by what processes it is legitimated, and how power is exercised through the regulation productions of particular knowledges. (*Structure based loosely on Hilda Taba's strategies for concept development, 1966*).

Weeks 6–8: *Assuming* conceptual instability (queer theories)

Interrogate the production of "normal" by watching *But I'm a Cheerleader*. Following the viewing, discuss the reparative program True Directions and the ways the movie overemphasizes the conduits of normalization to invite the audience to question these processes. Then ask students to select an identity category they have either claimed or that has been read/scripted onto them. Develop a list of "rules" for performing that identity—the do's and don'ts of the "community." Discuss the ways in which these normalizing identity markers are produced and learned.

Weeks 9–11: *Focusing* on processes and production of knowledge (critical pedagogy readings)

Analyze classroom materials/textbooks (specific to each grade and subject matter). Focus on the assumptions made about knowledge (progression of knowledge, kinds of knowledge), knowers (gender, race, sexuality, age, ability, culture), ways of knowing and relationship of knower and known, succeeding/excelling, focusing on language, inclusions and exclusions, images (their content and placement), and relationship between text and image.

Weeks 12–14: Getting *beyond* identities and playing with construction of subjectivities (all three)

Spend one day observing at a school or a series of different schools. Together, the class develops a rubric before going out and studying what happens during the day, how students interact with each other, and how teachers/administrators/staff interact with each other and students. It might be useful to get copies of the student/parent handbook and assess the language used and expectations. In general, explore ways binary identities are demanded, produced, regulated formally and informally—structurally and through peer interaction.

Week 15: *Synthesis*

Student-produced film festival and discussion of theories and practices learned.

9.6   Conclusion

While queer pedagogies function in conversation with poststructural theories and the accompanying challenges to cohesive subjects and the tyranny of "community," they are also indebted to the critical pedagogy tradition and its emphasis on themes of justice and power. That is to say, a critique of the limitations of liberalism that stops at the breakdown of the categories of analysis leaves us with little direction. Instead, privileging strategies of analyzing power that focus on the productive as much as the repressive has the potential to introduce a new politic into the teacher education classroom, and hopefully into their future classrooms. We maintain that in the context of undergraduate teacher education, deconstructive projects are useful inasmuch as they invite reconsiderations of power and politics in schools while forging new engagements with the complexities of self, other, and knowledge production. Therefore, we implore teacher educators and prospective teachers to join us in interrogating the very institutions of identity, power, and schooling.

Our intent throughout the chapter has been to engage the student of teacher education by delving into the porous boundaries of discipline, method, content, and subjecthood through queer theories and pedagogy; as such, "queer" is a new orientation to our praxis (Ahmed 2006). We underscore the instructiveness of queer theory in both dismantling and decentering normative structures and power while legitimizing uncertainty, more specifically ambiguity in the production of knowledge. Our hope with these curricular wanderings is to deeply trouble the all too pervasive practice of silencing these conversations and pedagogical practices in the perpetuation of

more testing, cloaked through a vacuous rhetoric of excellence. We do emphasize excellence, but rather one which unveils the inherent competitive intentions within a tracking system that requires a false heterogeneity and presumes some students are always inherently smarter than others leaving intact a narrow definition of intelligence, access, and privilege. Dismantling such certainty holds open the possibility of other embodiments of intelligence to surface, challenge, and coexist. This in turn employs a rigorous study of self, other, and mutuality unparalleled in traditional preservice courses. Undoubtedly any proposed curricular changes require instructors to do this work, not just disseminate it, solidifying a collaborative pedagogical space. The "benefits" of queering pedagogy unearth deeper philosophical questions about the nature and ontology of knowledge and responsibility as citizens of ever expanding cultures. Our commitment is in sharing and furthering this work not just in preservice education, but throughout every circuitry of learning.

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