



LGBTQ Themes in the Self-Study of Teacher Educators 19

A Queer Review of the Literature

Adrian D. Martin and Julian Kitchen

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Abstract

In spite of the increased social acceptance and legal advances for LGBTQ people globally, homophobia and transphobia are deeply embedded in the fabric of society. These status quo conceptualizations of gender and sexuality will continue in classrooms and schools unless teacher educators offer affirmative LGBTQ perspectives to dispel phobias and promote inclusive practices that advocate for and ally with LGBTQ youth. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to investigate how the literature of teacher education, particularly the self-study of teacher educator practices, has attended to LGBTQ themes. Queer theory is employed as a theoretical framework to guide the analysis of the reviewed literature. The

A. D. Martin (✉)

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, New Jersey City University,
Jersey City, NJ, USA

e-mail: amartin6@njcu.edu

J. Kitchen

Faculty of Education, Brock University, Hamilton, ON, Canada

e-mail: jkitchen@brocku.ca

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J. Kitchen et al. (eds.), *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices*, Springer International Handbooks of Education,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-6880-6_19

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results of the review reveal three major themes, which are analyzed in the context of SSTEP: (1) queering teacher educator identities, (2) queering pedagogical practice, and (3) queering classrooms and curriculum. The chapter identifies how insights from this body of work can inform the research and practice of teacher educators in the interest of promoting teacher education that advance anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia in educational contexts at large. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the findings and recommendations for future research on LGBTQ themes, particularly in SSTEP.

Keywords

Self-study · Teacher education · Professional development · LGBTQ · Queer theory

Introduction

The self-study of teacher education practice (SSTEP) community has always been a welcoming place for teacher educators. Over the past 20 years, it has expanded its scope to examine issues of cultural diversity and welcome a diverse range of practitioners. This is evident in the 11 chapters in the social justice section of this handbook, compared to 3 chapters in the first handbook (Loughran et al. 2004). Similarly, *Self-Study and Diversity II* (Kitchen et al. 2016) features predominantly minoritized authors, whereas most of the authors in *Self-Study and Diversity* (Tidwell and Fitzgerald 2006) were mainstream teacher educators attending to diversity issues.

As teacher educators who identify as queer, we feel welcome in the SSTEP community. At the same time, we are aware that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people are largely absent from the discourse in our community. Many of our colleagues have given limited thought to heterosexual and cisgender privilege, let alone explored how queer theory might serve as a useful lens through which straight and queer educators might view identity, experience, and practice. LGBTQ themes and experiences, while no doubt included in many courses, are largely invisible in the SSTEP literature. In this chapter, we draw attention to queer perspectives and how they might inform teacher education practice and research on practice by queer and non-queer teacher educators.

Issues relevant to diversity and teacher preparation have garnered increased attention over the past quarter century. Scholars, advocacy groups, and activists have contributed toward the development of frameworks for teaching that proactively and affirmatively acknowledge diversity in the classroom, positioning it as a resource for learning (e.g., Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings 2009). Many teacher preparation programs seek to promote such a pedagogical orientation among teacher candidates with a stand-alone course focused on multicultural education or by embedding existent coursework with connections to the relationship between diversity and the educative experiences of students in schools (Zeichner 2009). For teacher educators investigating their own practice, such a focus provides insight on attending to issues of diversity in their work

with teacher candidates (e.g., Tidwell and Fitzgerald 2006; Kitchen et al. 2016). Self-study has focused on examining culturally responsive teaching in higher education (Han et al. 2014), promoting students' awareness of how cultural similarities and differences can influence educative experiences in schools (White 2009) and investigating how one's cultural identity mitigates the trajectory of one's academic and professional career (Cortez-Castro 2016).

While such inquiry has substantially contributed to the literature on diversity and teacher education, providing a scholarly foundation from which teacher educators can draw to incorporate diversity issues in their own professional practice, it is limited by the primary focus on diversity in relation to culture and language. Despite calls to attend to diversity more broadly, issues relevant to gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation remain peripheral in teacher education and educational research (Gorski et al. 2013; Murray 2015; Taylor and Coia 2014). Normative conceptualizations of gender and sexuality that serve to perpetuate heteronormativity – the dominant social discourse that individuals are either biological male or female with a corresponding gender identity who are sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex (Sullivan 2003) – are emotionally and psychologically deleterious to both *straight* (*straightjacketed* into narrow roles) and queer (marginalized as deviant) individuals. As teacher educators are instrumental to how teacher candidates construct professional identities, interpret the aims of professional practice, and attend to difference in classrooms and schools, it is imperative that they explicitly attend to LGBTQ issues through pedagogy and curriculum.

For LGBTQ people, invisibility further marginalizes their presence in institutions of education (Martin 2014b). Insights from teacher educators who engage LGBTQ themes in the classroom are critical to heightening the visibility of queer students and educators. This is especially important given the all too often reported instances of bullying, harassment, violence, and attacks experienced by LGBTQ youth in schools (Blackburn and Pascoe 2015; Espelage 2015), which is abetted by teachers who turn a blind eye or choose not to intervene (Human Rights Campaign 2016). Evidently, such unsafe settings contribute to LGBTQ youth being almost five times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual peers (Center for Disease Control and Prevention 2016), at a greater likelihood for absenteeism because of feeling unsafe or uncomfortable at school, and more likely to drop out than other students due to peer victimization or discriminatory actions on the part of school authorities (GLSEN 2016). In spite of the increased social acceptance and legal advances for LGBTQ people globally, homophobia and transphobia are deeply embedded in the fabric of society. Such status quo conceptualizations of gender and sexuality will continue in classrooms and schools unless teacher educators offer affirmative LGBTQ perspectives to dispel phobias and promote inclusive practices that advocate for and ally with LGBTQ youth.

Organization of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate how the self-study of teacher educator practices literature has attended to LGBTQ themes and how insights from this body

of work can inform the work of other teacher educators and researchers to inform future self-study in the interest of promoting teacher education practices that advance anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia in educational contexts at large. We begin with a discussion on queer theory both as a useful lens through which to view sexual and gender issues and as a framework to guide our review of the literature. This is followed by a review of literature relevant to LGBTQ themes in the study of teacher education practices. As there are few LGBTQ-themed SSTEP publications, the search was widened to include other studies of practice by teacher educators. The results of the literature review reveal three major themes, which are analyzed in the context of SSTEP. Finally, we conclude with a discussion on the findings and recommendations for future research on LGBTQ themes, particularly in SSTEP.

It is our hope that increased awareness will help teacher educators foster the development of educational contexts in which all students and teachers can safely, affirmatively, and equitably participate as their authentic selves, free from fear, intimidation, or harassment based on sexism and heteronormativity. As advocates for queer students and teachers, and as gay men ourselves, this work is both professionally relevant and personally meaningful.

Part I: Queer Theory

Queer theory is a critical discourse that offers deep insights into personal identity, social relationships, and social hierarchies. It emerged in the 1990s as a series of critiques leveled against normative gender and sexual identity categories (Wilchins 2014). Drawing from the work of the poststructuralists in the second half of the twentieth century, scholars such as Eve Sedgwick (1990), Judith Butler (1990), and others (e.g., Muñoz 1999; Warner 1999) articulated emergent understandings of gender and sexuality as discursive social constructions. Sedgwick (1990) writes:

That's one of the things that "queer" can refer to: the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically. (p. 8)

This quotation conveys that queer theory is a critical theory that seeks to understand gendered identity and critique orthodox conceptions of gender and sexual orientation that privilege heterosexuality (Alexander 2008). With roots in feminism, gay and lesbian studies, identity politics, and postcolonial theory, "queer theory seeks to disrupt and to assert voice and power" (Tierney and Dilley 1998, p. 59) and "offers methods of critiques" (Britzman 1995, p. 154) against white, male discourse that normalize identity and shield power and privilege. Also, it challenges the binaries of sexual orientation and gender identity by disrupting heteronormativity and questioning static categorizations such as male and female or gay and straight. By aligning with feminist and other critical perspectives, queer

theory helps in “remapping the terrain of gender, identity, and cultural studies” (Alexander 2008, p. 108).

Queer theory posits that dominant social perspectives on gender and sexuality are natural consequences of biological sex. For example, a biological female will identify and recognize herself and be recognized as a woman and be sexually attracted to the opposite sex (i.e., be heterosexual). This lens perpetuates the idea of the gender binary (men and women) and heterosexuality as normal, natural, and desirable (Mayo 2007). Simultaneously, this heteronormative paradigm marginalizes and pathologizes identities and individuals that fail to align with it (Carpenter and Lee 2010). This ideological framework undergirds both structural and interpersonal instantiations of homophobia and transphobia (Pascoe 2012).

In contrast, queer theory suggests that gender and sexuality are discursive social constructions that are reproduced across time and space through sociocultural interactions (Butler 1990; Wilchins 2014). Consequently, biological sex in and of itself is not a predictor of gender or sexual identity, and normative gender and sexual binaries (male/female, heterosexual/homosexual) are rendered fallacious. From a queer theory perspective, this enables the possibility for a continuum of gender and sexual identities that the individual performs as an enactment of the self, open to interpretation and reinterpretation. Thus, the term *queer* signifies gender and sexual subjectivities that resist the heteronormative paradigm; queer is an emancipatory and performative ontological position, mercurial in nature, not an essentialist identity category. In short, gender and sexual identities do not emerge via a developmental process, but instead as a performative construction and reconstruction, both as synchronistic and diachronic phenomena.

In this way, queer theory decenters heteronormativity as the dominant lens through which to understand gender and sexuality. Adopting a queer theory lens enables a nuanced interpretation of social practices and beliefs that uphold or work against heteronormative ideals. Education researchers have adopted queer theory in various ways, such as investigating the role of schooling practices and structures to reify or disrupt normative gender and sexual identity categories (e.g., Pinar 2009). Others have contributed theorizations of queer pedagogies in the interest of dismantling heteronormative discourses, policies, and practices (Britzman 1995; Shlasko 2005), to identify means of promoting equitable schooling experiences for LGBTQ students (Helmer 2015), or to question the need for LGBTQ educators to *come out* to students and colleagues (Brueggemann and Modellmog 2002).

Shlasko (2005) asserts that mainstream education is complicit in perpetuating dominant gender and sexual norms. Given that these diminish the capacity for LGBTQ members of the school community to fully partake in systems of education, it is vital for educators and other school personnel to actively problematize, challenge, and disrupt heteronormativity. We concur with Zacko-Smith and Smith (2010) that LGBTQ educators must be accompanied by equally visible and active allies in the process of *queering* education and teacher education (Goldstein et al. 2007) through personal reflection, pedagogy, and curriculum that attends to LGBTQ issues. Studies by teacher educators engaged in such work are critical as a base on which to build more queer-positive teaching practices, educational policies, and scholarly teacher education research.

We employ queer theory as a guiding lens in our analysis of SSTEP and other teacher education literature relevant to LGBTQ themes in teacher education. We consider how the studies have sought to include individuals and/or representations of individuals outside of normative gender or sexual identity categories and how the work engaged in by the teacher educators sought to deconstruct these normative conceptions. In the following section, after a brief description of our search procedures, we analyze the literature for themes relevant to the practice of teacher education.

Our review of queer theory, in the context of our educational experiences, highlights the need for “dialogue on gender and sexuality in education [to become] an integral part of all teacher education programs” (Martin 2014a, p. 155). As Kitchen (2014) writes:

While queer theory is only one lens through which to view education, it does illuminate areas of self and practice that are often overlooked as we go about our daily lives. . . Enhanced perception can lead to more educative experiences for our students and contribute to social justice for all. (p. 139)

Part 2: Literature Review

A preliminary review of the SSTEP literature found that, aside from our own contributions (Kitchen 2014, 2016, 2017; Kitchen and Bellini 2012; Martin 2014a, b), there were no readily available self-studies on LGBTQ themes. Thus, we widened our review to include empirical studies by teacher educators on LGBTQ themes published in peer-reviewed journals and academic publications. While conceptual literature on queer theory and LGBTQ issues in education and teacher education informed our thinking, we narrowed our inclusion criteria to (1) studies by teacher educators investigating their professional practice and/or teacher education program that (2) focused on LGBTQ themes relevant to teacher education. We sought to include international work and limited ourselves to studies published in English but placed no limits on the publication period in order to capture the full scope of the literature. Electronic databases were searched for key terms: *teacher education*, *teacher educator*, *teacher preparation*, *self-study*, *LGBTQ*, *gay and lesbian*, and *queer*. Our search was supplemented by a hand search of mainstream journals in teacher education and education, SSTEP Castle Conference proceedings, and edited academic volumes on LGBTQ issues in education. This preliminary search resulted in 215 records, which were narrowed to 44 studies after a review of abstracts and summaries, of which 32 satisfied our criteria for inclusion. For each of these 32, we recorded the purpose, theoretical framework, methods and analysis, major findings, and implications/recommendations. Additionally, a series of prompts helped to guide analysis: e.g., contribution to the work of teacher educators on LGBTQ issues, affirmative inclusion of LGBTQ individuals, possible contributions to self-study, and relevance to future research.

Overwhelmingly, the literature focused on teacher educators investigating their own teaching practice in a university-based teacher education program. The earliest

publication was from 1998 with most (22) published from 2010 to 2017, confirming this as an area of emergent scholarly interest. The studies were primarily from the English-speaking world – the United States (15), Canada (7), Australia (3), and South Africa (2) – while the other four did not specify national context. Two employed mixed methods, with the remainder being qualitative. Journal entries, interviews with teacher candidates, reflection on practice, narratives, and observations were the primary data sources. While we are careful to avoid generalizations based on this modest data set, this review offers insight into efforts, initiatives, practices, and policies that can be taken up by teacher educators and teacher education programs to address heteronormativity, reduce homophobia and transphobia, and build queer inclusive communities in schools and universities.

We now turn to the results and discuss the major findings of the studies. An iterative process of reading and rereading the research tables and notes led to the identification of themes across the literature. The results illustrate the myriad ways that teacher educators explore LGBTQ issues in relation to their practice and to the field of teacher education. Most of the studies reflected elements of more than one of the themes, suggesting that the self, pedagogy, curriculum, teacher education programs, and LGBTQ themes are often intertwined.

We identified three main areas of focus: (1) queering teacher educator identities, (2) queering pedagogical practice, and (3) queering classrooms and curriculum. Further analysis led to the identification of subcategories. Lastly, the information generated in each category was then reexamined through the lens of queer theory's deconstruction of dominant gender and sexuality identity norms. We employ the term *queering* in the spirit intended by Britzman (1995): "thinking differently about what discourses of difference, choice, and visibility mean in classrooms, and on our own education" (p. 152).

Queering Teacher Educator Identities

A prominent theme in the literature is the importance of teacher educators reflecting and critically examining how sexuality and gender inform their approaches to LGBTQ issues. This approach is evident in the work of practitioners who identify as queer (Cosier and Sanders 2007; DeJean 2010; Grace 2006; Grace and Benson 2000; Hermann-Wilmarth and Bills 2010; Kissen 2004; Kitchen 2014, 2016, 2017; Kumashiro 1999; Martin 2014a, b; Sapp 2001a, b; Sarmiento and Vasquez 2010; Turner 2010; Whitlock 2010) and individuals/teams who do not (Benson et al. 2014; Kearns et al. 2014). All these studies involved an examination of one's gender or sexuality to better understand one's practice and support teacher candidates. Queer teacher educators paid particular attention to the implications of being out in schools and universities and how to persevere in academia.

Queering Oneself to Understand Teaching Practice

Nine studies reported on teacher educators attending to queerness as an aspect of their own professional identities. With the exception of Kissen's (2004) work that

reported on her inquiry as a teacher educator and mother of a lesbian daughter, the remainder of the studies offered narratives of LGBTQ teacher educators through studies that shed light on how queerness is related to one's professional practices (Kitchen 2016, 2017; Martin 2014a, b; Kumashiro 1999; Sapp 2001a, b; Whitlock 2010). How being queer shaped, informed, and constructed learning experiences and pedagogy in teacher education courses was a main focus with the researchers concluding that as with other aspects of self (e.g., cultural background, socioeconomic status, nationality), being queer informed their teacher educator identities. Sapp (2001a, b), for example, studied his longitudinal journaling that chronicled his professional experiences as a gay man. Similar to Kumashiro (1999), Sapp critically analyzed the intersection of his identities, for him as a gay man who was raised Baptist in the Southern United States. Self-disclosure about his gay identity to his students was important to promote an LGBTQ-inclusive learning context and to work against the marginalization of queer identities in classrooms. Other studies examined similar work, emphasizing how normative constructions of gender influence practice (Kissen 2004; Kitchen 2017; Martin 2014a; Whitlock 2010) and the efficacy of narratives on the self to better understand how gender and sexual identity norms are being upheld (or dismantled) in one's classroom.

Teacher Educators and Teacher Candidates Mutually Investigating the Queer Self

Whereas the researchers in the previous section examined queerness and self to better understand their own practice, others engaged in such work with students. Autobiographical, auto-ethnographic, and shared writing with students were productive sources for study (DeJean 2010; Grace 2006; Hermann-Wilmarth and Bills 2010; Sarmiento and Vasquez 2010). These emphasized the relevance of linking one's queer self to professional practice as a teacher educator, facilitating the inclusion of LGBTQ students in the classroom, and recognizing the particular supports they need for entry into the teaching profession. Disclosing one's positionality in relation to gender and sexuality and engaging in sustained conversation with teacher candidates on LGBTQ issues are ways to "...interrogate anti-queer stances and actions as they consider the parameters and possibilities of an ethical and just educational practice for queer persons" (Grace 2006, p. 829). Although such work may not fully eradicate some preservice teachers' hesitation to LGBTQ inclusiveness (Kearns et al. 2014), it may enable LGBTQ teacher candidates to feel less isolated and more prepared to engage in their future practice (Benson et al. 2014).

DeJean's (2010) inquiry on his experiences as a gay male teacher educator working with Jeannie, a lesbian teacher candidate in Australia, showcases the affordances for LGBTQ teacher candidates to learn from LGBTQ teacher educators. DeJean and Jeannie collaborated on a series of questions, journaled, and interviewed each other about experiences as a teacher/future teacher and as a queer person. For Jeannie, learning from DeJean's professional and personal experiences assisted her sense of ability to persevere in the teacher education program and work through her fears and concerns about being a lesbian who would likely work in rural

Australia. DeJean served as a role model for Jeannie, providing professional and emotional support from an insider perspective, something his non-LGBTQ colleagues would have been unable to do. This kind of collaboration supports the recognition that “different communities in education need different kinds of support for equity to occur” (DeJean 2010, p. 240).

Teacher Educators Mutually Investigating the Queer Self

While the previous studies emphasized supporting teacher candidates by collaboratively exploring the self with teacher educators, two studies investigated professional practice and identity among queer teacher educators themselves (Cosier and Sanders 2007; Grace and Benson 2000). Drawing largely from narratives of professional and personal experiences, these authors provide nuanced accounts of the challenges experienced as queer individuals in the academy and in teacher education. Both works suggest that investigations among queer teacher educators can shed light on myriad forms of LGBTQ oppression and homophobia in higher education. The authors reported instances of homophobic comments made by students during classroom instruction, complaints made to department chairs and deans that they were pushing a “gay agenda,” and lack of support among faculty colleagues. Such work demonstrates a need for “. . .rewriting [higher education] culture to refuse a culture of oppression and violence, which is all too often cast as the lot of the queer person” (Grace and Benson 2000, p. 90).

Self-Studies Queering Teacher Educator Identity

We are the authors of the only published self-studies on queering teacher and teacher educator identities. Adrian Martin (2014a), in “From Adam and Eve to Dick and Jane,” examines how heteronormativity constrained him as a queer teacher working alongside elementary school students; this study, along with a companion piece (Martin 2014b), is considered later in this literature review.

Julian Kitchen has written three self-study chapters in which he reflects on his personal identity as a gay man and professional identity as a queer teacher educator. In “Inquiries into Self-Study,” after introducing queer theory to educators in self-study, Kitchen (2014) suggests that “[q]ueer theory can be employed by self-study practitioners as a means of critically and playfully examining tensions related to sexuality, gender and heteronormativity in their own practice” (p. 134). Applying a queer theory critique to a graduate course paper he wrote in 1995, Kitchen demonstrates how queer theory and autobiography might be applied together in self-study. After critiquing his writings through a queer theory lens, he concludes, “As the opening story illustrates and subsequent examples reinforce, reflection on and analysis of heteronormativity and heterosexual privilege can sharpen our perceptions of ourselves and our contexts” (p. 139).

In “Inside Out: My Identity as a Queer Teacher Educator,” Kitchen (2016) writes, “I recount my experiences as a queer teacher educator in order to examine the importance of teacher educators’ cultural identities and, particularly, how being gay informs my identity as a teacher educator” (p. 13). In this narrative self-study, Kitchen explores his journey from confusion to acceptance as a gay man, his

transition from closeted teacher to out teacher educator, and the decision to engage in queer issues as a researcher and activist. He ends by inviting queer teacher educators to be more visible, urging straight educators to take a stand by “modelling comfort” (p. 24) and incorporating LGBTQ themes in the curriculum, and reminding all that “[s]imple actions can make a world of difference to queer teachers [and] students” (p. 24).

The importance of all teacher educators reflecting on their sexuality and gender identities is developed in Kitchen’s (2017) chapter “Critically Reflecting on Masculinity in Teacher Education through Self-Study.” In order to illustrate the need for reflection on the importance of examining male hegemony, Kitchen juxtaposes professional stories with scholarly understandings of masculinity. In a story about an opening lesson, Kitchen in suit and tie lists his credentials as an education law instructor, as well as his leadership roles and areas of funded research, before mentioning his identity as queer teacher educator. Reflecting on the story, he writes:

Revisiting the incident through storytelling also helps me see other ways in which masculinity informs my presentation of self. I offset potential subordination by emphasizing markers of hegemonic masculinity through my business suit, sense of authority, and emotional restraint. Thus, I am partly complicit in hegemonic masculinity—benefitting from the positive stereotypes of white males—even as I disrupt conventional notions. Also, I evidently experience a degree of gender strain as I evidenced by my adoption, in embodied (clothing, physique and body language) and disembodied (authority manifest in academic achievement) ways, of masculine ideals. (p. 91)

Through this incident, Kitchen invites all teacher educators to consider how they consciously and unconsciously live out their sexual and gender identities. He also draws attention to how Kuzmic (2014) overcomes unconscious sexism in his personal and professional lives by unpacking male privilege. In this chapter, Kitchen is particularly concerned with encouraging all teacher educators to examine their gender presentation in order to dispel stereotypes and “treat all students—regardless of gender presentation or sexuality—with care” (p. 98).

Queering Pedagogical Practice

Pedagogical practice undertaken in teacher education classrooms was a primary area of investigation in 19 of the studies reviewed (Asher 2007; Benson et al. 2014; Cosier and Sanders 2007; Francis and Msibi 2011; Goldstein et al. 2007; Kearns et al. 2014; Kitchen and Bellini 2012; Macintosh 2007; Martin 2014a; Mcconaghy 2004; North 2010; Richardson 2008; Robinson and Ferfolja 2001; Sapp 2001a, b; Sarmiento and Vasquez 2010; Turner 2010; Vavrus 2009; Whitlock 2010). Overwhelmingly, the teacher educators reported inquiries on how to present LGBTQ issues to their teacher candidates and whether or not these learning experiences facilitated a willingness on the part of the students to better attend to such issues in their own future professional practice. For some, promoting LGBTQ awareness began with reflective experiences and activities that required teacher

candidates to recognize and consider their own positionalities and how these mitigate their lived experiences (e.g., Robinson and Ferfolja 2001; Vavrus 2009). Others emphasized games or lessons centered on this same aim (Cosier and Sanders 2007; Kearns et al. 2014). Some investigated instances of student resistance to engage in lessons that focused on LGBTQ topics (e.g., Richardson 2008; Mcconaghy 2004). We take up each of these foci in the subsequent sections.

Games, Exercises, and Activities

Eleven studies in the review provided examples of games, exercises, and learning activities that teacher educators employed to introduce and discuss LGBTQ themes with their students. In general, these were aimed toward promoting the awareness that the affirmative inclusion of LGBTQ individuals should be part of the professional responsibilities and duties of teacher candidates. Learning activities that involved engagement with LGBTQ-related media were a featured approach among some of the teacher educators (Benson et al. 2014; Francis and Msibi 2011; North 2010; Richardson 2008; Vavrus 2009). Novels and films about LGBTQ individuals provided an opportunity for teacher candidates to reflect on the life experiences of LGBTQ individuals and how they, as future teachers, could affirm or marginalize these identities. Other teacher educators sought to support similar insight by providing their students with role-playing scenarios, such as LGBTQ students in critical situations or the implementation of LGBTQ-related curriculum (Benson et al. 2014; Francis and Misibi 2011; Kearns et al. 2014).

Such experiences promoted teacher candidates to reflect on themselves as future educators of LGBTQ students and what actions they might take in their future classrooms to facilitate an inclusive classroom environment. Still, some of the teacher educators sought to promote student awareness and insight on LGBTQ themes through an examination on how nonheterosexual and non-cisgender individuals are socially marginalized. These teacher educators described learning activities and games designed to actively provoke student thinking about gender and sexuality as socially created constructs (Cosier and Sanders 2007; Goldstein et al. 2007; Macintosh 2007). Cosier and Sanders (2007), for example, created “queer bingo”; this variation on the game provided art education teacher candidates insight on artists and other historical figures whose queerness has overwhelmingly been ignored. The authors articulate the challenges and opportunities present in crafting queer-affirming art curricula and learning experiences conducive toward queer literacy. While this activity was productive for some of the students, Cosier and Sanders report that others mistook this as an effort to promote a “gay agenda.” Clearly, such an attitude is indicative of prevalent social discourses sympathetic to homophobia and transphobia. Potentially, a starting point for teacher candidates to engage with LGBTQ themes may simply be to develop a shared understanding on what terms such as “gay and lesbian,” “sexual identity,” and “transgender” mean. Kitchen and Bellini (2012) report on the use of lectures, group discussion, and case study analyses as supports in an effort for teacher candidates to define such terms and contribute to the development of ethical knowledge on LGBTQ issues (such as bullying) and the role of teachers as advocates for all students. Their self-study

suggests that teacher educators need to create safe and comfortable spaces for all of their students to discuss these issues. Such an environment might potentially diminish teacher candidates' assumption that coursework and learning experiences relevant to LGBTQ issues are part of a "gay agenda" enacted on the part of the teacher educator.

Autobiographical Writing Practices

The use of autobiographic, auto-ethnographic, or reflective writing was a prominent theme in nine of the studies reviewed. These researchers employed writing as a critical pedagogical strategy to help teacher candidates better teach LGBTQ youth. Most of the researchers also wrote about themselves as a means to improve their own professional practice in this area. Overwhelmingly, these studies highlight the efficacy of self-examination in helping to create safe spaces for LGBTQ students in schools (e.g., Kearns et al. 2014), identifying the relevance of LGBTQ issues on one's professional practice (e.g., Robinson and Ferfolja 2001), and the intersectionality of one's identities and educative experiences at school (e.g., Asher 2007; Sarmiento and Vasquez 2010; Vavrus 2009).

The central purpose of three studies was an examination of the self on the part of teacher educators (Kearns et al. 2014; Martin 2014b; Whitlock 2010). Martin (2014b) and Whitlock (2010) each conducted a critical analysis of their teaching practices as queer individuals. Each suggests that there is no single approach to engaging students on LGBTQ issues; rather, such an aim should be tailored and contextualized to the needs of a given community. All teacher educators, including those who identify as LGBTQ, should reflect upon their own assumptions and interpretations of gender and sexual identity and the implications of these for the educative experiences of their students. For example, Kearns et al. (2014) focused on assessing the impact of an integrated training program on teacher candidates' abilities to identify and address the need for safe spaces in schools. They contend, after examining their own positionalities, that heterosexual teacher educators should explicitly acknowledge their privilege when engaging in ally work and ongoing learning about LGBTQ issues. Such a stance may in turn encourage non-LGBTQ teacher candidates to as identify as allies with the LGBTQ community.

Robinson and Ferfolja (2001) and Vavrus (2009) both attended to reflective self-examinations among their teacher candidates. The studies suggest that autobiographical/reflective work with their students reflects the hegemony of traditional, stereotypical gender, and sexual identity stereotypes. Vavrus (2009), for example, discussed how graduate teacher candidates completed an 18 hour module on gender and sexuality. Analysis of the auto-ethnographic narrative writing assignments gathered from 38 participants indicated that, with few exceptions, their former educative experiences reflected heteronormative norms through overt actions (on behalf of their own teachers) or by their silences relevant to LGBTQ issues. Some narratives provided by LGBTQ teacher candidates indicated a sense of internalized homophobia, whereas all of the participants reported having heard unchallenged homophobic slurs during their schooling years. Vavrus suggests the need to provide teacher candidates with deep, critical, and sustained reflection on one's positionality

to support teacher identities that are sensitive to how LGBTQ subjectivities are marginalized in schools.

The authors of four studies dealt with joint examinations of the self among teacher educators and teacher candidates. Sapp's work (2001a, b) explores journaling as transformative and writing about his experiences as a gay man in education as a way "...to model that my journey to my Real Self had drastically changed who I was, and thus, how I taught" (Sapp 2001a, p. 20). Life narratives were a pedagogical template for his teacher candidates, who learned that becoming a student of oneself is a necessary, vital, and integral aspect of being an educator. Asher's (2007) study on teaching a multicultural education course for elementary preservice teachers employed autobiographical writing to raise awareness of race and class as always implicated in discussions of gender and sexuality. Sarmiento and Vasquez (2010) interrogated the intersectionality of their own identities as a Latina teacher educator and a gay male Latino preservice teacher via shared narratives that supported his coming out process with his family. A sense of safety and affirmation surfaced from the interpersonal and cultural parallel between the teacher educator and student. These studies highlight that sharing narratives of self about LGBTQ issues, identities, and experiences between teacher educator and students was productive, affirming, and educative.

Resistance to LGBTQ Inclusion

Despite the productiveness of the previously discussed pedagogical practices and the use of reflective writing to engage teacher candidates on LGBTQ issues, the literature highlights how teacher educators were met with resistance by some students. While referenced in multiple works, six studies focused on instances of such resistance. Overwhelmingly, this reflected homophobic and/or transphobic ideologies that diminished the likelihood of teacher candidates' willingness to affirm LGBTQ students in their future classroom.

Some teacher candidates were reluctant to be allies or resistant to engaging with LGBTQ themes (Francis and Msibi 2011; Kitchen and Bellini 2012; Vavrus 2009). The authors of these inquiries (from South Africa, Canada, and the United States, respectively) examined their experiences conducting workshops, modules, or seminars devoted to LGBTQ topics. Despite proactively cultivating a comfortable classroom environment (Kitchen and Bellini 2012), promoting self-reflection and drawing from varied texts (Vavrus 2009), and explicitly discussing heterosexism and homophobia (Francis and Msibi 2011), many participants expressed tension as they grappled with the topics. Some were passively or actively resistant to enacting LGBTQ-inclusive practices in their future classrooms. Such tension and resistance may be attributed to cultural knowledge, beliefs, assumptions, and dominant conceptions of LGBTQ individuals the students may possess. Richardson (2008) and Francis and Msibi's (2011) inquiries into their practices in South Africa suggest that the teacher candidates were challenged by the prospect that parents would accept their adolescent as LGBTQ potentially because of prevalent misconceptions about LGBTQ identities. Similarly, Mcconaghy's (2004) and Robinson and Ferfolja's (2001) studies observed that students frequently regarded sexual and gender

minorities as deviant and LGBTQ-related lessons as an affront to their culture. Some even went so far as to accuse the teacher educators as possibly being deviant themselves.

Strongly held beliefs are often resistant to change, especially for those of a religious or spiritual nature. Awareness of students' cultural beliefs and perspectives students possess can aid teacher educators in incorporating LGBTQ themes into their courses. Kitchen and Bellini (2012), in their self-study, were able to frame such issues in a relational and respectful manner. Only 6 of their 134 respondents in Canada indicated any level of discomfort with the topic: a self-identified devout Christian appreciated the information but was "not too comfortable," an immigrant was "a little uncomfortable to hear that Professor Kitchen is gay" due to norms back home, and a third student was uncomfortable with gay-straight alliances (GSA) (p. 218). Kitchen and Bellini also helped prospective Catholic educators frame their practice in terms of anti-homophobia and anti-bullying. Nonetheless, the literature highlights how efforts to engage teacher candidates on LGBTQ topics were frequently met with resistance based on religious beliefs (Francis and Msibi 2011; Mcconaghy 2004; Richardson 2008; Robinson and Ferfolja 2001; Vavrus 2009). This reflects a larger social discourse that equates LGBTQ acceptance with religious persecution (Mcconaghy 2004) and the "undermin[ing] [of] dominant heterosexual family values" (Robinson and Ferfolja 2001, p. 125). In jurisdictions with LGBTQ human rights protections, it may be productive to emphasize the legal obligations of teachers for all of their students (including LGBTQ youth) as legitimate, moral, and ethical imperatives in one's professional practice (Kitchen and Bellini 2012).

Queering Classrooms and Curriculum

The third theme, which overlaps with pedagogy, is the need to make classrooms and curriculum more queer-friendly. The 11 studies in this section report on efforts by teacher educators to modify teacher education programs or curricula as LGBTQ-inclusive (Benson et al. 2014; Francis and Msibi 2011; Goodrich et al. 2016; Kearns et al. 2014; Kitchen and Bellini 2012; lisahunter 2015; Mathison 1998; Martin 2014b; Mcconaghy 2004; Robinson and Ferfolja 2001; Vavrus 2009). Most of these focused on the processes of initiating and implementing LGBTQ-focused workshops and how to support teacher candidates to enable inclusive classroom settings (Benson et al. 2014; Francis and Msibi 2011; Goodrich et al. 2016; Kearns et al. 2014; Kitchen and Bellini 2012; Vavrus 2009). Others report on K-12 teachers and LGBTQ youth to identify how to better determine what teacher education programs should do relevant to LGBTQ issues (Martin 2014b; Mathison 1998; lisahunter 2015). Similarly, Mcconaghy (2004) and Robinson and Ferfolja (2001) aimed to expand the foci of required coursework to attend to issues of difference, diversity, discrimination, and social justice for LGBTQ individuals. Collectively, these studies suggest that, for many teacher candidates, engaging in this kind of work is filled with fears and concerns about themselves and their livelihood; for many of the teacher educators, engagement in this kind of inquiry and initiatives in their

teacher education programs is a form of activism. Each of these foci is taken up in the subsequent sections.

Fear About Enacting LGBTQ-Inclusive Practices

While teacher candidates' ambivalence and resistance are significant issues, as discussed under pedagogy, another challenge is their concern that LGBTQ-inclusive practices will be met with hostility by students and the community. Several studies (Benson et al. 2014; Francis and Msibi 2011; Kearns et al. 2014; Kitchen and Bellini 2012; Vavrus 2009) noted that, despite affirmative LGBTQ programs, workshops, and experiences in their programs, teacher candidates lacked a sense of efficacy and indicated fearfulness about engaging in such work in their classrooms. Teacher educators reported that the workshops, modules, and trainings described in these studies were largely successful in that they provided a conceptual and empirical basis for teacher candidates to consider LGBTQ issues in education and themselves as teachers of LGBTQ students. Despite the affirmative responses and deemed success of these initiatives, many teacher candidate participants were fearful of loss of employment by administration or upsetting parents if they engaged in such discourse or practice in their future professional practice. Although the teacher educators expressed that the workshops, modules, and integration of LGBTQ content supported teacher candidates to realize the importance of engaging in advocacy, anti-homophobia initiatives, and implementing LGBTQ-inclusive curricula, it did not suffice to counter fears the candidates possessed.

Such fears were expressed among LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ teacher candidates. The work by Benson et al. (2014) is unique in that it explores the efforts of the authors (a queer woman, man, and straight ally) who developed workshops intended to support queer preservice teachers by providing a safe space that would explicitly attend to challenges relevant to homophobia and heteronormativity that they would confront in K-12 settings. The authors' study detailed how they engaged in interviews with the queer preservice teachers and utilized questionnaires on their responses to the workshops and their own meaning making of the workshops. These teacher educators reported that while their efforts enabled queer preservice teachers to feel less isolated and better prepared to engage in their student teaching placement and future practice, they nonetheless had anxiety about negotiating their relationship with their field supervisors and cooperating teacher and fears similar to those recounted by Martin (2014b) in his prior experiences as a teacher and those discussed in his self-study on teacher educators (Martin 2014a). Even within the context of facilitating GSA programs, many LGBTQ educators are reluctant to do so in fear of disclosing their identities to their colleagues and students (Kitchen and Bellani 2012). Despite the productiveness of workshops like Benson and colleagues', "safe spaces cannot be made safe enough for some queer students. . ." (Benson et al. 2014, p. 391).

Queering Classrooms and Curriculum as Activism

Modifying or including LGBTQ-relevant courses, modules, curricula, or workshops was constructed as activist work in seven studies (Goodrich et al. 2016; lisahunter

2015; Martin 2014a, b; Mathison 1998; Mcconaghy 2004; Robinson and Ferfolja 2001). The teacher educators discussed efforts and approaches not only to support teacher candidates in their future work with LGBTQ students but also as a form of political activism. Forms of determining what teacher educators could do in their classrooms and teacher education programs were by working alongside with K-12 teacher activists themselves (Iisahunter 2015; Martin 2014a) or reaching out to LGBTQ youth to learn more about their schooling experiences (Mathison 1998). Martin (2014b) discusses how his critical investigation on his professional identity as an educator is influenced by his queer identity and disposition to advocate for his students:

The positioning of my identity as a gay man, a queer, in relation to the dominant cultural conceptualization of manhood, has facilitated the development of a psychogenic empathy towards others deemed *other*. My queerness serves a lens toward an elevated awareness of difference in myself and in those around me. (p. 173)

His critically queer examination of more than a decade of teaching practice suggests that daily, mundane actions and discourses in classrooms can serve as a form of activism.

Other studies emphasized efforts in teaching from an anti-homophobia stance by incorporating LGBTQ themes in courses traditionally devoted to diversity and social justice (Robinson and Ferfolja 2001) and as a means of countering negative discourses about LGBTQ individuals (Martin 2014b; Mcconaghy 2004). The study by Goodrich et al. (2016) shed light on how a diverse group of teacher educator activists (gay White male, straight bicultural female, gay Latino, and straight White male) explored their professional work in a service learning project to raise awareness of K-12 LGBTQ issues and include queer curriculum in an undergraduate teacher preparation program. The researchers indicate that “Throughout the process of our work we encountered institutional resistance-pushbacks-from the entire structure of public education, including school district personnel, individual schools, and individual classrooms” (Goodrich et al. 2016, p. 221). Teacher candidates participated in role-play scenarios and group conversations and viewed LGBTQ-relevant media/videos; however, the authors conclude that future activist work to “queer” classrooms must involve not only preservice educators but practicing classrooms teachers and school leaders as well. Ultimately, these studies indicate that LGBTQ work for LGBTQ students and teachers may better take root should coalitions be built among various education stakeholders.

Part 4: Queering Self-Study: Moving Forward in Practice and Research

The self-study of teacher education practices community reads self-studies with a view to improving our own practices. The literature review in this chapter offers theoretical and practical approaches we might employ in our teacher

education classes. Through the lens of queer theory, a commonality among the studies was a focus on understanding the professional and educative experiences of individuals whose identities do not align with heteronormativity in academic and schooling contexts. The studies in the literature review contribute to an emerging knowledge base on the role of teacher educators and teacher education programs (particularly for teacher candidates) to address the affirmative inclusion of LGBTQ individuals in classrooms and curriculum. While many studies are by queer teacher educators, allies also offered useful approaches to advancing safe, inclusive, and affirmative educational settings in schools and universities through the collective efforts of diverse stakeholders. At the same time, the findings illustrate the challenges that confront teacher educators in this important work.

The paucity of studies – particularly self-studies – is a good reason for SSTEP practitioners, queer and allies, to inquire into LGBTQ themes. One of the challenges in academia is finding a fresh topic and perspectives to explore and share with colleagues through articles and chapters. The few full-fledged self-studies in this review hopefully demonstrate that ours is a productive and generative methodological approach to gain insight on LGBTQ issues in teacher education and the ways teacher educators attend to these in their professional practice. Kitchen and Bellini's (2012) manuscript, we suspect, was positively reviewed and quickly published because *Studying Teacher Education* recognized that it filled a gap in the field. As LGBTQ themes remain under-researched in SSTEP, queer and non-queer practitioner-researchers would do well to explore such themes when studying our practice.

One generative approach is to apply a queer lens in theorizing about education. The language and perspectives offered in queer theory help identify and deconstruct how normative constructions of masculinity, femininity, and gender roles influence the professional practice of teachers and teacher educators, as well as the experiences of students and teacher candidates. Hamilton and Pinnegar (2014) suggest that queer theory, as an interpretive lens alongside feminist theory, calls us to reconsider “what gendered notions of our actions as teachers and teacher educators contributed to our interpretation of ourselves in relation to our practice” (p. 47). Any self-study could be enriched with the inclusion of such a lens, as it might disrupt tacit sexual and gender assumptions, as Martin (2014a) and Kitchen (2016, 2017) illustrate.

Teacher educator identity is an important theme in the self-study literature. As much has already been published, queering the gaze offers a fresh perspective on a familiar theme. As there are already self-studies by gay men (Martin 2014a; Kitchen 2016), there is a need for more exploration of bisexual, transgender, and other queer teacher and teacher educator identities. While gender and sexual identities beyond the binaries of heteronormativity merit exploration, queer-themed inquiries by non-queer teacher educators storying their experiences are equally important. Self-studies of masculinity by Kuzmic (2014) and Kitchen (2017) serve as models of how any teacher educator might apply theory in exploring our identities as we work alongside teacher candidates.

The studies in this literature review also offer methodological templates for conducting self-studies about LGBTQ themes in teacher education. These findings highlight the productiveness of such inquiry and the ways in which queer or ally positionality might inform engagement and practice with teacher candidates on such topics. Martin's (2014a) self-study suggests the utility of reflection on social discourses and norms as an entry point for such work. He argues for the need to support:

classroom environment[s] where they [students] are not pinned down by a particular identity or gender. Students (and teachers) can bask in smooth space wherein they approach learning as an inquiry into the unknown rather than a journey towards the predetermined end point of womanhood for girls and manhood for boys. (p. 151)

Such learning environments would queer normative teacher education and enable a scholarly context for SSTEP to explore LGBTQ issues.

Kitchen and Bellini's (2012) self-study of an LGBTQ workshop illustrates that a single lesson or problem (e.g., employing trans-inclusive language) might be the basis for a rich inquiry. At the same time, as most studies attended to phenomena over a duration no longer than an academic year, multi-year longitudinal self-studies would enable more nuanced and in-depth insights on how changing social discourses and attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals and issues are attended to in teacher education. This kind of work could inform in what areas advances are being made by teacher educators in their classrooms as well as theoretical, pedagogical, and programmatic modifications that could be made for persistent challenges raised against the inclusion of LGBTQ individuals or themes not only in teacher education, but in the field of education at large.

There is also a need for more self-studies by classroom teachers and educators working in the community and higher education. Martin's (2014b) inquiry on the intersectionality of his identities as a gay man and elementary educator calls attention to the complex professional landscape that queer educators must navigate and how queerness can function as a productive fount for pedagogical activity. Teacher educators should take up similar explorations via a queer theory approach, potentially exploring not only gender/sexual identities in relation to the professional self but also in relation to the intersections of race, culture, and class. Such work would provide insight on these themes and would be of value for those confronting challenges (from administration, colleagues, or students) in community colleges and universities. This work would also be of benefit for those outside English-speaking context and non-Western/industrialized nations.

In conclusion, the literature in the LGBTQ themes in teacher education sheds light on ways SSTEP inquirers can facilitate inclusive professional identities, pedagogical practices, and educational communities through practice and inquiry into practice. When teacher educators explicitly take up these themes, they will create more inclusive teacher education classrooms and contribute to the emergence of schools in which LGBTQ people are no longer on the margins of education.

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