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

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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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