

CONCEPTUALIZING GENDER, CONTEXTUALIZING CURRICULUM:
A CASE STUDY OF TEACHER EDUCATION COURSEWORK

By

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ABSTRACT

CONCEPTUALIZING GENDER, CONTEXTUALIZING CURRICULUM: A CASE STUDY OF TEACHER EDUCATION COURSEWORK

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This study explores and theorizes around issues of transgender curriculum in teacher education courses. Using a conceptual framework informed by both transgender theory and curriculum theory, I propose a Critical Trans Framework to analyze what trans-related curricular materials are currently used in teacher education courses and what factors influence teacher educators' curricular choices. Gender-expansive syllabi were identified as those that contained required readings utilizing anti-oppressive, humanizing, intersectional, or justice-oriented characteristics. Data sources for this study include course syllabi, surveys with Likert-scale and open-ended questions, one-on-one interviews, and a group interview with all participants. Findings explore how participants were understanding or conceptualizing gender, queer, and heteronormativity in relation to trans. Participants had a somewhat similar approach to teaching gender as a concept, but had divergent and multiple understandings of queer. Heteronormativity was understood to be the overarching system of oppression targeting all non-heterosexual and non-cisgender people. In describing how they teach trans, the participants described attempts to complicate dominant trans narratives, establish class norms that created an environment ripe for gender exploration, and represent trans people through first-person narratives. Influential contextual elements outside the classroom include institutional and/or programmatic supports or constraints, the instructor's own understanding and experience with transgender issues, and state or local policies.

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To Devon,
for changing my life in so many positive ways.
Thank you for all you have taught me
about family and friendship,
about real life and fictional worlds,
and above all, being true to yourself.
I could not have come this far without you.
Live long, and prosper.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

When Laverne Cox graced the cover of TIME magazine in 2014 and transgender rights was declared the “new civil rights frontier” (Steinmetz, 2014), I was simultaneously delighted and worried. For all the positive effects of having the first openly transgender person on the cover of TIME, I knew that kind of visibility could also spur attempts to restrict and silence. As Nicolazzo states, “to be visible as a trans* person means to be increasingly watched, scrutinized, and surveilled...Simply put, visibility is neither a wholly rewarding nor a completely desirous state for all trans* people” (2016, p. 17). Any student of history knows that efforts to secure and defend civil rights, such as the Civil Rights Movement, the White women’s suffrage movement, and Indigenous rights movements, are routinely met with violence, hate, and fear from dominant groups who hold socio-political power. These movements may result in some overt policy wins, but they also inspire more covert methods of systematically oppressing already vulnerable communities (Alexander, 2012; McKibben, 2016; Stevens, 1920). Knowing this, those who are committed to social justice must be cognizant of both overt and covert means through which oppression and violence occur. In particular, teachers need to know how to protect and support transgender students and identify transgender oppression in action. Teacher preparation programs are in a unique position to influence future teachers’ supportiveness toward students of all genders, to empower and support transgender pre-service teachers, and to lead education toward transgender transformation.

Unfortunately, teacher education as a field has been slow to incorporate the theoretical advancements and valuable empirical findings by Meyer (2008), Jennings and MacGillivray (2008), and many others (Payne & Smith, 2014; Ryan, Petraw & Bednar, 2013). Traditionally, U.S. educational scholars approach the topic of gender in two primary ways: exploring women’s

oppression at the hands of men in a patriarchal system, and exploring homophobia as a reflection of sexism in a heteronormative system. The general absence of transgender individuals' identity in U.S. curriculum enforces the normalcy and superiority of those who are cisgender; that is, individuals whose gender expressions and identities align with the socially acceptable behaviors for their assumed sex. Gorski, Davis and Reiter's (2013) quantitative evidence shows that teachers are inadequately prepared by their teacher education programs to create equitable, or even safe, schooling environments for transgender youth. Further, multiple studies have found little to no coverage of transgender identities or issues in teacher education textbooks, and when coverage is present, trans people are typically presented alongside LGBTQ youth as 'at-risk' or as victims (Kean, 2017; MacGillivray & Jennings, 2008; Titus, 1993; Young & Middleton, 2002).

In addition to teaching content methods courses, many teacher education programs offer courses that focus on educational foundations or diversity. In terms of their relevance to transgender topics, these courses potentially serve two purposes. One is to introduce theoretical frameworks to understand societal injustices such as racism, heteronormativity, patriarchy, and ableism. At the present time, however, teacher education does not commonly use any framework that adequately describes or interrogates cisgender privilege or transgender oppression. For example, patriarchy describes a system in which men have privilege and social power over women, but there is no clear place within discussions of patriarchy for transgender people, no nuance for considerations of gender conformity or diverse gender identities.

The second potential purpose of educational foundations or 'diversity' courses is to guide pre-service teachers through the process of reflecting upon their own identities and positionality. It is crucial for instructors of these courses to have a solid theoretical and practical understanding of the gender binary system and transgender identity. This is not only important because of the

implications for pre-service teachers' future practice, but also because of the missed opportunity to provide meaningful content for pre-service teachers who would benefit from exploring their own gender identities in a supportive space. Although some might assume otherwise, teacher educators may not be able to easily identify whether one or more of their students are transgender or are questioning their gender identity. Pre-service teachers who are trans need to see themselves represented in their coursework. Therefore, teacher educators need to ensure their curricular content is meaningful for the pre-service teachers at the moment, not just for a hypothetical transgender student in the future.

Within teacher education courses, transgender topics tend to get grouped into lessons regarding sexual orientation, in large part due to the pervasiveness of the acronym LGBTQ (Airton, 2009; Kean, 2017). Stryker reminds us that one of the predominant concerns of some transgender theorists is the erasure of transgender identities within the acronym LGBTQ. Stryker notes that the T in LGBT is "reduced to merely another (easily detached) genre of sexual identity rather than perceived, like race or class, as something that cuts across existing sexualities" (Stryker, 2004, p. 214). This acronym is ubiquitous in the work of educational scholars to date, and is most often used in studies about sexuality to identify individuals who are not heterosexual. However, the needs of transgender individuals differ significantly from the needs of cisgender LGBTQ individuals. For example, gay and lesbian students are not likely to change their pronoun or their first name, or request access to various sex-segregated spaces such as bathrooms or locker rooms. Considering that transgender topics are routinely ignored or erased in teacher education courses (Kean, 2017; Jennings, 2008), pre-service teachers often move into the field unprepared to support their transgender students (Meyer, 2008; Payne & Smith, 2014) and

unprepared to teach their students in a manner that advances gender diversity and works against transgender oppression.

The present political climate makes preparing teachers to work against transgender oppression an even more pressing need. Under President Obama, the national political environment tended to support protections for transgender people in schools and other public institutions. For example, the Obama administration's Department of Education and Department of Justice jointly determined that gender identity was a protected status under Title IX. In 2016, the Obama administration published guidelines, regarding not only bathrooms but other issues of privacy and disclosure, intended to assist and support schools in providing a safe and non-discriminatory environment for transgender students (Lhamon & Gupta, 2016).

However, just one month into Donald Trump's presidential term, the Department of Justice and the Department of Education withdrew the guidance, although transgender students are legally still covered against discrimination under Title IX (Dyson, 2017). The Trump administration has also quickly abandoned a lawsuit, initially brought forward by Attorney General Loretta Lynch, challenging North Carolina's House Bill 2 (Stack, 2017). HB2 regulated the use of public restrooms for transgender people in North Carolina, requiring that individuals must use bathrooms based on their sex at birth. The bill also restricted cities and counties from passing antidiscrimination measures that protect transgender individuals. Further, the Trump administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development has removed online resource documents for emergency housing shelters on best practices for serving transgender people (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2017). These actions, combined with expanded immigration raids and detention (Hernández, 2017), bans on refugees (Diamond & Almas, 2017) and threats to repeal the Affordable Care Act (Haberman & Pear, 2017), have taken a

serious toll, physically, mentally and emotionally for our most vulnerable transgender populations.

The purpose of this study is both descriptive and theoretical. Using a theoretical framework informed by both transgender studies and curriculum theory, I explore what trans-related curricular materials are currently being used in teacher education courses, and what factors influence these curricular choices. In their 2013 School Climate Survey, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) showed that compared to LGB (lesbian, gay, and bisexual) students, transgender students face the most hostile school climates (Kosciw et al., 2014). As a result of their national school climate survey, GLSEN identifies supportive educators and LGBT-inclusive curricula as two of the essential elements necessary for improving the school climate for all students (Kosciw et al., 2014). These elements—specifically, trans-supportive educators and trans-inclusive curricula—serve as the focal points of this study. This study will provide insights into the curricular practices of teacher educators, and, ultimately, create a network of educators whose goal is to continue moving teacher education toward trans-inclusiveness together.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study focus specifically on the curriculum being used in teacher preparation courses, and the context within which teacher educators are making trans-related curricular choices. Specifically, my questions are as follows:

1. What transgender topics are currently included in Teacher Education course syllabi?
2. How do teacher education instructors conceptualize and/or teach trans in their courses?
3. What factors influence how Teacher Education instructors teach trans?

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, I will discuss the most relevant literature at the intersection of transgender studies, K-12 schooling, and teacher education. One difficulty in conducting this literature review is that much of the scholarship uses the acronym LGBT without including any transgender participants and/or without focusing on issues of gender identity. I agree with Linda McCarthy who argues that “using LGBT to be inclusive of transgender students is commendable, but when there are no resources available and when educators are mostly uninformed and unaware of the issues associated with transgender identity, it is in effect more harmful to include the ‘T’ in name only” (2003, p. 46). Of course, a significant number of transgender people identify as LGBQ and may be represented in that way. However, because I am intentional about centering gender identity and the unique challenges, needs, and possibilities of transgender people, I have limited my literature review to include scholarship that explicitly discusses issues of gender identity, gender diversity, gender fluidity, and/or the gender binary.

The literature review will be organized based on the teacher career trajectory, from pre-service to in-service. First, I will discuss scholarship focused on transgender topics within teacher preparation programs and studies involving pre-service teachers. Second, I will discuss scholarship focused on transgender topics within K-12 schooling and in-service teachers. I intend to show that the present study provides an important contribution to the existing literature and fills necessary gaps in the scholarship.

Transgender Topics in Teacher Education

Numerous studies have shown that issues of gender, especially transgender issues, are minimally covered in teacher education coursework and that teacher education programs are inadequately preparing pre-service teachers to create equitable school climates for LGBTQ youth

(Gorski, Davis & Reiter, 2013; Kysilka, 2011; Sherwin & Jennings, 2006). Horn et al. (2010) conducted a survey assessment of all 57 Illinois teacher education programs for their inclusion of LGBTQ content and attitudes toward gender identity and sexual orientation. The researchers approached the study with an understanding that “the status of LGBTQ rights in teacher education programs can be ‘read’ as an indicator of larger social justice questions in institutions, namely: Who is welcome to be a full member and who is not? Whose needs are prioritized and addressed and whose are not?” (Horn et al., 2010, p. 76). The deans and chairs who responded were interested in LGBTQ inclusion, but did not feel prepared to practice LGBTQ inclusion. The respondents admitted that their materials and resources on LGBTQ topics were outdated, and the majority of respondents “felt that they had no expertise in gender identity-related topics” (p. 70). The researchers provide several recommendations for how teacher education programs can more effectively integrate LGBTQ issues, including professional development for teacher educators, enumerating gender diversity within all definitions of diversity, infusing gender identity topics into all required courses, and ensuring that diversity frameworks within program and course objectives address gender diversity (Horn et al., 2010).

In a survey of U.S. teacher preparation programs, Sherwin and Jennings (2007) collected data from 142 program coordinators and department chairs who were asked to rank their programs’ emphasis on various diversity characteristics. Jennings found that no programs ranked gender diversity or sexual orientation diversity as high on their list of priorities compared to topics such as race, disability, or language diversity. The low priority ranking was most highly correlated with three challenges: program time constraints for other diversity topics, program time constraints for non-diversity topics, and faculty discomfort with and lack of knowledge about the topic (Sherwin & Jennings, 2007, p. 215).

Brant (2017) conducted a study investigating pre-service teachers' understandings and self-efficacy related to LGBTQ students and families. With regard to terminology, Brant found that "pre-service teachers can generally accurately define terms related to sexual orientation, yet they have a less secure understanding about terms related to individuals who do not exist within the traditional gender binary" (2017, p. 47). Further, Brant (2017) discovered that pre-service teachers felt more confident working with LGBTQ students, and less confident about identifying biases in the curriculum and school context.

Teacher Education Textbooks

Textbooks designed for teacher education courses can provide a substantial amount of course content and provide an already established course structure and order (Jennings & Macgillivray, 2011). Accordingly, it is vital to critically analyze the content of these books in order to understand and improve what teacher educators are teaching (and what pre-service teachers are learning) about transgender issues and identities. Previously, education scholars have investigated teacher education textbooks focusing on issues of sexism against girls and women (Titus, 1993; Zittleman & Sadker, 2002), sexual orientation, and transgender issues (Jennings & Macgillivray, 2011; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008). All of the studies that investigated transgender content in textbooks found that the books had little to no coverage of transgender identities or issues in teacher education textbooks and, when coverage is present, trans people are typically presented as deviants or victims (Kean, 2017; MacGillivray & Jennings, 2008; Titus, 1993; Young & Middleton, 2002).

Because transgender topics are so new within the field of teacher education, it is that much more important for textbooks to provide definitions that are clear and informed by the most recent research and theory. Unfortunately, numerous texts define gender as an extension of

biological sex, with definitions for gender such as “the fact or condition of being a male or a female human being” (Banks & Banks, 2013, p. 147) and “the cultural differences of men and women, which define the characteristics behind the meaning of being a female or male” (Gollnick & Chin, 2013, p. 115). To a reader attempting to differentiate sex and gender, or to an educator attempting to learn about transgender identity, these definitions provide circular definitions where sex and gender inherently rely on each other and cannot be separated.

Another common theme in multicultural education textbooks, in particular, is to approach transgender individuals ‘as if’ they were the gender they believe themselves to be, with a strong focus on cross-dressing. This phrasing echoes the larger social discourse around transgender people being deceptive or ‘faking’ their gender (Bornstein, 1994; Serano, 2007; Nicolazzo, 2017). For example, the authors of one multicultural education textbook place a heavy emphasis on cross-dressing, asserting that “transgender individuals cross-dress or have surgery to physically alter their sex to match the one with which they identify” (Gollnick & Chin, 2013, p. 115), and a few pages later they explain that “many transgender people are transvestites, people who cross-dress” (p. 117). Gollnick and Chin inform readers that “the protocol is to interact with a transgender student *as if* the student is of the sex with which he/she identifies” (Gollnick & Chin, 2013, p. 117, emphasis added). The wording here could be read as dismissive or demeaning, or at least not affirming of the student’s preferred gender identity. In a sense, the authors seem to be asking educators to ‘play along’ with transgender students as if their lives and identities were a game.

Transgender Topics in the K-12 Environment

While there are a multitude of studies about gender role development in gender-normative youth (see Adler, Kless, & Adler, 1992; Davies, 1993; Stafford, 2013; Thorne, 1993),

scholars have more recently begun to investigate transgender-specific issues in the K-12 environment, including teacher perceptions of gender diverse students (Meyer, 2008; Payne & Smith, 2014), and issues related to K-12 curriculum and pedagogy (Allan et al., 2008; Ryan, Patraw & Bednar, 2013). This educational scholarship has shown that embedded in students' everyday experiences are explicit and implicit messages about what it means to "do" gender correctly.

Bronwyn Davies (1993) was among the earliest researchers to explore how children understood their own gendered selves. Davies found that from a young age, children understand and are influenced by "dominant heterosexual scripts" (Renold, 2006, p. 494) which deeply informed their understanding of themselves as boys or girls. Understanding gender through sexuality worked to further heighten the assumed differences between boys and girls. Davies also found that children were very aware of the power of normative gender roles and the consequences for transgressing these norms (Davies, 1993).

Transgender Student Experiences

Wyss (2004) conducted interviews with 24 transgender and genderqueer high school students about their experiences with school-based violence. All but two of Wyss's participants were White. Wyss found that the majority of her participants experienced various degrees of physical and/or sexual violence, such as being shoved, smacked, or punched in the hallways, being set on fire, and being assaulted or raped (2004). These repeated incidents of violence led some participants to engage in self-destructive behaviors, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide ideation. Wyss (2004) reported strategies that some participants developed for coping with the violence, such as avoiding peer perpetrators, developing a tough and fearless reputation, carrying weapons, and developing a heightened awareness of their surroundings to anticipate possible

attacks. Other of Wyss' participants felt isolated and ashamed, "like somehow I was asking for it" (p. 722), and took on a more normative gender expression. These participants felt as though they needed to conform in order to keep themselves safe. These findings led Wyss (2004) to call for comprehensive sensitivity training for teachers, incorporating transgender lives, knowledges and experiences into the classroom and the library, and non-discrimination policies that include gender identity and expression. In the long term, Wyss argues for "a radical revisioning of gender, including the eradication of the binary sex/gender system, a move away from the assumption that there are only two sexes and two genders, and the elimination of all gender hierarchies and other forms of injustice" (2004, p. 724). Though the participants in this study displayed agency in how they coped with trans oppression, they were still merely coping; Wyss' suggestions would provide beneficial institutional and structural changes so that transgender students can thrive rather than merely survive.

Grossman and D'augelli (2006) conducted focus groups with 24 transgender youth from the New York metro area to examine the participants' social and emotional experiences. 95% of the participants were youth of color, and half lived in poverty conditions. The researchers found that family and friends of the participants responded mostly negatively to their gender non-conformity, with a smaller number of supportive loved ones. At school, the participants experienced verbal, physical and sexual harassment from peers and teachers. One participant commented: "'Teachers don't realize,' as one youth (F to M) said, 'that when they call me by my 'government name,' everyone is going to call me that; it's going to cause a fight. Because, if they don't stop, I'm going to fight'" (Grossman & D'augelli, 2006, p. 122). The participants also discussed the lack of safe environments in school or at home, and lack of access to trans-inclusive physical and mental health services. Similar to Wyss' findings, Grossman and D'augelli

found that these experiences of violence, rejection, and isolation led to shame, depression, substance abuse, and suicide ideation. Based on these findings, Grossman and D'augelli recommend increased access to transgender-specific resources in physical and mental health care, schooling, employment and housing. The researchers also suggest that programs should be established to assist transgender youth in developing a transition plan, including safe ways to acquire hormones and other necessary healthcare. Finally, Grossman and D'augelli advise that education about transgender people must be included in professional training programs for teachers, school counselors, and social service and healthcare providers.

In a more recent study, Rooke (2010) collaborated with 18 transgender youth in a year-long participatory arts project intended to “explore the science of sex and gender through art” (p. 655). The project, located in London, offered trans youth a supportive space to explore understandings of themselves as sexed and gendered beings, interrogate and critique how their everyday lives are shaped by gendered norms, and to “communicate the humanity of trans lives with dignity” (Rooke, 2010, p. 659). The workshops provided a tangible feeling of comfort and belonging in the participants; the project opened a “space of recognition...where a sense of gendered agency could be expressed” (p. 663). The participants also reported feeling recognized and more willing to play with gender fluidity. Rooke suggests that the participatory nature of the project was key in creating the positive results. Although this study did not take place inside a school, the pedagogical tools used by the workshop organizers were valuable to the trans youth and could be emulated by teachers in more formal schooling settings.

In-Service Teacher Perceptions

At the elementary school level, Payne and Smith (2014) interviewed 12 elementary school teachers and administrators to understand their reactions to having a transgender student

in their schools. The participants were from five different schools, both urban and suburban. The researchers found that fear was the most common reaction, primarily stemming from a lack of policy and procedure, but also from the fear that supporting the student would be met with backlash by the local community as endorsing transgender identity. The mere presence of a transgender child forced educators to reckon with their worldviews in ways that they were unprepared for. These internal conflicts left the educators resistant to acknowledge that they did not know how to create supportive environments for transgender children. Payne and Smith identified lack of preparation as one of the primary concerns faced by elementary school teachers, noting that none of the participants remembered transgender topics in their preparation programs. This left in-service elementary teachers feeling “stressed, anxious, and incompetent when faced with ‘the problem’ of creating accommodations for a transgender child” (Payne & Smith, 2014, p. 405). Although the teachers felt a professional responsibility to ‘accommodate’ the transgender child, Payne and Smith argue that their decisions come from a feeling of responsibility to the local community, to the parents, and to “the myth of childhood innocence” (p. 415), but not to the transgender children themselves. These findings led Payne and Smith to argue that lack of teacher preparation around transgender issues has very real implications for daily practice, resulting in teachers and administrators who are anxious and hesitant rather than confident and proactive.

Expanding on their 2014 study, Smith and Payne (2016) provided professional development for elementary-level educators and reported on the educators’ responses to transgender students after the training. The researchers found that educators were invested in and routinely relied upon binary understandings of gender:

As long as the child easily passed as the transitioned gender, teachers made claims that the child's gender identity 'didn't matter' in their daily routine. However, gender fluidity, the possibility of future physical changes, and situations where transgender children were present in gender-segregated spaces led teachers to fall back on binary gender systems to help them decide how to place the transgender student in the school. (Smith & Payne, 2016, p. 42)

Smith and Payne found that educators resisted suggestions to critically examine the areas of their curriculum and pedagogy that privileged normative gender, instead preferring to focus sharply on logistical issues such as name and pronoun changes. To that end, Smith and Payne suggest that curricular changes at the pre-service level regarding gender diversity and gender bias are critical to creating educators who are confident rather than fearful.

At the high school level, Meyer (2008) conducted interviews with six urban high school teachers in Canada about their responses to gendered harassment. Meyer defined gendered harassment as "any behavior, verbal, physical, or psychological, that polices the boundaries of traditional heterosexual gender norms and includes (hetero)sexual harassment, homophobic harassment, and harassment for gender non-conformity" (2008, p. 556). In a series of three interviews, participants discussed issues of race and ethnicity, issues of gendered harassment, and a final conversation where participants reflected on the first two interviews and explored their (in)actions in the face of harassment. Meyer found that both external and internal influences shaped how teachers perceived and responded to gendered harassment. External influences include elements such as a school's culture and its embedded social norms, various teaching/work demands, and their previous teacher training. Similar to Payne and Smith's findings, Meyer found that most participants felt their teacher preparation programs "did not

sufficiently prepare them to address incidents of harassment or bullying, particularly related to gender and sexual orientation” (2008, p. 560). Based on these findings, Meyer suggests that, although teachers are clearly motivated to intervene in gendered harassment, the formal and informal structures of the school must be transformed in order to create safer learning environments for transgender youth. These findings point to an area of crucially necessary improvement for teacher education programs.

More recently, Luecke (2011) documented the details of a school district’s coordinated response to the transition of a transgender elementary school student. Multiple stakeholders were involved in managing the school’s response to the child’s transition, including district personnel, student support staff such as counselors, and teachers. Luecke reported a positive outcome for the child, and an increased sensitivity and heightened awareness to issues of gender diversity. Based on these findings, Luecke asserts that we need more caring teachers who validate and affirm their gender identities: “the discernment required for this simultaneously emerges from and supports a kind of connected teaching; it is recognition that good teaching starts and ends with the relationships” (2011, p. 151). Even though the school and district staff in this study were not well versed on transgender theory or best practices, their active support and affirmation made a big difference in the student’s life.

Transgender Topics in the K-12 Curriculum

Although there is a fairly robust body of literature about LGB and queer topics in curriculum (Britzman, 1995; Kumashiro, 2002; Pinar, 1998; Sumara & Davis, 1999), fewer scholars have taken up transgender curriculum specifically. In a substantial contribution to the field, Ryan, Patraw, and Bednar (2013) chronicled one elementary school teacher’s attempt to make her instruction inclusive of transgender and gender nonconforming people. The authors

report that the teacher “provided opportunities for students to reflect on their own gendered lives as constructed and rulebound” (p. 102), and most significantly, her young students were able to understand the relationships between gender and sexuality, and grasp the concepts of gender identity and gender expression. These findings contradict the conventional wisdom that preadolescents are too young to think about, let alone understand, these complex and supposedly controversial topics. The authors also note that, while there has been research supporting the use of gay and lesbian topics in elementary school curriculum, few studies examine the benefits of incorporating specific information on transgender people and gender nonconformity. As a result of their analysis, the researchers emphasize the importance of teacher educators focusing more on gender diversity when preparing future teachers.

Conclusion

Research findings described here provide clear evidence that transgender and gender non-conforming students not only routinely experience harassment, discrimination, and violence from peers, but also from school staff. These negative consequences act as tools in the preservation of hegemonic gender norms that uphold and reassert the importance of conforming to binary gender expectations. As a result, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals experience lower levels of educational attainment and higher levels of homelessness, unemployment, and suicide (Grant et al., 2011). Because gender is intricately connected with race, it is no surprise that transgender and gender non-conforming students of color experience higher levels of harassment, discrimination, and violence than their White counterparts (Grant et al., 2011; Grossman & D’augelli, 2006). Transgender youth are becoming more visible and they need teachers and schools who will support them and provide the necessary resources for their social

and academic success. Additionally, we also know that even one affirming and supportive educator can make a huge difference in the lives of a transgender student (Luecke, 2011).

Educational researchers are only just beginning to explore transgender topics in education. Influential research by the scholars mentioned in this chapter has paved the way for my own work. To date, however, empirical work exploring transgender topics in teacher education curriculum is very limited. Findings by Horn et al. (2010) and Sherwin and Jennings (2007) provide a glimpse into the priorities of teacher education programs and their administrators, but these studies did not capture the priorities of the instructors; we have little research that shows what individual instructors are prioritizing in their own classes.

We know that multicultural and foundations textbooks largely ignore, underrepresent or misrepresent transgender identities, experiences and knowledges (Kean, 2017; MacGillivray & Jennings, 2008; Young & Middleton, 2002); what we don't know is whether instructors are actually using these books in their courses; and if they are, whether they are problematizing the content. And if they are not, what other readings they use and how they choose them. Previous research has also shown that pre-service and in-service teachers feel uncomfortable & unprepared to support transgender students or make curricular & pedagogical improvements (Brant, 2017; Meyer, 2008; Payne & Smith, 2014). What we don't know is how teacher educators are working to improve pre-service preparation in this area. The focus in the present study is to build upon this important work, but with a focus clearly on transgender experiences as they are represented through teacher education curriculum.

The focus in the present study is to build upon this important work, but with a focus clearly on transgender experiences as they are represented through teacher education curriculum. Further, no study to date has focused on teacher educators' experiences teaching transgender

topics. This dissertation aims to push empirical work on trans curriculum in teacher education programs in new and important directions. In order to do this, I will spend the next chapter outlining the theoretical frameworks that influence and guide my study.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

In this chapter, I will introduce a new theoretical framework I developed by uniting significant contributions from the fields of feminist, queer, and transgender theory on one hand and critical curriculum theory on the other. I intend to locate this framework within the wider arena of the aforementioned theories, while explaining why these theories, taken alone, are inadequate for this study. In the first section of the chapter, I will detail theoretical concepts that provide the foundation for the present study's theoretical framework. Second, I explain why queer theory and feminist theory are limited in their ability to interrogate transgender knowledge, experiences, and realities. In the third section, I explore educational theories that inform my work, and finally, I lay out the principles guiding my theoretical perspective.

Essential Theoretical Concepts

There are several theoretical constructs borne from feminist and queer theorists that are foundational to the present study. First is the idea of gender socialization (Beauvoir, 1953; Lorber, 1994), which moves us away from perceiving gender as a fixed and innate characteristic. Second is gender performativity, which helps us understand the iterative and citational nature of gender performance. Another important concept is the heterosexual matrix, which explains the ways in which bodies, gender, and desires are intricately connected to normalize monogamous heterosexuality and mark all other modes of gender and desire as deviant. In addition, I will discuss intersectionality and its importance in understanding how gender, at all levels, interacts with race, class, and other aspects of identity.

Socialization & Performativity

The French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir is famously quoted as saying, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (1953). This means that people assigned female at birth are

socialized into a deeply embedded system of norms that simultaneously guide and police their development into what we understand to be a woman. In making her argument for this assertion, Beauvoir suggested that the sex binary (which she asserts is a biological fact) has always existed and thus women have always been subordinate to men. Beauvoir effectively argued that biological sex is distinct from socially constructed gender, and that the process of socialization into sexist and patriarchal systems is what creates our understanding of ‘woman’ as an identity.

Butler (1988) builds upon de Beauvoir’s substantial contribution and goes a step further in asserting that gender is not just a social extension of one’s biological sex, but also a structurally pervasive construction which is enacted through implicit participation in performative acts.

Butler's description of gender as performativity insists that the reality of gender is not to be found in the feminist account of differently socialised and encultured bodies, but is the result of an illusion sustained by the incessant replication of norms that materialise that which they govern. These norms of behavior...operate ideologically to structure the fictive solidity of gender. (Hey, 2006, p. 440)

In other words, our understanding of gender norms and expectations is an iterative process created through shared experiences. We are socialized as children to understand how our gendered selves are supposed to look and act, and “we expend a tremendous amount of cultural energy keeping gendered meanings intact as well as continually policing, moving, and redesigning them” (Wilchins, 2004, p. 37). This process seems completely natural and necessary because gendered acts are so structurally pervasive. Gender policing stems from an understanding that gender is a static entity, one that must be internalized and maintained throughout one’s life—particularly in the case of masculinity for men. True gender liberation

cannot occur, then, without opportunities for pre-service teachers to dialogue and think critically about their own gender and the ways they are implicated in a genderist system.

Butler (1988, 1990) suggests that gender creates restrictions on one's ability to express themselves rather than creating a space for one's gender to flourish as it might. Thus, the fact that we engage in gender policing is itself a signifier that conforming to gender norms is not a natural or abiding quality. If it were, there would not be a need to police anyone's gender expression, because nobody would be non-conforming. "Performativity conceptualises the paradox of identity as apparently fixed but inherently unstable, revealing (gender) norms requiring continual maintenance" (Hey, 2006, p. 439). In essence, we are the tools through which gender is policed – we are taught to police our own gender, and the gender of others, in ways that uphold male dominance, patriarchy and the gender binary. Butler also acknowledges the possibility of a more complex gender system that could encompass numerous gender expressions and identities. "Butler's radical anti-essentialist critique argues that the equation in which sex (male, female) is seen to cause gender (masculine, feminine) and thus cause desire (towards the other gender) is false....and it critically reduces our capacity for thinking gender/sexuality/ desire otherwise" (Hey, 2006, p. 446).

The Heterosexual Matrix

Foucault's (1979) structures of intelligibility describe "regimes of truth that regulate - in a given history - the thinkable, the recognizable, the limits, and the transgressions discursively codified through legal, medical, and educational structures" (Britzman, 1995, p. 156). Judith Butler (1999) utilized Foucault's concept of structures of intelligibility in creating the "heterosexual matrix," which explains the ways in which the possibilities for gender and sexuality are normatively produced and sustained through heteronormative practices. Further

informed by Adrienne Rich's (1983) concept of 'compulsory heterosexuality' and Monique Wittig's (1992) notion of the 'heterosexual contract', Butler identifies the heterosexual matrix as a “hegemonic discursive/epistemological model of gender intelligibility” which assumes two and only two sexes connected to two and only two genders, “oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality” (Butler, 1990, p. 151). This matrix, which shows ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as two rows cross-referenced to columns labeled ‘straight’, ‘gay’, and ‘bisexual’, is upheld through power relations and regulatory regimes that sustain gender inequities and enforce heteronormativity. Despite this, Butler (1993) asserts that heterosexuality and gender are inherently unstable, and “exposes the fragility of the heterosexual matrix as malleable and open to rearticulation” (Renold, 2006, p. 494). Queer theoretical perspectives problematize the heterosexual matrix by questioning its fixed nature and investigating the ways in which the heterosexual matrix makes certain identities, performances, and sexual behaviors imperceptible (McWilliams & Penuel, 2016).

To update the heterosexual matrix, McWilliams (2016) suggests the addition of two more gender boxes, transgender man and transgender woman. This creates a larger matrix with four gender options cross-referenced to three sexualities. While this updated matrix includes the transgender identities one might call binary, it still renders invisible non-binary identities such as genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, bigender, and others. McWilliams (2016) notes that it is “generally agreed that regardless of whether you’re transgender or cisgender, you still fall squarely into either the ‘man’ category or the ‘woman’ category, so that you’re either a cisgender man or a cisgender woman, or a transgender man or a transgender woman” (p. 1). This new articulation of the matrix shows that even though options for gender identities may be expanding,

there are still identities and behaviors that are unintelligible within dominant understandings of gender and sexuality.

Intersectionality

Black feminist theorists have contributed many critical ideas to thinking about gender and its interlocking relationship with race, sexuality, and class (Collins, 2002; Crenshaw, 1995; hooks, 1984; Spelman, 1998). Black feminism asserts that the mainstream feminist movement caters to the needs of middle-class White women, and that Women of Color have different needs and experience different struggles. Issues that have not been emphasized in mainstream, White feminist movements—particularly the second wave—include sexual and domestic violence, access to affordable health care, and fair labor practices. Salient aspects of Black feminism include the assertion that Black women have been, and still are, an oppressed group, and they are oppressed in ways dissimilar from White women or Black men. Under both feminist and anti-racist organizations, Spelman (1998) argues that issues facing Black women were less important to the issues facing White women and Black men. Because systems of both race and gender are implicated in Black women's oppression, neither can be eliminated without also eliminating the other. Black feminism aims to amplify the voices and experiences of Black women, to engage in consciousness-raising leading to self-empowerment, and produce intersectional social change through various means.

Although Black women were active in both the second wave feminist movement and the civil rights movement, neither one was willing to take up the charge for issues that Black women face. The Combahee River Collective Statement, published in 1977 by a collective of Black feminists, describes the ways in which Black feminism goes beyond the common White feminist concerns of the time, including unfulfilled lives and professional advancement:

“The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives.” (p. 1)

bell hooks (1984) was one of the first scholars who critiqued White feminists such as Betty Friedan’s focus on middle-class White women. Specifically, hooks argues that women of color have very different needs and experience different struggles due to the interconnectivity of race, class, and gender and their ability to produce and perpetuate systems of oppression and domination. Black women do not face two separate struggles, or realities, one of being Black and the other of being woman; they face one struggle, or reality, of being a Black woman. hooks (1984) insists that one does not have to identify as either anti-racist or anti-sexist, but instead, we should identify as anti-oppression, in all its forms; for one type of oppression cannot be destroyed unless the others are destroyed along with it.

Crenshaw (1995) builds upon hooks’ argument that Women of Color’s lived experiences are not represented in feminist or anti-racist movements, and proposes an intersectional approach using structural intersectionality and political intersectionality to analyze violence against women of color. Structural intersectionality occurs when women of color simultaneously experience oppression in the form of sexism and racism, intersecting to form an experience different from racism or sexism alone. Crenshaw (1995) argues that anti-racist political organizing is centered around Black male concerns, while feminist political organizing is centered around White female concerns. This siloed approach to identity creates racially oppressive feminist movements and patriarchal anti-racist movements, and causes barriers for

full participation of Black women. Crenshaw argues that feminists must acknowledge the racial hierarchy and anti-racists must acknowledge the patriarchy before black women's experiences are addressed, but it will be difficult because these messages are embedded in our culture. Intersectionality is important because it provides a framework to understand how and why various oppressions work together to produce different experiences and different injustices. It also reminds us that oppression(s) cannot be quantified or pulled apart, that we cannot say definitively which oppression is worse/more prevalent/more foundational than the other. It also provides recognition that other forms of oppression (class, sexuality, disability, language, etc.) also intersect with each other and mutually support each other; however, the results/ effects may not be well known or supported by any mainstream social movements.

Feminist & Queer Theory: Limitations for Transgender Analysis

Mainstream White feminist theories have, at their core, a concern for the social conditions of people designated as female and/or those who identify as cisgender women. Feminist theory and the feminist movement(s) have been crucial in naming and interrogating cisgender male supremacy, and the ways in which cisgender women are oppressed and subjugated by sexist systems. The primary reason feminist theory is inadequate for a transgender-centered analysis is its adherence to a dichotomous view of gender. Feminist theory has historically centered the needs and experiences of cisgender women, and although third-wave feminism has attempted to be more inclusive, there is still a philosophical divide within modern feminism about whether or not trans women are actually women. Over time, there has been “a silencing of transgendered voices, particularly in academic discourse, but also within feminist and lesbian communities” (Doan, 2007, p. 63). A few feminist scholars, such as Butler (1990), Feinberg (1996), Halberstam (1998) and Wilchins (2004), argue against “binary male or

female constructions of gender and transgender expression as mental illness, favoring more fluid notions of gender identity” (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005, p. 32). However, feminism as a theoretical construct largely presupposes a gender binary in which one gender/sex category (woman/female) is systematically oppressed by another gender/sex category (man/male). Hines (2007) suggests that “on a theoretical, political and cultural level, feminism has been largely hostile to transgender practices” (p. 17). Feminism, therefore, does not singularly provide the necessary frameworks for the purposes of centering transgender experiences and disrupting the gender binary as a stable and necessary construct.

Queer theory aims to disrupt systemic heteronormative structures that regulate and police desire and sexuality. At its foundation, queer theory builds upon the social constructionist work of feminist theory and incorporates elements of postmodernism and poststructural theory. Britzman (1995) asserts that queer theory critiques and problematizes normalcy “as a structure and as a pedagogy”; normalcy creates exclusion, and exclusion creates a binary. By refusing and destabilizing the idea that there is a ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ sexuality, queer theory disrupts heteronormative assumptions and challenges dominant narratives of sexual desire and its connection to gender. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990), one of the founders of queer theory, problematized the heterosexual/homosexual binary, noting that its primary use is to reinforce heteronormative structures while othering homosexuality. Sedgwick, along with other queer theorists, assert that one’s sexual identity is not innate, stable, or fixed; instead, they assert identity is “multiple, shifting, and contingent on context” (McWilliams, 2015, p. 21). An understanding of sexuality as intricately connected to binary sex and gender systems, according to Sedgwick, is simplistic and limiting. Queer theory, then, asserts that queer people have

knowledge about the possibilities of sexuality, pleasure, and desire that are unintelligible within heteronormative structures.

Queer theory and transgender theory have much in common; they both share an interest in embodiment and the ways that bodies are politicized. Both queer theory and trans theory work to destabilize identity and identity categories as fixed or natural. And both fields of theory are interested in the ways gender norms can restrict possibility for full expression and happiness. Apart from these similarities, there are two significant reasons why queer theory falls short for the present analysis. First, at its core, queer theory centers sexuality and sexual desire rather than gender identity. Although a significant number of transgender people may also identify their sexuality as queer, their needs and experiences *as transgender people* are not necessarily the same as queer people who are cisgender. Queer theory most directly explores the possibilities of fluidity and creativity among gender expressions, behaviors, and objects of desire; it is less attuned to fluidity and creativity among gender identities. These are some of the reasons why several scholars have argued that queer theory neglects the lives of transgender people (Hines, 2006; King, 1993; Prosser, 1998).

Second, the concept of queer, as an identity or as a politic, does not necessarily include, appeal to, or accurately describe all transgender people. For example, some transgender individuals do not find the gender binary inherently problematic; they transition from one sex/gender to another without necessarily contesting the stability or necessity of the gender order. Elliot (2009) notes that some “transsexuals do not seek to queer or destabilize categories of gender but to successfully embody them, regardless of sexual orientation” (p. 38). Doan (2007) also notes that “most queer spaces have been unable to accommodate alternative subject positions such as nontraditional gender presentations within these communities, leaving these

individuals vulnerable and invisible in public spaces” (p. 63). Although gender transgressions are typically welcome in queer spaces, deviations from binary gender identities are not always accepted (Doan, 2007). In addition, not all transgender people identify with queer as a sexual identity label. The sexual identities of transgender people are just as varied and vast as those of cisgender people: heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, pansexual, asexual, demisexual, and the list goes on. Depending on how a scholar or writer is defining queer, then, trans experiences may or may not be represented.

Let us consider for a moment how feminist and queer theoretical perspectives manifest in teacher education programs. In their critical interrogation of the aims of anti-homophobia education, Lee Airton (2009) identified “two distinct paradigms professing to do or say something about gender in school” (p. 129): a sex-based approach defining gender as women/girls and men/boys, and a sexuality-based approach, exploring issues primarily relevant to lesbian and gay communities. In the first paradigm, the focus is kept on topics such as gender norms and stereotypes, bias against girls in STEM, or the disparity in boys versus girls assigned to special education. This paradigm relies on a binary understanding of gender and generally does not acknowledge or explore transgender as a topic within the category of ‘gender.’

The second paradigm, the sexuality-based approach, explores homophobia within a heteronormative system (Airton, 2009). In teacher education courses, this paradigm can be seen through issues such as coming out as gay or lesbian, bullying and violence experienced by gay and lesbian youth, or marriage equality. Although the LGBT acronym is ubiquitous within the sexuality-based approach, many scholars exclude or underrepresent transgender youth in their studies, or focus solely on sexuality and not gender identity. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer (LGBQ) identify individuals whose sexual orientation or sexual behavior falls outside the norms

and expectations of heteronormativity. Transgender, on the other hand, refers to gender identity in the same way that ‘man’ or ‘woman’ refers to gender identity. Just as it is possible for (cisgender) men and women to be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, pansexual, asexual or any other number of sexual orientation identities, the same is true for transgender people. In other words, transgender people have both a gender identity and a sexual orientation.

Transgender realities are not apparent in either of the paradigms Airton identified, and so pre-service teachers continue to be underprepared to understand or effectively advocate for their transgender students.

In this section, I explained the contributions of feminist and queer theory to understanding sex, gender, and sexuality. I also briefly discussed intersectionality as an important contribution to understanding intersecting forms or systems of oppression. Although gender identity and the gender binary are at the center of this study, these elements are also viewed at their intersection with other forms of oppression such as racism, ableism, and classism. In addition, I explained why feminist theory and queer theory are singularly inadequate for use in a transgender-centered inquiry. Transgender theorists “caution against trends in queer and feminist theory that cast gender as taking place solely on a sociocultural level while neglecting the embodied realities of the many transgender people who seek hormonal and surgical change to align their physical and experiential realities” (Meyer, Tilland-Stafford & Airton, 2016, p. 4). Although both feminist and queer theoretical approaches are concerned with power and oppression and challenge dominant ideologies, neither provide an appropriate or accurate framework to critique the ways in which the gender binary itself is implicated within systems of oppression for transgender and other gender nonconforming individuals.

In the next section, I will explain the contributions of education theories to the present study, noting particular areas of curriculum theory and critical educational theory that are influential to my research perspective and methodological commitments.

Contributions of Education Theories

Critical theory and curriculum theory have informed the theoretical framework with which I approach the present study. Although there are an infinite number of educational theories and teaching/learning models, I argue that the dominant culture relies on positivistic assumptions about knowledge (Kincheloe, 2008) and emphasizes a teacher-centered, banking model of teaching and learning (Apple, 1990; Freire, 1994). Alternately, critical pedagogy—a movement of resistance against the dominant culture’s educational ideologies—is informed by assumptions about knowledge that are anti-positivistic (Kincheloe, 2008) and emphasizes a learner-centered, critical model of teaching and learning (Freire, 1994; Wink, 2004).

Critical theorists are concerned with theorizing systems of power, ideology, and knowledge. The critical theories that most heavily inform my work emphasize schooling as an opportunity for transformation and emancipation from social constructions of oppression including race, class, sexuality and gender (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999; Kincheloe, 2005). In this way, the ‘critical’ in critical theory calls upon an unearthing or deconstructing of the hidden assumptions that govern society. In particular, critical theorists are interested debunking and deconstructing assumptions about the legitimacy of power relationships and official knowledge. The United States’ K-12 schooling system exists in a constant state of tension over the goals and purposes of schooling, how knowledge is defined and constructed, who should have access to schools, and many other complex concerns involving a multitude of constituents. War, global competition, political whims, and changes in economic stability also influence the direction and

function of the schooling system. While the dominant heteronormative culture attempts to control the discourse of schooling, diverse and marginalized groups push back with resistance, providing a turbulent undercurrent of discursive power. Critical pedagogy represents one of these undercurrents attempting to disrupt the status quo.

Critical pedagogical practices and assumptions about knowledge work to stop the cycles of oppression and violence that provide a barrier to both marginalized and privileged groups in reaching true justice and equality. Macedo (1993) believes that teachers operating under the dominant culture's ideological assumptions are being rewarded "for reproducing and not questioning dominant mechanisms designed to produce power asymmetries along the lines of race, gender, class, culture, and ethnicity" (p. 75). Using critical pedagogy, educators can transform the purpose of education from one of reproducing the dominant culture, to creating informed citizens who question and challenge it.

In *Education for Critical Consciousness*, Paulo Freire explains how the colonial imperialist history left the people of Brazil without the "habits of political and social solidarity appropriate to our democratic form of government" (2010, p. 34). Freire continues: "we had to appeal to education as a cultural action by means of which the Brazilian people could learn, in place of the old passivity, new attitudes and habits of participation and intervention" (2010, p. 34). Freire held that new attitudes and habits had to be formed through critical education prior to any sort of social change occurring, because the oppressed internalize the oppressor's way of thinking and behaving in the world. Internalizing oppressive ideologies occurs most dependably through what Freire called a 'banking model' of education, where critical thinking is discouraged and rote memorization of 'official knowledge' (Apple, 1990) is the mark of academic success.

Contrary to the banking model of education, critical pedagogy is student-centered where the teacher is a facilitator or guide and the students are actively involved in their own education. The reason this type of emphasis is beneficial for U.S. society is because the nation is becoming increasingly diverse, not only in terms of race and ethnicity but also with respect to religion, gender and sexual diversity. A curriculum and pedagogy reliant on the values, expectations and worldviews of white middle- and upper-class heterosexual men simply will not benefit the coming generations of Americans. A classroom enacting critical pedagogy makes use of assumptions about knowledge, pedagogical and curricular practices that are often at odds to the dominant culture's preferred assumptions and practices. In order to achieve the societal ideals of justice and equality, schooling must instill students with a powerful sense of agency.

Curriculum is Ideologically and Politically Powerful

Critical theorists argue that curricular choices can “serve dominant interests not through sheer repression of the underprivileged, but through social practices that are normalized over time” (Walton, 2005, p. 59). Textbooks and other written texts are integral elements of the explicit or intended curriculum (Eisner, 1994) and can provide the basis for what is considered important or valuable for pre-service teachers to know. Textbooks in the 19th century were written by individuals such as William H. McGuffey (Reese, 2011) to encourage assimilation and rote memorization, and the teachers followed this standard. The authoritarian, classical curriculum model dominated much of this era; however, new ideas about education arrived around the turn of the century with the Progressive movement and John Dewey.

Dewey's reform movement, starting with his laboratory school, replaced classical curriculum with student-centered learning that meets the specific needs, concerns and motivations of each child (Dewey, 1902). While Dewey is not widely considered a critical

pedagogue, his methods share some of the same attributes, such as the emphasis on teachers as guides and facilitators centered on the learner's interests and promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Critical pedagogues differ from Dewey's methods on multiple issues, including a clearer focus on systems of power and privilege and an emphasis on individual and community empowerment against hegemonic practices (Kincheloe, 2008). Dewey perceived social problems such as increased poverty to be caused by authoritarian schooling methods, and hypothesized that students would become more invested in their own education, participate in democracy, and create stronger problem-solving skills through a curriculum that was meaningful for them. Progressive and experiential methods of education enjoyed popularity through the economically prosperous years of the mid-20th century until World War II, when global competition started to become a heavy influence on the process and policies of schooling.

Scholars interested in the hidden curriculum have asserted for decades that schooling is always political and never neutral, with real consequences for society (Apple, 1990; Giroux, 2001; Vallance, 1974). Deciding what is important for students to learn and know is a loaded question; inevitably, some content is included and much more is not. Because this is true, we must pay attention to who makes curricular decisions, what those decisions are, and which students benefit most from the curricular content provided. A critical analysis of the hidden and null curriculum reveals not only that curriculum is *limited*, but also that it is *skewed* or *biased* toward a particular status quo, supporting and reproducing systems of privilege for Whites, men, Christians, heterosexuals, English speakers, the wealthy, and able-bodied people.

Considering the limitations of school curriculum, why does it matter that certain values or knowledge is excluded or marginalized? Looking at it from a philosophical lens, Linda Alcoff (1993) argues that certain discourses (in this case, discourses related to gender) are presented as

constant, natural or normal, and it is not coincidental that these discourses are primarily those that maintain oppressive systems such as sexism, racism, and ableism. As Ingrey (2014) states, “Reiterations of myths become part of the hidden curriculum and have led to an assault on people who feel their gender and their bodies do not cohere to society’s binary gender norms” (p. 104). Eisner (1994) suggests that we must give attention to what is not taught; like many complex and sometimes controversial issues, what a teacher says or implies about gender is just as important as what they do not say. The null curriculum is defined as everything left out of the curriculum, which can be just as impactful as the explicit curriculum; it conveys meaning to students that certain content or ways of knowing either do not exist or are not important enough to include.

In summary, educational theoretical concepts such as the official knowledge (Apple, 1990), critical pedagogy (Freire, 1994; Kincheloe, 2008; Wink, 2004), and the hidden and null curriculum (Eisner, 1994; Ingrey, 2014) are foundational to my theoretical perspective. Disappointingly, there is minimal scholarship focused on the overlap of gender and curriculum, and no theoretical frameworks that bring these two together while centering and challenging the gender binary. Because of this, I put forward the following Critical Trans Framework, which integrates important contributions from queer, feminist and transgender theory with critical curriculum theories. These principles guided my analysis throughout this study.

Principles of a Critical Trans Framework

Through this framework, which I am calling a Critical Trans Framework, I am bringing together understandings from gender theories and critical curriculum theories. This Critical Trans Framework can be understood as working alongside existing theoretical paradigms within the field of education that explain systemic oppressions such as racism, sexism, heterosexism,

decolonialism, and ableism. It also incorporates and builds upon important recent work at the intersection of transgender studies and student affairs (Catalano, 2015; Nicolazzo, 2017).

The definitions I provide here should be considered in flux and inevitably insufficient to describe people's gendered realities. I approach concepts such as gender and transgender with a poststructural sensibility (Ball, 1995; Derrida, 1980), in that I recognize the impossible task of clarifying and simplifying concepts that are constantly in flux, concepts whose definition may change given certain contexts or perspectives. Thus, readers may disagree with the ways in which I have categorized, included or excluded various concepts. I cannot claim to create an accurate portrayal or representation of all trans people's experiences, and I reject the notion that there are right and wrong ways of knowing gender. However, I propose that some ways of knowing gender might be less damaging, more transformative, more liberatory, and/or more representative than others. It is my intent, then, to put forth conceptualizations of gender that achieve these goals most closely.

Principle 1: Gender has Individual, Institutional, and Cultural Levels

My definition of gender is informed by Beemyn and Eliason (1996), Butler (2004), Stryker and Aizura (2013) and Catalano and Shlasko (2013). I describe gender as a system with individual, institutional and social/cultural aspects. Viewing gender in this way helps us see how it is operating at all three levels and, taken together, helps us see the complexity of the system as a whole. This definition also acknowledges and celebrates the various ways in which individuals resist and uproot the dominant understanding of gender as separate/different from one's biological sex.

On the individual level, gender is manifested through various complex means, distilled here into the categories of gender identity and gender expression. Gender identity is defined as “a

person's internal self-concept with regard to gender categories like man, woman, transgender, genderqueer, and many others" (Catalano & Shlasko, 2013, p. 426). Though I do not believe gender identity is biologically determined, I also do not agree that it is purely socially constructed; in other words, I do not think it inherently follows that we "are" a gender by "doing" it (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009). To be clear, there is not currently culturally recognized or intelligible ways for some transgender people to "do" their authentic gender identity in a way that is accurately perceived by others. For example, a variety of transgender identities that exist between or beyond the currently available binary gender categories of man and woman, but have no intelligible (Butler, 1999; Foucault, 1979) means of expressing or displaying non-binary gender identities.

In the 1960s, Stoller and Greenson developed the term gender identity, which "clearly differentiated the subjective sense of self from the behaviors associated with masculinity and femininity" (Meyerowitz, 2002, p.115). Stoller was also clear in separating one's gender identity from one's "sexual identity," which is now generally referred to as sexual orientation. Understanding gender identity to be separate from biological sex and sexual orientation was an integral step for the medical field to acknowledge the need for gender affirmation surgeries. While helpful constructs still today, it should be noted that Stoller and other researchers of the time perceived gender identity through a Freudian psychoanalytic lens, and relied heavily on such concepts as penis envy and the Oedipus complex to explain gender non-conformity.

Transgender theorist Sally Hines notes that since the 1970s, "medical perspectives on transgender occupy a dominant position that has significantly affected how transgender is viewed and experienced within contemporary Western society" (2007, p. 4). Gender Identity Disorder, the psychological classification given to transgender individuals who intend to medically

transition, was finally removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 2013, replaced with Gender Dysphoria. Many in the transgender community were pleased with the removal of the term ‘disorder’ from the list of criteria needed to access medical transition resources. As Butler (1990) reminds us, the problem does not stem from transgender people’s mental health; the root of the problem is the binary and restrictive system of gender. From the 1990s to the present, dominant ideas about gender identity have been disrupted and expanded. The proliferation of the internet and social media has completely changed how people understand their own and others’ gender, and we now see a proliferation of identity labels and pronouns being used by trans people in various locations across the country.

Gender expression can be thought of as the “behaviors, such as attire, demeanor, and language, through which we intentionally or unintentionally communicate gender” (Catalano & Shlasko, 2013, p. 426-427). Gender identity and gender expression tend to, but do not always, overlap. For example, someone who identifies as a woman might choose to signify this by displaying mannerisms, wearing clothes and hairstyles that are culturally considered feminine, thus being ‘read’ as a woman. This ‘reading’ of gender has been called gender attribution (Bornstein, 1994). When attributing a gender to a person, we use physical cues such as hair, voice, and movement; behavioral cues such as manners; textual cues including histories, documents, and names (Rands, 2009). Many trans people become frustrated when others attribute a gender that they do not identify with, which can result in greater feelings of anxiety, depression, and social isolation. This can be especially true for non-binary or genderqueer people, as there is no culturally recognized gender expression that allows them to be ‘read’ as something other than a man or a woman.

It should be noted that in this conceptualization of gender, biological sex is intentionally separated from gender identity and expression. This is an explicit statement that biological sex should be considered completely separate from one's gender, except for the connection they both have to certain institutional policies and practices and social/cultural norms, roles and conventions. For example, when a person gives birth to a baby, the social institutions involved in that event (government, medical, etc.) require the doctors to identify the biological sex of the baby via visual inspection. That decision automatically connects the baby's physiology to their expected gender identity through the socialization process which includes the institutions of family, media, and education. This is not to say that all people, trans and cis, should (or do) consider their sex as being different from their gender, but instead to acknowledge that one's sex does not determine one's gender, and for some individuals such as myself, my body and its physiological parts have absolutely no relevance to my gender identity. Therefore, it is most inclusive to consider sex and gender as separate concepts, so that individuals whose sex and gender align and those that do not align both find themselves represented and acknowledged.

Calling on the work of gender theorists, such as Bornstein (1994), Feinberg (1997) Wilchins (2004), and Bilodeau (2007) I am defining transgender as "a broad range of gender non-conforming identities, including individuals whose biological sex assignment and societal expectations for gender expression are in conflict with the individual's gender identity" (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005, p. 52). Catalano and Shlasko (2013) add that the mismatch between societal expectations and one's gender identity or expression "is central to their identity and/or important in determining their life circumstances" (p. 427). Transgender is an achieved rather than ascribed identity, in the sense that one cannot determine whether another person is transgender or effectively label them as such. Identities under the broader umbrella of transgender could

include, but are not limited to: Female to Male (FtM) and Male to Female (MtF) transsexuals (also known as transgender men and women, respectively), non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, bigender, third gender, and agender/genderless individuals.

I am hesitant to pin down what I mean by trans, because by its very nature it is defiant to categorization. I am also strongly against putting borders around what is and is not trans, because that encourages conflict and competition regarding who is ‘trans enough’, who is ‘really’ trans, and what one must be or do to meet the requirements of ‘trans’. Figure 3.1 presents my own attempt at categorizing and explaining trans identities, as imperfect as it is.

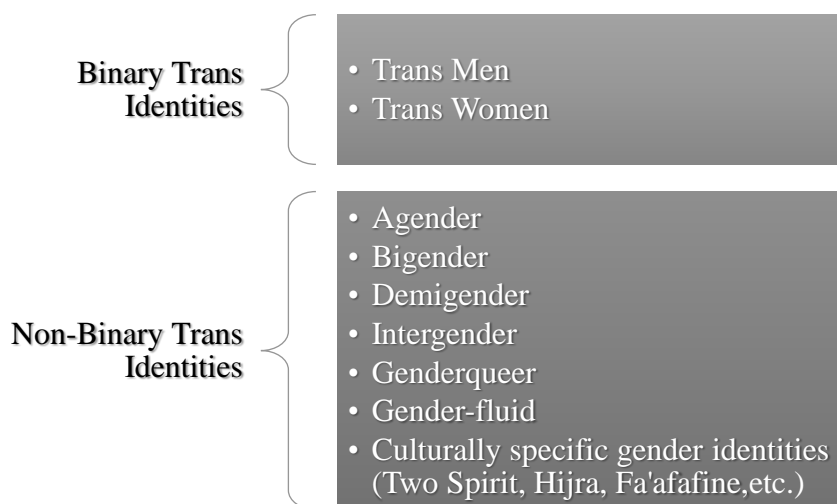


Figure 3.1. Author's Categorization of Trans Identities

Some generalizations can help to explain why I chose to separate ‘binary’ from ‘non-binary’ transgender identities. Trans men and women are more likely than non-binary individuals to want to bio-medically transition from one intelligible gender to the other intelligible gender. Because gender-affirming surgeries can cost tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket, whether trans men and women are actually able to undergo bio-medical transition depends largely on their economic status, access to medical resources and/or trans-inclusive insurance. Trans people who bio-medically transition face particular challenges, such as access to hormones and other

medical procedures, airport security, and the sex-separated prison system (Spade, 2011; Transgender Law Center, 2014).

Non-binary trans people may or may not undergo bio-medical transition, based on a variety of factors including economic access and whether or not they believe bio-medical transition would enable them to feel affirmed in their body or be perceived by others in a more authentic way. But because gender is so tied with biological sex, itself a binary with two choices, medical transition may not be helpful for non-binary individuals. Regardless of whether or not a trans person biomedically transitions, there are certain challenges that nearly all trans people face, including accessing trans-inclusive mental health (Carmel, Hopwood & dickey, 2014), opportunities for dating & relationships, having your gender perceived authentically (Nicolazzo, 2015), and issues of social transition such as name and pronoun changes.

The use of an asterisk after trans, written as trans*, is an alternate textual representation of “the multitude of identities and identity categories that refer to those of us who are trans*” (Nicolazzo, 2016, p. 2; see also Tompkins, 2014). I have chosen not to use an asterisk after trans in this paper because I believe that ‘trans’, on its own, creates space for any individual who does not identify as cisgender.

Schilt and Westbrook (2009) explain that the term cisgender refers to “individuals who have a match between the gender they were assigned at birth, their bodies, and their personal identity” (p. 461). It is beneficial to consider that Schilt and Westbrook did not specifically include gender expression in this definition. As Nicolazzo reminds us, “some people may identify as cisgender, but have an outward gender expression others may read as transgressing gender boundaries” (2015, p. 4). In other words, some people may actively resist normative gender expressions through their hairstyle, clothing choices, and other mannerisms, yet identify

as cisgender. One example of this from popular culture is Ellen DeGeneres, a cisgender woman whose gender expression would be considered masculine. Non-conforming gender expressions could include cisgender women with masculine-leaning gender expressions, and cisgender men with feminine-leaning expressions.

Cisgender privilege is a set of social advantages provided to cisgender individuals that are not available to transgender individuals. Evin Taylor (2015) discusses cisgender privilege in a similar way to Peggy McIntosh's (2004) "invisible knapsack" of white privilege, citing examples of cisgender privilege such as being confident in and unaffected by checking 'Male' or 'Female' on forms; obtaining government identification that accurately represents your name and gender; having regular interaction with someone whose gender identity matches your own; having access to doctors who acknowledge your gender identity and provide you with holistic preventative and emergency care; and not having to prove your gender before others call you by the correct name and pronoun (Taylor, 2015, p. 456-457).

On the institutional level, gender is manifested through various policies and practices which have encoded the gender binary into our socialization and social order, including the social construct of a biological sex binary. Many of our social institutions are built upon the idea that there are two sexes and two accompanying genders, and there is no possibility for anything else. In other words, gender is constructed as a binary system manifested through gender roles, gender norms, and other administrative practices (Spade, 2015). In his book *Normal Life* (2015), Dean Spade explains how administrative gender classification practices and policies, such as identification documents, sex-segregated facilities, and health care access codifies transgender oppression into nearly every aspect of one's life. It is our involvement within social institutions such as family, church, media, and school that provide us with socially constructed gender

expectations. One aspect of institutional gender is its inclusion (or exclusion) from curriculum. On the social/cultural level, our society's norms, roles and conventions create and sustain gendered expectations and gender inequality. Along with social institutions, this level is where gender takes on social, interactive meanings.

Understanding gender as a system with multiple levels allows us to more clearly see the systemic and institutional means by which gender non-conformity and trans identities are oppressed and erased. Transgender people do not just experience individual hatred, fear, and bigotry; there are social structures in place that maintain the gender binary as a hegemonic force. It also helps us see that the way one understands their gender identity and expression is related to, but not dependent upon, one's sexual orientation. Through this distinction, it becomes clear that neither sexism nor heterosexism fully articulates the multi-layered oppressive systems and beliefs that oppress transgender people, and there is no clear or common understanding of where trans people fit into these frameworks. To that point, Airton (2009) noted that "anti-sexist projects address the *effects* of strict gender binary socialization and not their root cause" (p. 134, emphasis original). The relatively new concept of genderism (Browne, 2004; Hill & Willoughby, 2005; Bilodeau, 2007) provides a much better lens through which to interrogate trans oppression. Principle 2 is focused on the systemic level of gender.

Principle 2: Genderism is Endemic to Society

Dominant ideologies that serve the interest of dominant groups are embedded in everyday life, and can be seen when "schools create and recreate forms of consciousness that enable social control to be maintained without the necessity of dominant groups having to resort to overt mechanisms of domination" (Apple, 1990, p. 2). Hegemonic ideology propagates the values and

norms of those in power until they become the preferred or “common sense” values and norms for everyone.

Genderism provides a framework for interrogating the gender binary itself as problematic and understanding the unique challenges trans people face that are related to, but not the same as, oppression faced by cisgender women or cisgender LGBTQ individuals. Genderism as an ideology upholds the gender binary as normal and ideal, privileging gender normativity and cisgender individuals over gender diversity and transgender individuals (Bilodeau, 2007; Hill & Willoughby, 2005). Similar to other structural systems of oppression like racism and sexism, genderism operates at multiple levels and within every social institution’s policies and practices to uphold its beliefs and values. Hill and Willoughby (2005) define genderism in this way:

Genderism is an ideology that reinforces the negative evaluation of gender non-conformity or an incongruence between sex and gender. It is a cultural belief that perpetuates negative judgments of people who do not present as a stereotypical man or woman. Similar to heterosexism, we propose that genderism is both a source of social oppression and psychological shame, such that it can be imposed on a person, but also that a person may internalize these beliefs. (p. 534)

Bilodeau (2007) identified four major characteristics of genderism. First, genderism forces categorization of all individuals into male or female identities at an institutional level. Both qualitative and quantitative research shows evidence that the binary gender system creates interpersonal and institutional expectations which not only restrict the ways in which we can understand and express ourselves, but also perpetuate gender-based inequities (Annandale & Hunt, 2000; Kimmel, 2004; Sadker & Zittleman, 2009). People are generally quick to refer to someone as ‘he’ or ‘she’ depending on what gender we subconsciously attribute to them. Gender

attribution (Bornstein, 1994) is a process by which one perceives another's gender. When attributing a gender to a person, we use physical cues such as hair, voice, and movement; behavioral cues such as manners; textual cues including histories, documents, and names (Rands, 2009). Our spontaneous attribution of gender is disrupted when we encounter someone whose gender is not instantly recognizable. Stryker puts it poignantly when she writes, "Because most people have great difficulty recognizing the humanity of another person if they cannot recognize that person's gender, the gender-changing person can evoke in others a primordial fear of monstrosity, or loss of humanness" (2008, p. 5). Individuals who do not fit neatly into one of the two gender options are seen as outcasts, freaks, and often referred to derogatorily as 'she-male', 'he/she', 'tranny', or 'it'. The absence of transgender and gender non-conforming realities, both in practice and in theory, creates official knowledge about gender where transgender and gender non-conforming individuals are silenced and invisible.

The second characteristic of genderism is that conforming to binary gender norms is socially policed with punishments for those who fail to conform (Bilodeau, 2007). Deviations from culturally normative gender behavior tend to be constrained by negative consequences that range from disapproval and bullying to harassment and violence. These negative consequences act as tools in the preservation of hegemonic gender norms that uphold and reassert the importance of conforming to binary gender expectations.

The third characteristic of genderism states that marginalization of transgender people occurs through "overt and covert privileging of binary systems" (Bilodeau, 2007, p. 48), and the fourth characteristic states that the privileging of binary systems results in the invisibility and isolation of transgender people. Pronouns present a particularly frustrating barrier for transgender individuals, their loved ones, and even strangers they encounter in public. Many trans people

become frustrated when others attribute a gender that they do not identify with; this can result in greater feelings of anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Genderqueer and non-binary individuals who identify as neither woman nor man are completely invisible in the English language, as there are no conventional pronouns that accurately and appropriately refer to genderqueer or non-binary individuals.

Understanding genderism is critical in pre-service and in-service teachers' ability to respond to the challenges trans people face and incorporate a gender-expansive perspective into their practice. We cannot fully understand the social context of education without acknowledging the effect of genderism on everything from curriculum to classroom management to policy.

Principle 3: Transgender People's Experiential Knowledge is Essential to Overcoming the Epistemology of Ignorance

Experiential knowledge is a foundational principle in my Critical Trans Framework, and teacher education courses need to ensure they are centering trans experiences and lived realities. Nicolazzo (2015) provides the foundation for a "trans* epistemology" that explores "what the possibilities are when trans* people imagine an epistemological standpoint of our own, and how that standpoint may (re)frame educational praxis" (p. 3). Two of Nicolazzo's tenets are particularly significant for teacher education and ways in which we can understand trans experiences. First, "we all experience our trans*ness differently as a result of our varied, intersecting identities" (p. 7). Nicolazzo points to the ways genderism interacts with racism, ableism, and other systems of oppression. As a result of this, "the way we make sense of ourselves, and the way other people make sense of our embodiments/expressions of our trans*ness, mediates our (in)ability to navigate our social contexts" (2016, p. 11) The second tenet of Nicolazzo's trans* epistemology that is most relevant to teacher education is

“In/visibility and its varied meanings are central to our senses of self, community, and kinship” (2017, p. 7). Here, Nicolazzo discusses the ways in which trans people are both visible and invisible in different contexts, and how this reality is influential in the ways trans people understand themselves and others. Nicolazzo suggests that although trans people are often invisible in material spaces, virtual spaces offer a safer and more accepting environment.

Mills (1997) and Tuana (2008) direct our attention to ignorance, not as a state of unknowing, but as intentional, and actively constructed. Though Mills originally developed this concept in relation to racism, philosophers such as Tuana and Sullivan (2006) and Code (2014) have since applied the concepts to feminist concerns. We can recognize that our traditional, dominant understandings of gender not only privilege a dichotomous gender binary, but are actively constructed to deny the existence of any other gender identities or experiences. This echoes Britzman’s suggestion that “the relationship between knowledge and ignorance is neither oppositional nor binary. Rather, they mutually implicate each other...ignorance is analyzed as an effect of knowledge” (1995, p. 155). The effect is an epistemology of ignorance surrounding the possibilities of gender. What we assume to know about gender identity and expression comes from the perspective of cisgender people, primarily White men. Therefore, what is seen as deviant, freakish, wrong, etc. in terms of gender identity and expression has been determined by a certain epistemological perspective. We can identify this as an epistemic injustice, in that it unjustly oppresses transgender identities, experiences, and knowledges.

Tuana’s (2008) framework for an epistemology of ignorance can be expanded to support the assertion that there are vast areas of potential knowledge about gender identity, expression, and possibility that are intentionally avoided. We remain in an ignorant state intentionally; we fear what we do not know. When the hidden and null curricula maintain binary norms of gender,

the null curriculum necessarily includes gender non-conformity and transgender identities. These mechanisms work together to reinforce and normalize the gender binary.

Trans people's experiences challenge dominant ideological assumptions about the possibilities of gender. Social justice scholars centering race, disability, and other points of marginalization have also emphasized the importance of experiential knowledge in understanding and deconstructing oppressive systems (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). As bell hooks reminds us, "critical pedagogies of liberation...necessarily embrace experience, confessions and testimony as relevant ways of knowing, as important, vital dimensions of any learning process" (hooks, 1985, p. 88-89). Integrating trans voices and experiences into teacher education courses is an important step in humanizing trans people and gaining a deep understanding of the complexities of genderism. In line with Greytak and Kosciw's (2014) finding that knowing LGBT people is a statistically significant predictor of a teachers' frequency of intervention in anti-LGBT behavior, it is critically important for preservice teachers to meet and interact with trans people in order to gain a fuller picture of who trans people are.

Principle 4: Visibility and Invisibility—Within Language, Academic Discourse, and Curriculum— is Central to Understanding Trans.

Language is a powerful tool in understanding what is valued in a particular culture. In the English language, gender dichotomy is baked into nearly all of the ways we describe people: he or she, husband or wife, aunt or uncle. It has only been very recently that English has colloquially expanded to include words to accurately explain and identify individuals who are genderless, gender-fluid, genderqueer, and/or non-binary. The Merriam-Webster dictionary has, surprisingly, been fairly responsive to new gender-related terminology, adding 'cisgender', 'genderqueer', and the gender-neutral honorific 'Mx.' in 2016-17, and singular 'they' as a

pronoun for non-binary people is currently on their ‘Words We’re Watching’ list, and may be added soon (Chokshi, 2016). Presently, the lack of multi-gender language in mainstream gender discourse enhances the feeling of invisibility among transgender persons. As Riki Wilchins states, “all aspects of gender that are not named are also assumed not to exist—to be make-believe” (Wilchins, 2004, p. 39). This linguistic failing is more prominent for non-binary individuals who identify as neither woman nor man, as there are no widely-used and accepted singular pronouns that accurately and appropriately refer to non-binary individuals. This means that each individual who uses non-conventional pronouns such as singular ‘they’ or ‘ze’ must make the decision whether and how to inform people in their lives about their correct pronoun. The initial conversation being stressful enough, non-binary trans people must also be ready for others to use the wrong pronoun, intentionally or not. Being mis-pronounced or mis-gendered is considered a microaggression against trans people, and can cause psychological distress, strained relationships, anxiety, depression and isolation (Nordmarken, 2014).

Beyond the words themselves, we can look at discourse as informed by larger social discourses or ideologies. Using an understanding informed by Foucault (1972) and Fairclough (1992), we can understand discourse as “broad constitutive systems of meaning that can be seen as *carrying* ideology” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 6, emphasis original). According to Foucault, discourse—as a set of meaning-making practices that produce knowledge—is a form of power. The primary medium through which discursive power (as opposed to repressive or administrative power) operates is through production: “discursive power produces specific kinds of individuals, with specific bodies, pleasures, and sexes” (Wilchins, 2004, p. 62). One way in which discursive power operates is through discipline, which Foucault (1972) recognizes as the ways in which we regulate, police, and internalize dominant and restrictive discourses. There is some disagreement

among critical and poststructural theorists regarding the role of agency within and against dominant discourses. When considering the experiences of transgender people, it makes most sense to understand discourses as positioning individuals in different ways, but at the same time, individuals have some measure of agency in order to contest or resist a particular discursive positioning.

In her book *Gendered Discourses*, Jane Sunderland describes what gendered discourses are and how they can be identified and named. In other words, Sunderland is looking at “what people do with language as regards gender” (p. 17). She uses both empirical and theoretical studies to demonstrate gendered discourse analysis. For example, the gender differences discourse, identified by Sunderland (2004), relies on the idea that gender is predicated on biological difference, and that gender is/must be dichotomous. Other dominant gender-related discourses include the discourse of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980) where cisgender women internalize the suggestion that heterosexuality and marriage are inevitable and ideal. We also see discourses that conflate sexuality and gender identity, and discourses that presume gender expression is indicative of one’s sexual orientation. These discourses carry dangerous and inaccurate ideological assumptions about gender and sexuality. These discourses must be interrupted, unlearned and transformed if our goal is social justice (Kumashiro, 2000). Many discourses related to gender have potential to cause harm. This harm could come in many forms – material, symbolic, psychological, and/or social. Similar in some sense to curriculum theory and the null curriculum, a discourse can be damaging not just through what is said, but also what is not said.

Conclusion

The theories outlined in this chapter have several similarities. All theoretical paradigms presented here look at how systemic structures and systems of power influence people's everyday lives, and vice versa. All problematize the idea of 'normal' or 'natural' and instead intentionally center those on the margins. All look at the ways in which ideology and hegemony are used by dominant groups to oppress and regulate. And finally, all are concerned with transforming society and advancing social justice. However, I have outlined reasons why feminist and queer theory, while critically influential in their own way, are independently inadequate to frame this study. In addition, few transgender theorists take up issues of teacher education curriculum, and few curriculum theorists take up transgender issues. The present study is poised at the intersection of transgender theoretical frameworks and critical curriculum studies. One of the significant contributions I hope to make with this dissertation is in merging the practices of scholarship in each of these fields. In the next chapter, I detail the present study's methods of data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Data collection was conducted in two phases, with the first being a nationwide syllabus solicitation followed by a summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) of the transgender content in the syllabi. The second phase was a multiple case study comprising four of the syllabi submitted during Phase 1. Data for Phase 2 included a survey with Likert-scale and open-ended questions, a one-on-one interview, and a group interview/dialogue.

Methodological Commitments

I approach this study within an interpretivist paradigm (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012), meaning that my research does not intend to objectively measure truth, but instead attends to questions of process and relationality. Through this study I intend to generate knowledge through understanding participants' lived realities, experiences, and understandings. I intend to contextualize and interpret, rather than generalize and predict. In contrast to modernist or positivist standpoints on research, I believe that my own values, experiences and beliefs influence my methodology, my data analysis, and my interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Going further, my research has a clear focus on social justice, liberation and empowerment, and these elements of my methodology are rooted in a critical theory paradigm. It follows, then, that qualitative research methods are the most appropriate manner through which I explore and investigate my research questions.

I am utilizing a qualitative research approach for this study because I intend to "obtain in-depth understandings about the way things are, why they are that way, and how the participants in the context perceive them" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 12). As a qualitative researcher, I aim to be reflexive, engaged, mindful, and holistic in my approach to both the data and the participants (Patton, 2002). I do not see myself as an objective observer; rather, my subjectivity,

past experiences, and theoretical commitments undoubtedly impact my research. It is my goal to provide thick description of the cases that I study. In every way possible, I intend to integrate humanizing (Paris & Winn, 2013) and desire-centered (Tuck & Yang, 2013) practices into my work. Following the suggestion of Patton (2000), I approached the interviews with a commitment to seeking “vicarious understanding without judgment by showing openness, sensitivity, respect, awareness, and responsiveness” (p. 40). Some of the interview questions I asked were specifically intended to engage in reciprocity, community building and knowledge co-construction (Paris & Winn, 2013). In the individual interviews, I asked participants, ‘how can this study help you? What do you want to see come out of this study?’ and in the group interview I asked, ‘what are our next steps, as a group of instructors committed to transforming teacher education?’ In this way, I worked to break down the researcher/participant binary and instead, “engage in a meaningful dialogic spiral based on storying, listening, and reciprocating” (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2013, p. 33). Because I am interested in the context surrounding curricular choices, and because my research questions are asking how and why questions, using a case study method seemed most appropriate.

According to Merriam (1998), case studies should be particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. In this sense, a case study project should describe a particular phenomenon and provide insight into the context of that phenomenon. Using a case study research method is appropriate to my study because I am attempting to describe a particular phenomenon, that being the inclusion of transgender curriculum in teacher education courses. Case studies are also concerned with a particular bounded system; in this study, the teacher education courses are the bounded system and the curricula within those courses is the unit of analysis.

While the primary form of inquiry of this study is a multiple case study, principles of participatory action research also heavily informed my study design. Participatory action research (PAR) values cooperation and collaboration between researchers and participants, diminishing the hierarchical assumptions of positivist paradigms where the researcher is the sole producer and controller of knowledge. PAR at its core is interested in utilizing research as a means toward social justice, and intends to empower both the participants and the researcher. The principles of participatory action research can be seen most clearly in the current study design through the group interview.

Desire-Centered Research

For this research study, I was committed to desire-centered rather than damage- or victim-centered research frameworks. For example, instead of asking, what are instructors doing wrong, or how are instructors creating trans-antagonistic environments, my research questions instead looked at what instructors are already doing well, and how instructors are creating what I call ‘gender expansive’ environments. I intentionally avoided avoiding damage-centered research which operates under the assumption that “harm must be recorded or proven in order to convince an outside adjudicator that reparations are deserved” (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 226-227).

Examples of damage-centered research can be seen quite plainly in the introduction chapter and literature review to this dissertation. Damage-centered frameworks dominate empirical research on transgender topics, and some would say that this is for a good reason – that genderism and other forms of oppression are deeply affecting the daily lives of transgender people. However, I also agree with Eve Tuck & K. Wayne Yang (2013), who suggest that

this [damage-centered] theory of change is both colonial and flawed, because it relies upon Western notions of power as scarce and concentrated, and because it requires

disenfranchised communities to position themselves as both singularly defective and powerless to make change...in many cases, communities are left with a narrative that tells them that they are broken. (Tuck & Yang, 2013, p. 227)

In summary, my methodology stems from a desire to advance social transformation and gender justice, to build community and learn from each other, while being reflective of my own positionality. I view the individuals who worked with me on this study to be participants that I learned with and from, rather than subjects whom I studied. I was intentional about using a desire-based framework that focused on what are people doing well, instead of what they are doing wrong. In doing so, I intentionally resisted the dominant pain narrative (Tuck and Yang, 2013) and instead considered how to pursue a study that is interested in understanding transgender people not as broken, but whole inside a broken system. In the next section, I outline the means with which I solicited and gathered data for this study.

Methods: Data Collection

In an attempt to understand the context of trans in teacher education, my research is a two-fold inquiry. First, I explore the transgender themes or issues that teacher educators are including in their curricula. Second, using a multiple case study design, I investigate the context of instructors' curricular choices. This might include institutional and/or programmatic support or constraints, access to trans resources and texts, and/or the instructors' own understanding and experience with transgender issues. Finally, I work to develop a network of educators committed to trans issues in teacher education. The data for this study will be centered around the intended curriculum for teacher education courses. In accordance with case study research design, I used the following methods of data collection:

1. Syllabus solicitation

2. Surveys with Likert-scale and open-ended questions
3. One-on-one interviews
4. Group interview/dialogue

Syllabus Solicitation

The medium through which curriculum for a course is first made explicit is through the course syllabus. Most undergraduate syllabi provide a course description, various course policies, and a course schedule including readings and assignments. Through reading syllabi, one can get a basic sense for the epistemological commitments of the instructor (or the creator of the syllabus), what topics the course will cover and in what order, and what voices/perspectives are present in the readings. Syllabi, then, are the most direct, non-invasive, and descriptive data source for answering my first question, “what transgender themes or issues do teacher educators include in their curricula?”

For Phase 1 of the study, I solicited syllabi from instructors in teacher education programs. Instructors could be full-time faculty, adjuncts/fixed-term, or graduate students. It was important not to limit participation to full-time faculty because I recognize that part-time instructors and graduate students provide a substantial amount of the instructional labor in higher education. I solicited syllabi through relevant listservs, newsletters, social media, and direct requests to my personal and professional networks (see Appendix A). In this nationwide search, I attempted to gather the widest possible range of syllabi; the institution type or program type did not matter (public/private, land grant or liberal arts, etc.), as long as the course was explicitly intended for pre-service teachers (see Appendix B for the Call for Participants). The courses could be required or electives, with the understanding that elective courses may not signify what

students are required to learn, but at the same time acknowledging that much of the justice-oriented work in teacher education programs is pushed to the margins.

Limitations of Syllabi

Because I am relying on syllabi for phase one of the study, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of syllabi as the primary source for understanding the curriculum. Syllabi are created for numerous purposes, such as acting as a ‘contract’ of sorts between instructor and student; delineating course objectives and relevant institutional policies; acting as an archival record for purposes of accreditation, etc. Some would argue that one cannot get an accurate picture of what happens in the classroom, or what students actually learn, by looking exclusively at the syllabus. The enacted curriculum may be more or less equity-oriented than what is intentionally listed on the syllabus, and some instructors may feel political pressure to include or not include certain topics on their syllabi. In this sense, tension exists between the intended and the implemented/enacted curriculum. I recognize that this concern and limitation is valid. In this study, I do not attempt to determine what students actually learned or what specific pedagogical moves an instructor makes while teaching transgender content. My emphasis is focused on the intended curriculum itself, the choices that instructors make about including or excluding particular topics, readings, or assignments, and the context surrounding those choices.

In addition to syllabi inadequately reflecting the enacted curriculum, there are also ways in which syllabi can reflect common practices within higher education that go unexamined and perpetuate harm. One such practice is requiring instructors to include within their syllabi various statements, policies, and requirements that they have not been adequately trained to implement or enact. With regard to transgender identities in the classroom, some universities now require or encourage instructors to include a statement about name and pronoun changes in their courses—

see Texas A&M, University of the Pacific, and Lake Forest College as examples. As with other syllabus statements such as disability accommodations, the syllabus might claim that the instructor will affirm, acknowledge, and accommodate students' needs—without the instructor even knowing how to. I experienced this unexamined practice during my time as a graduate student.

During the last year of my Ph.D. program, a department administrator announced that all syllabi needed to include a statement regarding transgender students, including the following wording: *This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name and/or gender pronoun.* This requirement came after I had been an out trans student in the program for four years, and in my experience, some instructors had not taken the time or made the effort to remember my alternate name or correct pronouns after I informed them. I encountered several instructors who were well-meaning, but lacked an understanding of how to be affirming of trans identities in their language, their curriculum, or their pedagogy. To my knowledge, no department-wide training had been offered to any instructors prior to this syllabus requirement, other than the support and training I had provided to instructors of one course I was involved in teaching and co-coordinating. Considering all of this, the new requirement both surprised and upset me. It was particularly upsetting because the administrator who sent the message had misgendered me in front of my peers and colleagues on countless occasions, and when I met with her about these continued microaggressions, she claimed that it was her 'linguistic training' that prevented her from using the correct pronoun. And yet, this administrator had not reached out to me to ask how the department can best prepare or train instructors to affirm trans identities. I felt as though expecting instructors to add this language to their syllabus without any training on what it means,

not to mention the lack of administrators modeling this expectation, is just as damaging and dangerous as not adding the language at all.

Data Analysis: Syllabi

In response to my nationwide call, I received 10 syllabi from 9 instructors. One of the syllabi was from a PhD-level course not intended for pre-service teachers, and therefore that syllabus was rejected for not meeting the criteria. Of the remaining nine syllabi, five courses were required for Education majors, and four were electives in Education programs (see Table 4.1). All the elective courses focused specifically on queer and/or LGBTQ topics in education. The required courses were slightly more varied: three dealt with diversity, pluralism, and/or diverse contexts, one was a social foundations course, and another was a curriculum theory course. I did not receive any syllabi from content methods courses such as Math Education, Science Education, or English Education.

	Course Type	Course Topic
Syllabus 1	Required	Social foundations
Syllabus 2	Required	Diverse contexts
Syllabus 3	Required	Diverse contexts
Syllabus 4	Elective	Queer, trans and feminist theory
Syllabus 5	Elective	LGBTQ topics
Syllabus 6	Required	Curriculum theory
Syllabus 7	Elective	Queer topics
Syllabus 8	Elective	LGBTQ topics
Syllabus 9	Required	Diverse contexts

Table 4.1
Characteristics of Collected Syllabi

The first step in analyzing the syllabi was creating a descriptive matrix (see Appendix B). The descriptive data I collected here allowed me to get a sense for how these instructors are situating trans within their course readings and assignments. Specifically, I recorded the location of transgender topics within the course, including the week during the semester where trans

topics are discussed and what comes before and after on the course schedule. I also noted how many class periods are set aside to discuss trans topics, how many transgender-related readings were present during the whole semester, and what readings or lesson/unit topics explicitly mention transgender or gender identity in the title.

After completing the descriptive matrix, I then used the information I collected there in two ways. First, I developed a list of topics present in the transgender-related readings from each syllabus. Examples of these topic categories include ‘gender identity development’, ‘student negative school experiences’, ‘families with transgender children’, and ‘heterosexism/heteronormativity’. I combined these categories together into larger themes, including ‘school context’, ‘personal identity and interpersonal relations’, ‘structural/institutional influences’, and ‘activism and theory’. A full list of categories and themes for all transgender-related readings can be found in Appendix C. Second, I determined which syllabi met the criteria for gender-expansive, the characteristics of which I will explain next. From the syllabi that were submitted by instructors, I utilized purposeful sampling (Patton, 2000) to select cases for study that were illuminative of the gender-expansive criteria I had designed.

Analytical Framework: Development of Gender-Expansive Criteria

Gender-expansive is a term I am using to characterize readings and syllabi that not only expand thinking about gender, but are also particularly abundant in their coverage of transgender topics. I was inspired to use this term after finding Merriam-Webster’s definition of expansive to be particularly inspiring: “characterized by high spirits, generosity, or readiness to talk” and “characterized by richness, abundance” (Expansive, 2017). I reviewed all required readings on all syllabi to determine whether the syllabus met two or more gender-expansive criteria. In doing

this, I used my prior knowledge of some readings, and if I was not familiar with a reading, I found it through the university library system in order to review the content.

The gender-expansive selection criteria I developed were informed by reading a large body of conceptual and empirical literature, and my own work with pre-service teachers. I developed the criteria by placing social justice as a central aim of teacher preparation, and thinking about what course readings can do to work toward social justice and against all oppressive systems, and genderism in particular. With this in mind, I developed four criteria for gender-expansive syllabi. The first criteria is Structural, informed by scholars such as Alan Johnson (2001), Iris Young (2009), and Chase Catalano and Davey Shlasko (2013), whose work has illuminated the structures, levels and implications of systemic oppression. From these and other scholars we understand that inequality just doesn't occur at random or as an aberration, it is an effect of a variety of measures, methods, policies and practices. These structural forces are rooted in the social construction of normality and create particular ideological climates. Examples of the Structural criteria would be readings that address transgender oppression at institutional, systemic and/or cultural levels. It is important for pre-service teachers to understand the structural factors influencing the trans experience because these structures create the foundation for genderism and transphobia.

The second criteria is Humanizing, informed by scholars such as Django Paris and Maisha T. Winn (2013), bell hooks (1984, 1994), and Eve Tuck (2013), whose work reminds us that we must bring the margins into the center of our research and teaching, working collaboratively to amplify voices and build relationships. A humanizing pedagogy “respects and uses the reality, history, and perspectives of students as an integral part of educational practice” (Bartolome, 1994, p. 173). Examples of humanizing curricular materials would be readings that

are written by trans people, readings that provide a more complex and nuanced view of trans life, and/or readings that employ a desire-based rather than pain- or victim-based perspective. As witnessed in the literature review provided in this paper, the majority of research about transgender people, to date, has been conducted by cisgender people, through a cisgender lens. Trans people writing about their own experiences and trans people leading their own research studies offers us a different, potentially more nuanced, and more humanizing perspective.

The third criteria is Intersectional, informed by scholars such as Kimberle Crenshaw (1995), Audre Lorde (1984), and Eli Clare (2015) who remind us that systems of oppression intersect in ways that influence various groups and communities in complex ways. Understanding that the dominant discourse regarding any subject is crafted and controlled by those with privilege, it is important to recognize that we must not limit our understanding of trans to only those individuals who are privileged in every other way. Nicolazzo (2016) points to the ways genderism interacts with racism, misogyny, and other systems of oppression, affecting black trans women in extreme and often violent ways; the majority of trans people killed each year are trans women of color (Nicolazzo, 2016). Examples of intersectional materials could be readings that address the experiences or needs of trans women of color or trans people with disabilities.

The fourth criteria is Justice-oriented, informed by scholars such as Sonia Nieto (2000), Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2004), and Sensoy and DiAngelo (2015), who remind us that recognizing and interrogating oppressive structures is just the first step in transformative change. Justice-oriented materials include that which provides tangible suggestions for actions, or that which frames difference as a beneficial asset. This criteria is an important one because it builds upon the theoretical features of the other three criteria and moves them into praxis, or the

combination of theory and practice. It is not just important for pre-service teachers to understand issues of transgender oppression in theoretical terms, but also to have an opportunity to learn tangible actions they can take as individuals, community members, and future teachers.

Individual and collective agency and the power of the people are key features in any struggle for social justice.

With these four criteria in mind, I determined which syllabi met two or more criteria and moved into Phase 2 of the study. Two or more criteria were required because, as informed by Freire, we understand that action must be combined with dialogic communication and consciousness raising in order to create a humanizing praxis (1996); in the same way, readings on structural oppression, for example, may be good and helpful by themselves, but we cannot move toward true liberation without some combination of structural, humanizing, intersectional, and justice-oriented curricula.

Criteria	Examples
Structural	Readings that address oppression at institutional, systemic, and/or cultural levels.
Humanizing	Readings that are written by trans people, and/or readings that provide a complex, nuanced and/or positive view of trans life.
Intersectional	Readings that address the experiences or needs of trans women of color, trans people with disabilities, etc.
Justice-Oriented	Readings which provides tangible suggestions for actions.

Table 4.2

Criteria for Gender-Expansive Syllabi

Phase 2 Data Collection: Surveys and Interviews

Six of the nine syllabi submitted to this study were found to meet two or more of the gender-expansive criteria listed above. Two of these syllabi were submitted by the same instructor, so there were five instructors with gender-expansive syllabi. I communicated with

each instructor for these six syllabi and requested their participation in the second phase of the study. Four of the five instructors agreed to participate in the next phase of the study.

The first step of data collection for the next phase of the study was conducting a pre-interview survey to gather specific information about the context of the course itself, such as average enrollment, grade level of students, frequency of course offering, and a brief history of the course. In addition, through this survey I asked participants about their perceived level of support or constraint for including transgender topics in their course on a 5-point Likert scale. Specifically, I asked how the course structure itself was supportive or constraining; how their department was supportive or constraining; and how the institution was supportive or constraining. After each Likert-scale question about the extent of support and constraint, participants were provided text boxes to provide more detail about supports and constraints. I used this information to prepare for their one-on-one interviews, allowing their survey responses to inform interview questions relevant to each participant's unique context.

One-on-One Interviews

There were two specific areas I explored in participant interviews. First, I wanted to gain an understanding of how the participants are conceptualizing, making sense of, or defining relevant terminology, such as gender, transgender, queer, or heteronormativity. In my own work, I have found that these terms are sometimes used interchangeably but other times they are not; sometimes they encompass transgender identity or transgender oppression and sometimes they do not. Instead of assuming I know what they mean when they say 'transgender', for example, I directly asked the question. I discussed the meanings of 'gender' and 'transgender' with all participants, and added other conceptual questions based on each participant's unique syllabi. For example, some instructors used the term 'queer' in the title of their course, and so we had a

conversation about what they mean by queer, and how transgender fits into that conceptualization. Another syllabus did not use the term ‘queer’ but instead used terms such as ‘patriarchy’ and ‘heteronormativity’, and so we discussed what those terms mean to the instructor and how transgender fits into those constructs.

The second purpose of the one-on-one interviews was to dive deeper into the context of their course, including syllabus development, how they chose and organized the readings, assignment details, and other elements of their classroom context such as how students responded to trans content. For each interview, I chose particular lessons or weeks from their syllabi to focus in on, those being the lessons or weeks that centered transgender topics most heavily. These areas of the interview tended to be a bit broader for the instructors who taught elective courses where the entire semester was dedicated to LGBTQ topics, versus the required courses who typically had a much smaller percentage of trans-related content. In total, the interviews included approximately eight questions and lasted 60-90 minutes. The interviews were conducted and recorded using Zoom software.

Group Interview/Dialogue

After completing all four individual interviews, I brought the participants together (in virtual space) for a group discussion. I chose to conduct a group discussion as part of this study for several reasons. First and most importantly, I felt that the study provided an opportunity to connect instructors from across the nation together so that we could learn, support, and potentially collaborate with each other. Conducting a group interview was integral to the humanizing and collaborative aspect of study; I considered this group conversation as an opportunity to “make space for people to engage in personal, reflexive conversations that might initially occur because of research, but not for the sake of research” (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2013,

p. 40). In other words, I wanted to decenter my own authority as the researcher and allow participants to connect with others who are similarly committed to advancing transgender inclusion in teacher education. I also wanted to provide an opportunity for the participants to counteract the feelings of isolation that often come with being the only one, or one of the few, individuals within a given department or school that is passionate about these topics.

The group interview gave me and the participants a chance to share positive experiences in teaching trans, ideas about what needs to happen next in order to move teacher education in a gender-expansive direction, and an opportunity to share resources such as readings, syllabi and assignments. To this end, in preparation for the group discussion, I created and shared a Google Drive folder including all participants' syllabi (with their consent), and an editable document with the group interview questions where we documented our hopes for future action.

The second reason I chose to conduct a group interview was in order to strengthen the validity of my data. In conjunction with the syllabi, survey, and one-on-one interview, the group discussion provided further insights into the conceptualization of gender and contextualization of the instructors' curriculum. I was able to follow up with some of the comments the participants made in our earlier one-on-one interview, and participants had the opportunity to share their experiences with others. The purpose of the group interview was not only to collect data, but to also share resources and experiences, and build a community of support for educators committed to trans issues in teacher education, since we are often geographically and institutionally isolated.

Group interviews have been found to produce "data rich in detail that is often difficult to achieve with other research methods, because participants built on each other's ideas and comments to provide in-depth and value-added insights" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This was certainly true within our group. Our discussion was guided by a set of five questions, but the

group was lively and dialogic, and the participants ended up asking each other questions about each other's experience, or what they think or how they feel about a particular topic or concerns. Although I facilitated the conversation in the sense that I moved the conversation along to various questions, I also answered many of the interview questions, provided details of my personal and professional life, and affirmed the experiences of others in an attempt to create a dialogic spiral, where the "process of listening and speaking co-creates an area of trust between speakers – the space between" (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2013, p. 30). Each individual, including myself, was given time to listen and respond to each question and to each other. See Appendix D for one-on-one and group interview questions.

Data Analysis: Interviews

After I conducted each interview, I created research memos reflecting our conversations and noting any particularly significant or compelling stories from each participant. These memos informed my first manual pre-coding of the interview transcripts once they were complete. I divided the coding of interviews into two cycles. During the first cycle of coding, I utilized descriptive coding (Saldana, 2013), also known as topic coding, to assign labels to chunks of data that in some way responded to my research questions. I chose a descriptive coding method because the study explores epistemological questions and explores participant actions, processes, and perceptions (Saldana, 2013). Questions that I considered as I coded were, what specific decisions, choices, or strategies are the participants employing? How do the participants talk about, characterize, and understand concepts such as gender, transgender, queer, etc.? What unique perspectives or experiences do these participants bring to the topic? I kept in mind that each case is special and unique, and I was committed to respecting and capturing details within each case before and during the cross-case analysis.

Together with the data from the individual interviews, I then coded the group interview transcript, looking for contextual insights and nuances that were not present in the syllabi alone. After the first round of coding all interviews separately, I combined all interviews in the second round of coding, looking for cross-case similarities and differences and additional insights provided by the group discussion. I looked at how each participant answered the same question, and how each participant's responses were reflective of their unique context. Some of the codes were informed by my research questions, such as 'defining gender' or 'local context', and some codes were inductively applied based on the insights of each interview, such as 'transitory labor' and 'previous teaching experiences'. I coded all interviews by hand first, and then inputted my hand-written codes into NVivo for further organization and analysis. Using NVivo, I combined the inductive codes into larger categories or themes: Class and Syllabus, Context, and Dispositions and Experiences. I distilled the data into Findings chapters and sent these chapters to the participants for their review and feedback. Three of the four participants responded, suggesting no changes or additions.

Researcher Positionality

In this study and in all of my research endeavors, I strive to be reflexive; this includes acknowledging and naming aspects of my identity, experiences, and positionality that impact my perspective and my work. Daley (2007) suggests that "reflexivity about our own social positioning is necessary as a means to invoke a critical reflection on the ways we bring to the research our own position of privilege, our vulnerabilities, and ideological commitments" (p. 201). A researcher's positionality impacts everything about the study, from its conceptualization to how the data is interpreted and presented. In this section on positionality, I provide three vignettes that situate my current positionality and perspectives on gender.

The first story takes place in 2009, when I was pursuing an MA in Higher Education/Foundations of Education. The moment I wish to highlight occurred during a Multicultural Education course, taught by a well-known multicultural education scholar. I admit, perhaps it was naïve of me to assume that a unit on ‘gender’ in a multicultural education course in 2009 would include transgender issues. It was my first course on the subject and I had no basis of comparison. But my partner was undergoing medical transition and I was re-evaluating my own gender identity at the same time. So I approached the instructor and requested that we also talk about transgender issues, in addition to women’s issues. To her credit, she did respond to this request. Unfortunately, the additional ‘transgender’ curriculum was a distorted and inaccurate web video regarding Chaz Bono’s gender transition. In the discussion that followed, the instructor first referred to Chaz correctly as ‘he’, then ‘he or she’, and stuck with ‘she’ for the rest of the discussion. The instructor told us that there’s “trouble with these issues” in schools but didn’t clarify what she meant by that. She suggested that teachers need to ask themselves if they are “open to that kind of lifestyle” in their students, and then if, as a teacher, you choose to ignore it, that was okay. With that blatant disregard, I left the room and spent the remainder of class time crying in my car. I offer this story as a flash point that ignited my desire to pursue this PhD, and a moment of realization that teacher education must be better so that students like me don’t end up in tears over an ill-conceived curriculum.

The second story I wish to share occurred about five years ago. I was staying in a cabin on the outskirts of Cleveland, nursing and supporting two trans friends who were there to get ‘top’ surgery (double mastectomy). One morning over breakfast, I told one of the guys that I actually didn’t identify as a woman or a man—something, at that time, I had not admitted to anyone other than my partner. He did not affirm my identity or inquire more about it. Instead, he

immediately asked me, “why don’t you identify as a woman, just a *different kind* of woman?” He argued that by keeping my biological body but not identifying as a woman, I was doing a disservice to the feminist cause. Though I was personally offended by his suggestion, I understood in some sense what he meant; if we continue to understand ‘woman’ and ‘man’ to mean very specific things, we continue upholding that strict dichotomy and make it difficult for gender diversity to thrive. With more women and men pushing the bounds of what it means to be women and men, perhaps more and more people will eschew or ignore the socially constructed boundaries altogether. On this, I agree. I think it is important for us to witness many different kinds, types, looks, embodiments of ‘woman’ and ‘man.’ The problem, for me, is that I feel a deep discomfort with seeing myself as a woman. The truth is, if I were at all comfortable with the identity of ‘woman,’ I would claim it; how much easier my life would be if I were a cisgender woman whose gender expression was a bit more masculine! But that is simply not the case. At my core, in my head and in my heart, I feel no connection or attachment to being a ‘woman.’ It is not a refusal to be feminine; in fact, I highly value femininity and embody many attributes traditionally considered ‘feminine’ such as being sensitive, nurturing, and quiet. It is simply how I know myself to be, and nothing about my body or the way others gender me will change that. It made me appreciate that each person should have agency to define their own identity regardless of what body they were born with, or what gender expression to embody.

This leads to a final vignette regarding gender identity. When I attended AERA a few years back, I was thrilled to meet other female-assigned but gender non-conforming people. As a group of us gathered outside a conference room after a particularly queer/trans session, one of the presenters – who came out as trans during his presentation- walked up to us and said, “I found my tribe!” This phrase lifted my heart and made me feel as if I had finally found some of

‘my people.’ We exchanged contact information and promised to keep in touch. I connected with several of them on Facebook soon after, where I had the opportunity to get to know them better. Soon after, one individual—whose gender expression was markedly more masculine than my own, but who identifies as a woman—posted a link to an article written by a cisgender woman decrying the recent ‘trend’ among butch women moving to identify as ‘agender’ or ‘non-binary.’ The author argued that this ‘trend’ somehow weakened ‘butch’ as an identity category and created a rift in the lesbian/queer community. As a non-binary, agender person myself, I tried to explain to my AERA acquaintance that identifying as such shouldn’t be considered a ‘phase’ or a ‘trend’ as this insinuates that such an identity is taken on without much deliberation or forethought. For me and for other non-binary people I know, it is a constant struggle for others to recognize and respect our humanity. She fervently disagreed; she was very invested in maintaining ‘butch’ as a broad term for female-assigned but masculine-presenting individuals, and she did not see a need for gender categories beyond woman and man.

In both two final vignettes, I have shared encounters with individuals who on the surface seem to align with me ideologically or theoretically, but digging deeper reveals discontinuity in our fundamental understandings of identity categories and the possibilities therein. I include these stories not to discount their worth or validity; quite the opposite. I present them as two valid ways of thinking that have both challenged and informed my own thinking on the issue of gender identity. These two individuals, and many others, have helped me to clarify and strengthen my framework for understanding my own gender identity, as well as the concept of gender identity on a larger scale. I recognize that the way I conceptualize, theorize, or otherwise discuss gender may be different from others, and I have come to the understanding that there is room—within theoretical discussions as well as lived experiences—for both agender people and

butch women, for both non-binary people and *different kinds* of women. I do not see identity politics, or gender politics broadly, as a zero-sum game.

Of course, gender is not the only aspect of my identity that influences my work. Perhaps the most influential aspect of my identity to this work, outside my gender, is my Whiteness. I recognize that White privilege is at work in my life, and as frequently as possible, I work with determination as an anti-racist ally. I also know that my Whiteness is a weakness; I know very little about the complex ways that people of color and people of non-European cultures conceptualize or make sense of gender. My understanding of gender, and of masculinity and femininity, is situated within colonial/Western ways of thinking. As Susan Stryker (2006) eloquently notes, “‘gender,’ as it is lived, embodied, experienced, performed, and encountered, is more complex and varied than can be accounted for by the currently dominant binary sex/gender ideology of Eurocentric modernity” (p. 3). Various non-Western cultures use different terms to describe forms of gender non-conformity, some even recognizing third or fourth genders. Within U.S. borders, for example, the Navajo, Zuni, Lakota, and Sioux nations recognize Two Spirit as a third gender, while the Mohave nation recognizes four genders. Outside the U.S., several other countries, such as India, Pakistan, Germany and Australia, allow citizens to legally identify as a third gender. While recognizing the validity and importance of cultural differences in understanding gender, this research study is largely limited in focus to dominant U.S. categories and conceptualizations of gender. I will attempt to mitigate this limitation whenever possible, with the help of my committee, my participants, and other respected friends and colleagues.

CHAPTER FIVE: PHASE 1 FINDINGS

This chapter will illuminate findings that respond to my first research question, “What transgender topics are currently included in Teacher Education course syllabi?” I asked this question because I wanted to know what readings or other curricula instructors were including in their courses to talk about the topic of trans. To answer this question, I analyzed the required readings in all collected syllabi to determine the type and frequency of topics covered in their transgender-related readings.

Nine instructors responded to the nationwide call for syllabi containing transgender content. In the four courses that were focused on queer or LGBTQ issues in schooling, transgender topics were dispersed throughout the syllabus. In all five syllabi from required courses, readings and/or lessons on transgender topics were placed near the end of the semester. One might assume that topics presented near the beginning of the semester are ones that the instructor intends to thread throughout the semester, and there may also be an expectation that students cumulatively approach each topic; for example, an instructor might cover race first and then discuss social class with an eye towards its intersection with race, and then the instructor might discuss disability within an eye towards its intersection with race and social class, and so on. This means that students who take courses with this format may not have an opportunity to integrate transgender topics into the course’s prior curriculum which typically consisted of race, social class, language, and disability.

Required Readings: Quantities and Qualities

In total, the nine syllabi required 410 readings. The number of readings per course ranged from 8 to 102, with an average of 41 required readings per course. Of those 410 required readings across all nine syllabi, 72 explicitly mentioned transgender, gender identity, or gender

nonconformity in the title. The syllabi designated as gender-expansive in Phase 2 of the study accounted for 68 of the trans-related readings, while the other syllabi accounted for four of the readings. I coded these 72 readings based on prominent topics in each reading. Through inductive coding of the readings, I developed a list of 20 topics. I combined these topics into major themes in the readings: 1) School context, 2) Personal identity, 3) Structural/institutional influences, and 4) Activism & theory. Figure 5.1 below displays a sunburst chart showing the major themes and topics represented under those themes, with the size of each theme and topic relevant to the number of readings represented. See Appendix B for the full Syllabus Matrices.

School Context

Under the theme of school context, seven readings focused on student negative school experiences, including readings focused on LGBT students coping with school violence (Grossman, Haney, Edwards, Aless, Aron, & Howell, 2009), peer victimization (Aragon, Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2014), elementary and secondary school climates (GLSEN, 2012), and other risks and challenges faced by transgender youth in schools (Biegel, 2010; Meyer, 2015; Wyss, 2004). Three readings focused specifically on transgender topics in the elementary school context (Payne & Smith, 2014; Ryan, Patraw, & Bednar, 2013; Slesaransky-Poe, Ruzzi, & Stanley, 2013), addressing questions of whether young children are ready for these topics, and how teachers might approach them. Four readings spoke to trans-related issues in teaching practice, including a review of LGBT issues in teacher education (Quinn & Meiners, 2011), suggestions for a gender justice framework for teachers (Travers, 2014), and understanding teachers' reactions to gendered harassment (Meyer, 2008). The fourth reading under the topic of teaching practice (Gilbert, 2016), offers a transgender youth transitioning in high school as an



Figure 5.1

Themes and Topics within Required Readings

example of “times when gayness has emerged as controversy and pushed against the limits of educational thought and practice” (p. 26). While this reading does focus on an example of transgender youth in schools, it does so by describing it as an issue of “gayness” alongside examples of same-sex marriage debates and representations of sexuality within teacher education. While it is possible that the transgender youth may have also identified as gay, the author muddled the waters between gayness and transness, because medically transitioning is not a direct reflection of one’s sexuality. Readings focused on school or district recommendations accounted for seven of the readings under the theme of School Context. These readings included GLSEN’s model policies for bullying enumerating anti-discrimination policies and state and school district guidelines for supporting students and staff who are transgender. In addition, readings provided practical suggestions for working with transgender children (Luecke, 2011), decreasing LGBTQ bullying and harassment (Hillard, Love, Franks, Laris, & Coyle, 2014), and providing LGBTQ-responsive school counseling (Goodrich & Luke, 2009; Singh & Burnes, 2009).

Five readings talked about trans youth of color, although three of these readings were focused more broadly on LGBTQ youth of color, with only passing mentions of gender identity or trans youth (Bridges, 2007; Burdge, Licon, & Hyemingway, 2014; Diaz & Kosciw, 2009). Lance McCready’s article (2004) discusses the marginalization of gay and gender non-conforming black male students, and alternately refers to his participants as queer youth of color. McCready seems to be speaking about cisgender youth of color whose sexuality and gender expression might be considered queer or gender non-conforming, but he does not speak directly about trans youth. While numerous readings across syllabi discussed queer youth of color (see Kumashiro, 2001; Misa, 2001; Ressler, 2001), there was only one reading in any syllabus that

centered trans people of color (Singh, 2013). The scarcity of readings focused specifically on trans youth of color points to an urgent need for more research and scholarship focused on this multiply-oppressed and highly vulnerable community.

Trans youth resilience and/or resistance, and LGBT-inclusive sex education are the final two topics under the theme of School Context. The topic of resisting and showing resilience in the face of heteronormative systems was the focus of three readings (Cruz, 2011; Scourfield, Roen & McDermott, 2008; Singh, 2013). Only one syllabus included readings on LGBTQ sex education, including a study on LGBTQ youth perspectives on sexuality education (Gowen & Winges-Yanez, 2014) and three articles speaking to the importance of inclusive sex education (McGarry, 2013; Slater, 2013; Temblador, 2015).

Structural/Institutional Influences

Under the theme of structural/institutional influences, the family as an institution was most heavily represented. Across syllabi, numerous readings provided the perspective of the parents of transgender children, but not the children themselves (Beam, 2008; Nutt, 2015; Padawar, 2012; Spiegel, 2008). Four out of nine syllabi incorporated readings that discussed gender within other social institutions, such as Dean Spade's (2015) work on administrative violence and critical trans politics. Other institutional topics included gendered restrooms (Herman, 2013) and state surveillance of transgender bodies (Beauchamp, 2009).

Heterosexism or heteronormativity was also a popular topic under the theme of Structural and Institutional Influences. It was not always the case that readings on this topic included gender identity in addition to sexual orientation, and some readings included gender identity in a way that was ambiguous. For example, in Sumara and Davis' article entitled "Interrupting Heteronormativity: Toward a Queer Curriculum Theory", the authors note that they do not use

‘queer’ as an identity marker that represents LGBT identities, but instead as “a marker representing interpretive work that refuses...the cultural rewards afforded those whose public performances of self are contained within that narrow band of behaviors considered proper to a heterosexual identity” (p. 192). It is not clear whether this framing of heteronormativity as being related to “behaviors considered proper to a heterosexual identity” includes transgender people or not, as the authors’ focus is squarely on issues of sexuality and not gender identity.

An article by García and Slesaransky-Poe provides an understanding of heteronormativity that explicitly includes problematizing the gender binary, although not necessarily in a way that forwards transgender awareness. The authors provide a conceptual deconstruction of the connections between gender identity, gender expression and heteronormativity, forwarding the idea that “the gender binary serves to ensure that we participate in the expected patterns of “appropriate” heterosexuality and corresponding gender identity” (García & Slesaransky-Poe, 2010, p. 247). Although the authors say they intend to differentiate sex and gender, they use girl/woman interchangeably with female, and boy/man interchangeably with male. For example, they define ‘sex’ as “the biological and anatomical differences between women and men, that is, their genitalia” (p. 247) but also define the sex binary as “boy or girl” (p. 246), while later describing gender expressions as being ‘male’ or ‘female’ (p. 249). The authors define gender as the “social practices of femininity and masculinity”, and renounce the idea that femininity and masculinity are dichotomous opposites, suggesting that this false duality encourages homophobia (García & Slesaransky-Poe, 2010). However, the authors do not trouble the idea that a ‘male’ sex at birth should lead to a ‘boy’ and then a ‘man’, and the same for a ‘female’ sex at birth leading to a ‘girl’ and then a ‘woman’; instead, they assert this progression as a given. In this sense, the authors discuss only gender non-conforming behaviors among cisgender youth, and they do not

acknowledge or discuss transgender or non-binary gender identities in relation to heteronormativity.

Personal Identity

There were significantly fewer readings that covered topics relevant to personal identity, with a total of eight readings under this theme. Syllabus 6 covered this theme most abundantly, with readings on gender identity development for transgender individuals (American Psychology Association, 2011; Eliason & Schope, 2007; Olson, 2015), medical transition (Orr, et al., n.d.), gender dysphoria (American Psychology Association, 2013), pronouns (Shlasko, 2015), and microaggressions (Nordmarken, 2014). Overall, these readings were largely clinical in nature and tended to portray the experiences of trans men and trans women, with less attention paid to non-binary gender identities.

Activism and Theory

Finally, the majority of the readings under Activism and Theory derived from Syllabus 4—an elective course on queer, feminist and trans theory. Several of the readings in this category were written by transgender people, providing an element of experiential knowledge. For example, students read conceptual or theoretical pieces from Leslie Feinberg (2006) who wrote about transgender liberation, Eli Clare (2013) who wrote about the intersection between trans rights and disability rights, Kate Bornstein (2000) who wrote about gender outlaws, and Susan Stryker (2004, 2006) who discussed transgender studies. Another group of readings focused on the idea of gender borders and the tensions between feminist, queer, lesbian butch and trans identities including Halberstam (1998), Heyes (2003), Rubin (1992), Stryker (2004), and Whittle (2006).

In addition to identifying the themes and topics covered in each reading on the syllabi, I also wanted to determine whether any of the syllabi, taking the curriculum as a whole, met two or more gender-expansive criteria. The following section provides descriptions of syllabi that did not meet the gender-expansive criteria, and then I will discuss the syllabi that met the criteria.

Gender-Restrictive Syllabi

Syllabus 1 was a required course in Social Foundations of Education, offered at a state university in the Midwestern region of the U.S. The class met twice a week for 16 weeks, with topics including the history of public schooling, race, social class, ability, and education policy. There were four major assignments in the course: an educational autobiography, analytical response papers, a review of children's literature or young adult novel, and a final essay. The course had one week, containing two class sessions, on gender and sexuality. Syllabus 1 incorporated only one reading on transgender topics, and this reading emphasized the negative school experiences of LGBTQ youth (Grossman et al., 2009), where transgender participants were underrepresented compared to lesbian and gay participants.

Syllabus 2 was a required course focused on Cultural Diversity in Schooling. The course was offered at a state university on the West Coast. The course met once a week for 15 weeks with topics such as the role of culture in schooling, structural racism, immigration, religious and linguistic diversity, and culturally responsive pedagogy. There was one week dedicated to gender and sexual identities, and the placement was in the middle of the semester. Out of the 15-week course schedule, only one week included readings that centered lesbian and gay (with largely silent bisexual and transgender) topics, with readings discussing lesbian-led families, anti-gay comments in the classroom, and binary gender identity development in early education environments. The course schedule includes one week titled 'Gender and Sexual Identities', with

one reading called “Playing with Gender” (Pelo, 2005), but this reading describes gender identity development of kindergarten children and does not acknowledge or discuss transgender identities. Further, the Gender and Sexual Identities week was also the midterm, so the reflective journal typically due on reading topics was not required. This indicates that the students in the course may not have had an opportunity to reflect on or grapple with that week’s readings as they had to do with other areas of content. Interestingly, the instructor of Syllabus 2 included a graphic on the top of the first page of the syllabus, an image depicting a pink triangle with the university’s mascot in the middle of the triangle with its arms outstretched, with the words “LGBT Safe Space”. It is unknown whether the course, beyond the course schedule and readings, was really a ‘safe space’ for LGBT students in the class, or what that promise means to the instructor or the students. Although it is outside the scope of this study, I remain curious as to why the instructor believed that the course included transgender content; perhaps this is a situation where the syllabus does a particularly poor job of representing the enacted curriculum.

Syllabus 3 was a required course in Diverse Contexts in Education with a focus on school and community partnerships, offered at a state university in the Midwestern region of the U.S. The class met once a week for 16 weeks, with topics including family as a social institution, social class and poverty, culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum, linguistic diversity, and immigration. The assignments for the course included a self-identity and family study, an interview project, attendance at a parent-teacher conference, a community-based action project, and a book review. The course had one lesson entitled “What does gay mean? Complexities of trust and fear in school family partnerships”, but there were no required readings focused on transgender topics. The only trans inclusion noticeable from the syllabus was one of the optional books for the book review, from the perspective of the parent of a transgender child (Nutt, 2015).

	Gender-Expansive Syllabi								
						Case Study Participants			
Reading Topics (# of readings)	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9
SCHOOL CONTEXT (35)									
Student negative school experiences (7)	X							X	
Trans-inclusion in elementary curriculum (3)							X	X	
Education policy and practice (7)					X		X	X	
School recommendations (5)							X		
Experiences of trans youth of color (4)					X			X	
Trans youth resilience (3)						X		X	
Sex Education (4)								X	
School Support Structures (2)								X	
STRUCTURAL/INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCES (19)									
Families with trans children (6)			X				X	X	
Other social institutions (5)				X		X	X	X	
Heterosexism/Heteronormativity (5)					X		X		X
Gender Norms (3)									X
PERSONAL IDENTITY (8)									
Gender identity development (4)		X						X	
Medical transition of youth (1)								X	
Gender dysphoria (1)								X	
Pronouns (1)								X	
Microaggressions (1)								X	
ACTIVISM & THEORY (16)									
Social/Activist Movements (4)				X					
Transgender theory (12)				X		X	X		X

Table 5.1

Topics and Themes of Required Readings in Collected Syllabi

Syllabus 4 was an elective course focused on feminist, queer and trans theory. It was offered at a private arts college in the U.S. Midwest, meeting three times a week for six weeks. The course topics were noticeably interdisciplinary and intersectional, considering the ways in which sexuality, class, race, ability and religion intersect with gender, with regards to the body and embodiment. Assignments in the class included a critical review, a group lesson, analysis papers, and a collaborative newsletter. Thirteen of the required readings explicitly mentioned

trans in the title, and/or were written by transgender people. These readings were not isolated in one week or lesson but dispersed throughout the course schedule. The instructor of Syllabus 4 submitted two syllabi to the study, and we decided together to focus on the other syllabus (Syllabus 6) in our conversations.

Syllabus 5 was an elective course on LGBTQ topics in K-12 classrooms, offered at a state university in the Pacific Northwest region. The course was unique in its delivery, meeting on Saturdays only and running for only three weeks. The course offered 1-credit and 2 credit options, with 1-credit enrolled students attending the Saturday morning sessions only, while 2-credit enrolled students stayed for an extended afternoon session as well. Assignments in this class included self-reflective journaling and a case study analysis, where students chose a particular theme or topic as a ‘case’ to study from a particular theoretical framework. Although the course only ran for three weeks, transgender topics were well integrated into the readings; out of eight required readings, trans was a central topic for three of them (Catalano & Shlasko, 2013; Portland Public Schools, 2014; Serano, 2016). The instructor of Syllabus 5 was asked to participate in Phase 2 of the study, but could not commit due to time constraints.

Participants of Phase 2

For Phase 2 of the study, I asked all instructors who submitted syllabi that met two or more of the gender-expansive criteria if they would participate in the next phase of the study. Four out of the five individuals agreed to move on to the next phase. The participants will be referred to with the following pseudonyms throughout the paper. I discussed with the four case study participants how they are teaching trans; in other words, how and why they chose particular readings, how trans is part of their assignments, and how the trans-related readings and/or lessons play out in the classroom context.

Syllabus 6: Curriculum Theory at the Urban Art Institute

The Curriculum Theory course at Urban Art Institute (both pseudonyms) is a required course for students in the post-undergraduate teacher certification program. The course is offered every Fall semester and has a typical enrollment of 12-15 students. There is one section of the course offered, and Cooper (pseudonym) is the primary instructor. Cooper describes the course in this way: “The course is grounded in Pinar's idea of *currere* so it allows for space/time to think about complicated conversations in our contemporary world”. Cooper identified the presence of transgender students in the program and the school as being a supportive or encouraging element for including transgender content in his curriculum. He also notes that the Urban Art Institute has a new program promoting developing multicultural curriculum that provides material supports for faculty to do the work of engaging issues such as transgender topics, which serves as an element of institutional support.

Cooper is an adjunct professor at a private art school (Urban Art Institute) in a large city in the U.S. Midwest. Cooper identifies as a White cisgender man and a queer scholar, and he earned his Ph.D. in teacher education. Cooper submitted two syllabi that he developed to the present study: one elective course on queer, feminist, and transgender theory, and a required course on curriculum theory. While both syllabi met the criteria for gender-expansive, Cooper exclusively spoke about the required curriculum theory course in the surveys and interviews.

Syllabus 7: Queer topics in Education at Mountain State University

The Queer Topics in Education course at Mountain State University (both pseudonyms) is an elective course for undergraduate students in the teacher certification program. It is also cross-listed as a graduate-level course. The course is new, offered once in a recent Spring semester and expected to be offered every Spring semester moving forward. There is one section

of the course offered, and Paige (pseudonym) is the primary instructor. Paige describes the course in this way: “I developed the course because I wanted to support students to engage in queer thinking about education-- not only to break the historical silences in teacher education and schools of education in general, but also to support students to understand and engage queer theoretical perspectives”. Paige notes that she was intentional about including gender diversity into the course curriculum, and that transgender topics was central to the design of the course.

Paige works at a public state university in the western region of the U.S. (Mountain State University). Paige identifies as a White cisgender queer woman, and earned a Ph.D. in educational foundations. She has experience teaching in secondary schools in addition to conducting district- and school-level professional development on issues of sexuality and gender. The syllabus Paige submitted was for an elective course on queer topics in schooling, which she developed.

Syllabus 8: LGBTQ topics in Schooling

The LGBTQ Topics in Education course at Southern University (both pseudonyms) is an elective course for undergraduate students in the university’s School of Education. The course was developed and taught by Harold (pseudonym) and had an enrollment of eleven students. Harold describes the course in this way: “Rarely do existing survey courses explicitly include LGBTQ issues as topics in the syllabus. I wanted to meet undergraduate pre-service teachers' need to know about LGBTQ issues in education through the course. I also wanted to demonstrate to the School of Education that the course could be designed and delivered in a rigorous way”. Harold notes that there were no LGBTQ-related courses offered in Southern University’s school of education, so he developed the course and offered to teach it for free.

Harold is a doctoral student in educational policy at a public state university in the U.S. South (Southern University). Harold identifies as a White cisgender gay man, and has experience in teaching and administration in secondary schools. The course syllabus Harold submitted was an elective course on LGBTQ topics in education.

Syllabus 9: Diverse Contexts of Schooling

The Diverse Contexts of Schooling course at Northeast University (both pseudonyms) is a required course for undergraduate students in the teacher certification program. The course is offered each Fall and Spring semester, with a condensed version being offered in “Maymester”. The average enrollment for the course is 38, being the largest class to be involved in this study. There is one section of the course offered, and Casey (pseudonym) is the primary instructor. Casey describes the course as “the token ‘critical/cultural’ education course for teacher candidates”. Casey served as a teaching assistant for the primary course instructor for several semesters, and then had the opportunity to teach the class solo. The course readings and assignments relevant to gender were not changed when Casey taught the class, so he primarily relied on the previous instructor’s curricular choices.

Casey is a doctoral student who teaches at a private research university in the Northeast region of the United States (Northeast University, pseudonym). Casey identifies as straight, cisgender, and White. The course syllabus Casey submitted was for the required teacher education course in diversity, which he noted was the only course in the teacher education program that directly addresses gender issues.

A note on limitations

Harold and Paige taught the elective courses that focused the whole semester on queer or LGBTQ issues; this lent itself to richer conversations, more data. Cooper and Casey taught

required courses where trans topics were one unit among many other topics. In addition, Casey did not develop the course he was referencing, although he did have the opportunity to change the syllabus before teaching it but he chose to keep trans related curriculum the same. So, he could not comment on some interview topics such as finding the readings, for example.

All participants in this study are White, cisgender U.S. citizens who speak fluent English. These demographics may be representative of college faculty and graduate students in most U.S. schools of education, but they are not necessarily representative of the students in our K-12 schools or the demographics of society more broadly. As I will discuss below, these instructors are knowledgeable and passionate individuals whose contributions should not be discounted. At the same time, I must acknowledge the privileged position that the participants inhabit with respect to their race, level of education, gender identity, citizenship, and language. I, too, inhabit privileged positions in most of these categories. And so, it is important to acknowledge that this study is missing the voice and perspective of individuals who do not share these demographics.

CHAPTER SIX: CASE STUDY CONTEXTUAL FINDINGS

Contextual Factors Inside the Classroom

In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss findings specific to the second aspect of the question, “How do teacher education instructors conceptualize and/or teach trans in their courses?” I explored these question with the Phase 2 case study participants only, which correspond to Syllabi 6-9 in the above chart. Cooper’s course is Syllabus 6, Paige’s course is Syllabus 7, Harold’s course is Syllabus 8, and Casey’s course is Syllabus 9. These findings extend the data presented above from Phase 1, and provide a more complex picture of what, and how, trans content is currently being taught in teacher education courses. Three areas I will discuss in detail are the instructor’s attempts to complicate the trans narratives present in their readings, establish class norms that created an environment ripe for gender exploration, and represent trans people through guest speakers and other first-person narratives.

Complicating Trans Narratives

When I asked the instructors why they chose the readings that they chose, Cooper, Paige and Harold discussed how they wanted to ‘complicate’ or provide complexity and intersectionality to the discussion of trans identities and the lived experiences of trans people. In Paige’s words, “I really wanted to make the readings uncomfortable for students in the class.” This included being intentional about featuring multiple readings that centralized the experiences of trans students of color, various depictions of transgender children that were not damage-centered, and bringing in the voices and experiences of trans people through guest speakers and videos.

Going further, Cooper discussed the benefits and drawbacks of infusing trans matters throughout the syllabus—so that it is there but not necessarily ‘seen’ through individual lesson

topics—versus enumerating trans more explicitly. Cooper suggested that “the consequences of not enumerating are that people don’t get to see,” but at the same time “the consequences of enumerating is that we then realize there’s still more work to be done.” He suggested that “it’s kind of like the melting pot idea, oh, if we just melt everything into the pot of curriculum, we don’t see any of the distinctions, the differences, the histories.” For this reason, Cooper believes that enumerating various identities in course syllabi is still an important move in teacher education courses. At the same time, Cooper was intentional about acknowledging gender diversity even when the reading or topic was not centered on trans. He says,

I ask students to not only think about race when you’re reading Lisa Delpit, right? Delpit is forefronting race but how is she also implicating gender? How is she implicating sexuality? Including is she not implicating sexuality? So it becomes a part of the complicated conversation of a curriculum theory course, on curriculum as a complicated conversation. To be able to train the eye in many ways to see what’s there and what’s not there. (Cooper)

Overall, the instructors discussed the deliberate nature with which they approached developing their syllabi and choosing their readings on transgender topics. Two instructors lamented the lack of transgender-related readings in their own Ph.D. programs, compared to research on more mainstream topics or the traditional ‘canon’ in educational scholarship. The instructors suggested that they found it difficult and time-consuming to find relevant and accessible transgender content when developing their own courses, since it was not a built-in aspect of their institutional training.

Establishing Class Norms

Harold and Paige discussed setting particular class norms at the start of the semester including having good intentions, approaching the content with curiosity, and a willingness to be vulnerable. Paige remarked, “given that some people have never talked about these issues, there’s going to be a lot not to know. So just having the attention to vulnerability the whole time was something that students really talked about a lot in their journals and how important that was and how freeing that was to just name that in the beginning.” Harold talked about his students being worried about using the right terminology. In his class, he made sure the students knew that “vocabulary is going to get in the way sometimes”, and so “as long as you come from a point of good intention and curiosity versus judgment or power difference, we’ll work through finding the right vocabulary word.” The students in Harold and Paige’s classes were encouraged to “start where you are, but don’t stay there” (Milner, 2010). With these norms, the instructors opened up space for a supportive space to unlearn, relearn, and reflect (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Kincheloe, 2005). Freire developed a non-traditional pedagogy that relied on dialogue to develop critical consciousness. Dialogue and critical reflection is an important processing tool that helps students combine theory with everyday life. Reflections can be informal or iterative processes that help students make sense of the content in a low-stakes atmosphere. Both Harold and Paige recognized that pre-service teachers have gender identities, and preservice teachers need opportunities to reflect on and potentially experiment with gender identity and gender expression.

“It Was All So New”

Instructors reported that for many of their students, this course was the very first time they had learned about trans identities. For example: “Several students from rural communities

were like: ‘We had one stop light. We never talked about this.’ There was a lack of understanding, but not resistance outright” (Paige). Casey suggested that for his students, “it was all so new. It was new and a lot and they didn’t really know how to say much about it.” This provided challenges to instructors because they had to start at basic terminology and build from there. Cooper asked, “How do you start getting pre-service teachers to think about them [transgender issues] when they might not have had opportunities to think about them, or are uncomfortable thinking about them, or don’t have the language to think about them?” The source of the unfamiliarity was not just from previous life experience; the structure of teacher preparation programs also influenced the depth to which Casey felt he could go:

I don’t want to say we did a ton of specific analysis on specific gender identities. Not that I didn’t want to, but I think that requires a lot of work to get to a point where that would be a very productive and informative conversation. For these students, this is the one class that they have on this. There’s a few other professors who do critical work, but this is the most systematic.

The task of getting past terminology was easier for instructors teaching elective courses that had a semester-long focus on LGBT or queer issues in education, rather than for those teaching required courses that had to cover a long list of other topics.

Instructors reported that the course topics and classroom environment, including the established norms discussed earlier, gave students an opportunity to explore their own gender fluidity and/or cisgender privilege. In thinking through aspects of cisgender and heterosexual privilege, Casey noted that “there was an aha moment for those students who felt their dominant privilege in that moment. They began to understand how that really exists in the world and how

other people have a radically different experience.” For others, the course provided the impetus to, as Paige put it, “really use that space to figure out who you are”:

One of my students changed pronouns over the course of the semester. The student came in using she/her/hers, and then there’s an assignment that I give called a Queer Autobiography. During this time, the student said, ‘I think I’m going to change pronouns’ and ‘this is a real surprise to me.’ The student ended up using different pronouns and now still uses the same pronouns that they were using at the end of class. So for that student, and for other students in that class, just having somebody take that risk – that was a big moment for that student and for all of us. (Paige)

According to Paige’s syllabus, the Queer Autobiography is an ongoing writing assignment where students are asked to “reflect, queerly, on your own experiences, both in and out of education contexts” and aims to “trouble the ways you understand yourself in the world”. The autobiography chronicles the students’ personal journeys through the course, as Paige asks her students to

write the impossible, to think about the ruptures, the places that are sticky, the gaps, the silences, the tunnels that you have yet to explore—and to reflect not only on you, but also how you are affected by, contribute to, benefit from, disrupt, trouble, complicate, grapple with the topics, issues—and systems, discussed throughout the semester. You will use this assignment as a way to engage with the readings, but also with your own process of becoming. (Paige’s syllabus)

Overall, the instructors reported that their students seemed open and curious about transgender topics, even though students’ previous knowledge may have been minimal. None of the instructors reported remembering a time when their students were outwardly hostile towards

transgender topics. Instructors who provided space and time for students to reflect on and explore their own gender identities found that experience to be extremely beneficial for themselves and the students.

Telling Our Own Story

Instructors were deliberate in their attempts to bring in guest speakers and seek out transgender-created media such as Youtube videos and independent films. Guest speakers included transgender high school students, transgender school administrators, and parents of transgender youth. These real-life representations worked, as Harold describes, to “put a human face on the data we had just read, the articles we just read.” Rather than waiting for a transgender student to present themselves, Harold remarked that “I did my very best to make sure they had representations of trans people, even though everyone in the room, to my knowledge, was cisgender.” Continuing their attempts to humanize transgender people, instructors also worked to interrupt certain dominant narratives about trans people that are incomplete. For example, Harold showcased an independent film entitled “Ross: A Transgender Short Film” because

I think most of the time we think about transgender, people are thinking about male to female. It seems to be the dominant story or narrative. So I wanted my students to have an example of the challenges that a female to male student encounters. And this little short film does that very well, it gets those points across. That like oh, there are things I should be considering, like dress code and the physical pain that a young person may be experiencing because they’re trans.

Paige invited a parent of a non-binary child to speak to her class. Paige reported that “hearing the parent be super on board, super supportive, that really disrupted the narrative for my students of parents not being supportive and not understanding. I think that having the story from

a parent was like, ‘Oh, yes. This is a family, and this is somebody’s kid’.” These findings are in line with Greytak and Kosciw’s (2014) finding that knowing LGBT people is a statistically significant predictor of a teachers’ frequency of intervention in anti-LGBT behavior. Students in most of the participants’ classes had an opportunity to meet at least one transgender person, which in turn might increase the likelihood that they will speak up in the face of trans oppression or antagonism. These instructors intended to disrupt damaging narratives, to familiarize and humanize transgender people. There is immense power of representation, of having a real person I’m trans, or my child is trans, and this is what my life is like, this is the way we see the world and this is how we think society can and should change. That first-person experience can be more powerful than any text and should be essential to teacher education’s approach to teaching trans.

Assignments

Most instructors realized through our conversations that transgender matters were not explicitly attended to in their assignment instructions. For example, instructors mentioned that “the assignments are kept pretty wide open in terms of what content is taken up” (Cooper), and “I didn’t say take up the topic of transgender in a particular way, so I don’t think it was something that I placed as central to the assignments” (Paige). Expanding further, Harold admitted that “there is nothing [in the assignments] that is explicitly trans. The students were able to do what was relevant to them. So I would say since most of them are cisgender there were very few trans assignments, trans products.” In other words, broadly defined & expansive assignment instructions sometimes provided opportunities for students to engage in trans matters, but it also gave them the option not to engage. This seemed to be particularly true for LGBQ and

cisgender students, who seemed to be drawn to issues of queerness and sexuality when they had the option to do so.

Sometimes the assignment instructions conflated sexuality with gender identity, or relied on a binary understanding of gender. Noticing assignment instructions that lists transgender as a sexual orientation, Harold realized that “I think that’s something else that’s difficult in doing this, is making sure that in every space that I’m not conflating those two things.” Casey noted, upon reviewing his course’s final exam questions:

One of our questions on the final was: ‘Discuss how gender roles that are reproduced in schools harm both males and females in our society?’ Even in that question it’s implying, reinforcing, the gender binary rather than a spectrum. I just noticed that. The final is made by the professor and I didn’t change that.

In some courses, assignments and exams appeared to be an element of the curriculum that was less attended to than the readings with regards to ensuring accuracy and inclusion of transgender concepts.

Contextual Factors Outside the Classroom

In this section, I offer the findings relevant to my third research question, “What factors influence how Teacher Education instructors teach trans?”. To answer his question, I asked participants open-ended questions about factors outside of their own control that influenced how and why they teach trans.

Local and State Political Commitments

The political leanings and dominating ideologies of the surrounding district and state have a major impact on what is possible for teachers—and even teacher educators—to do. Relationships with local school districts and communities influenced the ways in which

instructors framed conversations around what it looks like to be a supportive K-12 teacher for trans students. For Paige, the surrounding district's progressive stance created a mutually beneficial relationship between parents, the school district, and the university. Parents of LGBTQ youth pushed the local district to improve their policies and practices, motivating the district to request professional development from the university, which spurred the university to commit more resources to professional development efforts, both for the district and for faculty within the teacher education program. This relationship also provides an opportunity for university scholars to share new research and knowledge with the local schools.

In many parts of the U.S., it is risky it is for K-12 teachers to be trans allies, much less identify as trans themselves. In order to address this, Harold talks with pre-service teachers about finding and keeping a job, what to do if the principal is not supportive, and symbolic ways to show support for trans students, such as displaying the trans pride flag. Several instructors agreed that it is important to provide the unique preparation necessary so that “teachers who are committed to being active allies for trans students will work in contexts that are not great so that they can provide that support” for transgender and gender non-conforming students. At the same time, Paige said, “we also want those teachers to stay safe and keep their jobs and have a good experience. We can’t just say, this is the right thing to do, go do it. Because ‘doing it’ doesn’t look the same in every context.” These findings show that when instructors are committed to preparing teachers to be allies and supports for transgender students, they need to understand the political landscape that their pre-service teachers may be walking into, and discuss potential ways around these constraints.

“The Bathroom Bill”

At Southern University, an anti-transgender bill in the North Carolina legislature provided a real-world example for Harold’s students. Harold was teaching his course on LGBTQ topics in education when the general assembly in North Carolina introduced House Bill 2, which regulated the use of public restrooms for transgender people in the state, requiring that individuals must use bathrooms based on their sex at birth. The bill also restricted cities and counties from passing antidiscrimination measures that protect transgender individuals. HB2 became law in March of 2016. Harold reports:

While we had discussed heteronormativity, the fact that we were able to listen to the general assembly’s discussion, or lack thereof, of this topic during class while it was happening kind of hit home that heteronormativity that is not something that is passive or that happened years ago to create institutions that we now need to dismantle, but rather it is something that continues to reinforce institutions that police non-conforming people. That was a huge aha for my students.

Under President Obama, Attorney General Loretta Lynch filed a lawsuit challenging the North Carolina law, claiming that the law was nothing more than “state sponsored discrimination” (Graham, 2016). Unfortunately, under the next presidential administration, Attorney General Sessions dropped the lawsuit against the North Carolina law.

Leaving the Obama Era: “A Re-Emergence of Rage”

On the federal level, the issue on most of the participants’ minds was the presidential transition. My interviews with participants spanned the time between just before the election in November 2016 and the inauguration in January 2017. Several instructors shared concerns and fears about the upcoming changes to the political landscape. Harold lamented the fact that Betsy

DeVos was slated to be our next Secretary of Education, considering her ideological views on schooling. Cooper suggested that those of us interested in social transformation and trans liberation must “move from being in an offensive state to a rather defensive stance to protect the basic grounds that have been gained.” Together, we discussed what a defensive stance might look like, such as holding our local contexts accountable, attending marches and protests, and using our university resources to support local schools in their efforts to protect trans youth. Cooper encapsulated the ensuing struggle: “there’s got to be a re-evaluation, re-orientation or perhaps a re-emergence, hopefully, of rage”. We are only beginning to see and feel the impact of the new presidential administration, and I, along with my participants, fear what else the future will bring.

Departmental Support

Administrators such as department chairs, deans and chancellors had impact on participants’ ability to teach trans. Harold called his course “an anomaly”; not only did he develop and propose the Special Topics course on his own, the university did not pay him to teach it because “it is not a strategic part of the university’s teacher preparation program.” Further, Harold reported the dean at his school “claims she doesn’t have the authority or the power to even mention or encourage what is taught in the classes by the faculty.” particularly regarding LGBTQ topics. According to Harold, “even though she thinks they should [teach LGBTQ topics], she doesn’t have the positional power or political power to make that successful.” At the institutional level, just one individual could make or break the chances of transgender topics getting incorporated in the teacher preparation program, or even just one course.

In contrast, Cooper found significant support for infusing trans issues into the curriculum at his institution, Urban Art Institute. The campus has seen a big push - by the students, in

particular - for the institution to be more trans-inclusive. In addition, students “have access to queer spaces in ways that other contexts might not have” (Cooper), such as being in close proximity to entire neighborhoods dominated by a plethora of businesses, restaurants, clubs, and other establishments that exclusively cater to gay and queer communities. Being a private institution that is arts-focused provides specific allowances that public institutions, particularly land-grant, assessment-focused, institutions do not offer. And, according to Cooper, Urban Art Institute’s students are more likely to be coming from families with more economic privilege than average, which can provide more ease in exploring ‘controversial’ issues. In fact, transgender topics might be more approachable than issues of race or class to people with wealthier backgrounds, because gender diversity cuts across all racial and class lines.

Student Activism

At Northeast University, a university leader’s unexpected decision caused a wave of student activism on campus. The tipping point was the closure of the sexual assault advocacy center on campus, and the movement grew to address issues of sexism, racism, and other forms on inequity on campus. Students in Casey’s class saw and heard about this movement, and it motivated them to ask questions and increase their awareness of the issues. Casey remarked that “all these things were happening on campus, it was there, it was powerful, it was visceral. Students could relate to that.” An administrator’s decision sparked massive resistance from the student body, which Casey suggested created conversations and awareness that permeated this participant’s classroom discussions.

At Urban Art Institute, students are not actively resisting an oppressive administration; rather, they are working to move conversations even farther along. Cooper reports that, for the last few years, there has been a very visible trans presence in student activist circles at his

university, led by a student group centered on gender diversity. He explained, “They really spearheaded in the way that I think student activists can, conversations around bathroom accessibility. They produced a lovely little zine that talked about trans issues 101, pronouns, the history, different ideas of bodies. I think part of the work that has done for the community for the last couple of years is open up spaces for the conversation” (Cooper). At both Casey’s and Cooper’s institutions, student activism has permeated classroom spaces and discussions in positive ways.

Getting Past the Diversity Course

Several participants noted the importance of threading trans and LGBTQ topics throughout teacher education programs, but also acknowledge the difficulty in doing so. Threading LGBTQ topics throughout the teacher preparation curriculum ensures pre-service teachers are well prepared to be active allies to trans students (Meyer, Tilland-Stafford, & Airton, 2016). Of all the participants, Paige has found the most success in this endeavor:

What we try to do in our teacher prep program is string queer topics throughout the teacher education program. In the foundations class, students get a look at queer topics from a foundations perspective and a social justice perspective, and by the time they get to the methods class they’re ready to enact some of these things. Once they get through the whole program the ideas become more robust.

Previous research has shown that LGBTQ topics are under-prioritized in teacher education program and largely isolated within diversity courses that cover various aspects of identity in isolation (Horn et al., 2010; Sherwin & Jennings, 2007). Threading queer topics through all levels of the teacher education program, as Paige’s program does, allows pre-service teachers to go beyond the typical exposure to LGBTQ topics in an isolated diversity or

foundations course. Instead, faculty in Paige's program are encouraged to be intentional about incorporating LGBTQ topics and perspectives within other courses such as methods and the internship, re-iterating and strengthening pre-service teachers' understanding of these issues. This is essential to making K-12 schooling a more liberatory space for transgender students, because without these kinds of intentional practices, we know from previous research that pre-service and in-service teachers feel uncomfortable & unprepared to support transgender students or make curricular & pedagogical improvements (Brant, 2017; Meyer, 2008; Payne & Smith, 2014).

This integrated model is clearly not the norm everywhere; Casey noted that in his teacher preparation program, "this is the one class that they have on this", and students only receive a basic understanding of trans issues without learning how to incorporate that into their own pedagogy or curriculum. This echoes similar criticisms from educators who want to see a more deliberate attempt at weaving other issues of oppression and privilege, such as racism and White supremacy, into courses beyond foundations or multicultural education (Nieto, 2000; Picower, 2009; Sleeter, 1995, 2001).

Implications of Transitory Labor

The increased reliance of transitory labor (adjuncts and graduate students) means that improvements to teacher education courses may arise and disappear without becoming enmeshed in the fabric of the department or program. This can mean that instructors end up 're-inventing the wheel' based on their own interests and expertise, putting in more time and energy to create something meaningful, only to have their ideas leave with them when they move on. Indeed, three of the participants were temporary instructors: Casey and Harold are doctoral students and Cooper is an adjunct instructor. The implications of job insecurity was heavy on Cooper's mind.

If the teaching job is temporary, instructors might take less risk in covering ‘controversial’ topics:

I imagine there’s lots of faculty out there that don’t take up these issues that would like to because they have to survive themselves. At the end of the day, doing this type of work in particular contexts is going to put people at risk. And people have to decide whether they want to take those risks or not. (Cooper)

Previous Teaching Experiences

In addition to the socio-political context, instructors had past experiences that heavily influenced their passion for and interest in teaching trans. In particular, Paige and Harold’s past teaching experiences in undergraduate and high school spaces had powerful influences on their thinking on teaching trans. In one instance, Paige witnessed a promising trans student drop out of the teacher preparation program because he did not feel safe or supported in the local schools. According to Paige, this experience “really affected my thinking about which identities and issues to position as central in conversations and how necessary that was.” This points to the importance of a strong relationship between the university and the local schools, where the university is able to support pre-service teachers who are trans, and then have confidence that the local school districts will also support their in-service trans teachers.

Harold encountered a transgender student early on in his K-12 teaching career. In his first-hour class, this student would arrive dressed in ‘masculine’ clothes and throughout the course of the hour, would apply makeup and trade clothes with the girls. This activity meant that the student was not paying attention, and for the first half of the semester, was failing the class. Harold grappled with how to best approach this situation. Instead of dehumanizing this student,

Harold asked, “what do I need to do to help make this better?” The conversation continued between Harold and the student:

‘I’m going to write [preferred name] on my papers’. And I’m like, sure. And I asked, ‘what about this makeup and getting dressed stuff? Can’t you do that at home?’ And he’s like ‘no, because mom doesn’t know I’m a girl yet, and I’m not sure how she’s going to respond to it’. And so class started at nine, and we made a pact that he could come to class at 9:10 if he was already dressed as [preferred name] and had his makeup done.
(Harold)

Harold went on to explain how he adjusted his references to the student based on context. For example, in class, Harold referred to the student with her preferred name and ‘she’ pronouns. The student was able to use her preferred name on all coursework. At the same time, when speaking to her parents or classroom outsiders, Harold called the student by her legal name and ‘he’ pronouns. This short conversation, the pact, and the actions that followed, seemingly turned things around for this student; she earned a B for the last half of the semester. For Harold, this experience helped him move from teaching content to teaching students, and it was one of the reasons why he decided to later pursue his Ph.D.

In a second powerful story, Harold recounted a situation in a different high school where he was serving as an administrator. It was graduation time, and everyone was excited to celebrate this rite of passage with one student in particular, a transgender girl who had gotten a lot of support from teachers and administrators to pass a particularly difficult class. However, the student didn’t show up to graduation:

Somewhere between graduation practice and graduation night, a staff member told the student that she would need to come to graduation as a boy, to be able to march. She

needed to get her hair cut, she needed to wear pants, she needed to wear a button-down shirt and a tie. But it was someone who didn't have any authority to say that. Not the principal, not me, not the teacher who had the responsibility of leading graduation. And it's weeks later that I discover why she didn't show up – because she thought she had to come to graduation as a boy.

Harold expressed frustration that the student was discouraged from attending graduation as her true self, but he also admitted that the situation made him question himself: “it makes me wonder if she perceived our actions as being authentic when we were trying to be supportive. I think about that now.” In each of Harold's stories, there was one person whose actions created a turning point. In the first story, Harold's actions created a positive turning point. In the second story, the actions of the staff member created a negative turning point. Harold's experiences showed the best example of a teacher seeing a human with needs, rather than a problem to be solved. This is at the essence of a humanizing pedagogy (Winn & Paris, 2013).

Two participants referenced their identity and belonging in the broader LGBTQ community as being highly relevant to the ways they understand and teach gender diversity. Paige identifies as queer, and her and Cooper both referenced instances in history and in the present time that represent for them an overlap between queerness and trans-ness. Within history, Cooper pointed to the Stonewall riots as a point of overlap between drag queens and trans women of color: “Where drag and trans-ness get collapsed into one another and have been used for different, mutually beneficial political and ethical arguments.” In the present time, Paige's gender nonconformity (being “not at all” femme identified) means that she frequently gets unwelcome gendered comments from strangers—a familiar occurrence in many transgender people's lives, as well.

Conclusion

Instructors found most success when a significant number of faculty and administrators were committed to trans-inclusion. Faculty, department chairs, and deans are all important actors in moving teacher education in a gender-expansive direction. The institutional contexts encountered by the participants were often, but not always, a reflection of issues at the local and state level. The reliance on transitory labor is also a significant factor in the lack of stability or longevity of transgender topics in teacher education courses.

In this chapter, I provided findings on the first research question: How are we teaching trans?. There was a wide variety of readings across the nine syllabi, with few readings repeated on more than one syllabus. This may be a result of the disparate nature of literature and scholarship on transgender topics; unlike other areas in teacher education, there is no established canon of texts for transgender topics in education and so it is up to each individual instructor to find and evaluate transgender-related readings. The transgender-related readings covered an assortment of topics, with a large number of readings related to the school context and trans student experiences.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCEPTUAL FINDINGS

Coming into this study, I have felt tension with the common collapsing of trans into other terms that reference gender or sexuality. Building from my earlier critique in Chapter Three regarding the reasons why feminist and queer theory are influential but not adequate to analyze transgender issues, I entered this study with the belief that certain terms such as ‘gender’, ‘queer’, and ‘heteronormativity’ are often assumed to be inclusive of trans identities and experiences but are not always so in practice. For evidence of this, one can look to Airton’s (2009) exploration of sexuality and gender education programs, where transgender realities are not apparent in either the sexuality-oriented or the gender-oriented paradigms. A recent study of mine (Kean, 2017) corroborates Airton’s findings with regards to multicultural education and foundations of education textbooks, where transgender topics were found to be largely absent, underrepresented or misrepresented in sections of text that claim to discuss transgender topics, but are actually devoted to cisgender girls & women, and cisgender LGBTQ individuals.

Overall, it has not been true in my experience that something—an event, a research study, or a course, for example—that is queer-oriented or queer-centered will automatically represent and meet the needs of transgender people. I have had similar concerns about the term ‘heteronormativity’, and how or whether transgender identities and experiences are being included when heteronormativity is studied, discussed, or learned. Because of this, I asked participants who mentioned ‘queer’ and ‘heteronormativity’ in their syllabi how they defined these terms, and how they understand queer and trans as being connected or not. In the following sections, I will describe my findings from those conversations. First, I will describe the ways in which the participants define gender, and then I will share how they described their understanding of ‘queer’ and ‘heteronormativity’ in relation to ‘transgender’.

Gender

All four participants reported speaking to their students about gender being a social construct. The term ‘social construct’ is helpful in understanding gender in several ways. First, it helps to distinguish gender from biological sex, which itself is not an immutable binary, and is related to but not synonymous with gender. Second, gender as a social construct illuminates the idea that gender roles and norms can change over time, which Cooper refers to as a “historicist” idea of gender. In my own teaching of gender, I present students with a list of the following characteristics: long hair, leggings, jewelry, and high heels. I ask the students, if you saw a person with all of these attributes walking around on campus, would you consider them feminine or masculine? Without fail, students agree that this would be a feminine person. Then I show them a painting of King Louis XIV, posing with his signature high heels, wearing the historic version of leggings, plenty of jewelry and long flowing hair. I ask my students if they would guess that people considered Louis XIV feminine in his time, and they answer, certainly not! The king would surely be the epitome of masculinity. We then connect this example to the understanding that one’s cultural context, rather than one’s physiological traits, determines ideal and normative behaviors, mannerisms, and social roles for different genders. Casey described a similar pedagogical method he has used:

I had them get into small groups and list 10 things for each. I asked them the question: Today, in our world, what does it mean to be female or feminine? That was one question. Then: What do you think it should mean? On the other side: What does it mean to be male or masculine? What do you think it should mean? I had them list 10 things per each and then we talked about that. I used their own responses and ideas to contrast: this person says it’s this, this other group says, no, that’s actually feminine or whatever. Then

we took that and we're like: Where does that come from? How do you even answer that question, what do you think it should mean? I think largely the students understood. They were like: Okay, yes, if there's no objective, it's kind of whatever you want. (Casey)

In describing how he conceptualizes gender with his students, Cooper emphasized Judith Butler's well-known concepts of performativity and citationality; those "simple everyday examples" such as the act of getting dressed, as a way to think about what the social construction of gender is. Cooper continues to say:

I think a revelatory moment that oftentimes happens is students themselves kind of transgress gender norms, right? So thinking about the everyday simple things of growing up and having their mother put them in pink versus blue. And all of those very simple things and the ways in which that gets policed for themselves. Then also connecting that to what I think about in terms of the identity categories, of individuals who identify as trans. And really kind of teasing apart the experiences of gender, that they kind of relate to on various levels from the things they wear to the way they speak, their voice intonations. To then also thinking through gender beyond that binary in terms of thinking about individuals who identify as trans whose experiences might parallel their own in some ways but engage contemporary issues in a different way. So I think that's usually where there's some minor aha moments of connecting that kind of everyday gender experience to then thinking how does that affect people who encounter those realities in a different way, perhaps a more severe way. And I think those aha moments become, I don't want to say easier but they're visible now because of the visibility of trans issues now than say, five years ago.

As Cooper explains, understanding gender as a social construct also provides space for individuals whose interests, behaviors, and gender expressions do not conform to dominant expectations of gender. This openness to non-conformity and fluidity can also be seen in Casey's remarks:

What I stress is that there's a continuum, there's a spectrum. I don't know if fluid is the right word for it. I'm trying to stress this thing like instead of thinking and categorizing, boxes and options—I try to stress to them that this is a dynamic experience that is different for everyone given their context and social interactions and this can change of a lifetime. (Casey)

Instead of relying on a textbook definition of gender, Paige describes defining gender as a process that occurs in an iterative fashion throughout the course of the semester, with input from the readings and the students:

I think that gender is really defined over the course of the semester through the readings.

And I think some of the ways that it's defined is from students in the class, the ways that they identify and the ways that their identity has actually shifted during the course.

Pronouns changed. I feel like I give definitions, but if I had to say how it's defined I don't know that I would just say, 'I define it in this way and that's the definition that we operate from.'

Similarly, Harold does not rely on a textbook definition of gender; in fact, he intends for his students to discover that “these notions of gender sometimes get in the way of us being able to meet the needs of students and creating safe learning spaces for students.” In this way, Harold's primary concern is identifying the needs of transgender youth and providing the appropriate support and accommodations for their specific situations.

Overall, every participant clearly defined gender as a social construct in their teaching, as a concept separate from but related to biological sex and sexuality. Going further, each had ways which they problematized strict gender role expectations and attempted through various readings, assignments and class activities to show that gender can be a dynamic spectrum rather than a restrictive binary. Although all participants had a relatively standard way of conceptualizing gender, they differed more significantly in the ways they conceptualized queer, which I will discuss in the next section.

Queer

From our conversations, I derived multiple dimensions of ‘queer’ as understood by the three participants for whom ‘queer’ was a salient term in their course: queer as an identity, queer as an expression or behavior, queer as a theoretical framework, and queer as a politics. In Paige’s words, “I talk about ‘queer’ as a noun and ‘queer’ as a verb and the problematics of ‘queer’”.

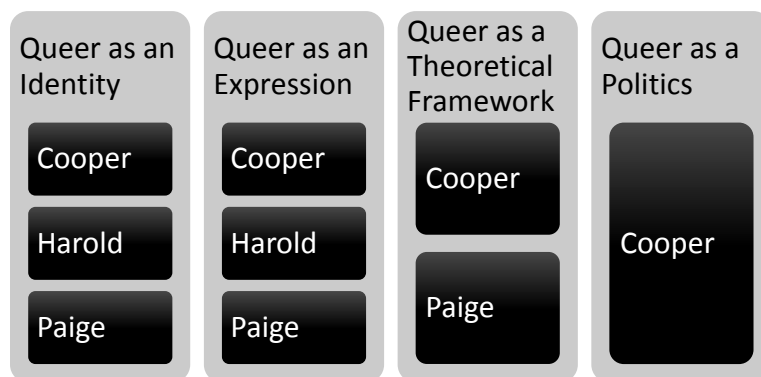


Figure 7.1
Manifestations of Queer as Described by Participants

All three participants who discussed their understanding of ‘queer’ spoke about queer as an identity marker, the act of identifying as queer or having a queer sexuality. Similarly, all three participants discussed queer as having important relationships with gender expression, behavior, or performativity. Cooper and Paige specifically discussed queer as a theoretical framework or analytical lens through which anyone can ‘queer’ or ‘look queerly’ at a topic. Finally, Cooper

spoke about queer as a politics, identifying important distinctions between identity politics and queer politics.

Queer as an Identity

The primary way that the participants spoke about ‘queer’ was in the form of an identity label for one’s sexuality. Queer is sometimes used as a synonym to mean all non-heterosexual identities, or as a more simplified way of including all letters of the LGBTQIA+ acronym. However, others intentionally use it instead of terms such as ‘gay’ or ‘lesbian’ because it is intentionally ambiguous and open ended; neither the subject or object of interest/desire is necessarily labeled or gendered. Others use it in order to reclaim the negative connotation attached to the term for much of history. In this way, queer is “an anti-normative positioning with regard to sexuality” (Jagose, 1996, p. 98). It is for these and other reasons that ‘queer’ is the identity of choice for younger generations, particularly youth of color. Harold referenced these thoughts in our conversation:

Harold: Anyone who is expressing themselves and is disrupting that normative behavior in my mind is queer. So queer is a broader term to address the sexual and gender minority people as a whole. Which I think is interesting in that younger folks are willing to adopt, use and embrace the term queer and to be more inclusive, and folks that are older than me don’t like that term at all, it’s derogatory for them.

Eli: Yeah, that’s been my experience too, that younger people who are non-conforming are much more willing to use the word queer. But I’ve also found young people, straight cis young people, still think of queer as a derogatory term that they potentially use in derogatory ways. So it’s always interesting because when I teach about LGBTQ issues,

almost every time they ask me ‘what does queer mean?’ because in their mind, queer is a negative term that you call someone who you don’t like.

Harold: I think that my students of color really pushed me to use queer more than I would normally would have used the word queer because it’s part of how they identify. And so in trying to demonstrate I was learning from them, and I *was* learning from them, I use the word queer a whole lot more than I used to.

Queer as an identity term was the most prevalent dimension of queer present in my conversations with the participants. As with other identity terms identifying one’s sexuality or sexual orientation, ‘queer’ cuts across all gender identities, meaning that it can be referring to both cisgender and transgender people. However, some transgender people identify as queer, or identify with queer communities, and some do not; therefore, it is important to recognize that this dimension of queer is not always or entirely inclusive of all transgender people.

Queer as an expression or behavior

From a queer perspective, conforming to gendered norms is generally considered as abandoning your true self or accepting current systems of social power. Perhaps it is exactly because conformity is not appealing to queer-identified people that they choose a word that is only recently being reclaimed from pejorative definition of ‘freak’, ‘weirdo’, or ‘strange’. Queer as an expression or behavior was illuminated most frequently by participants who talked about subversive, fluid, or non-conforming gender expression. In a similar way to ‘queer’ as an identity, ‘queer’ as an expression can cut across all gender identities. If ‘queer’ as an identity is about *being* queer, then ‘queer’ as an expression is about *doing* queerness on a personal level. There are a handful of non-binary identity labels such as genderqueer, genderfuck, or genderfluid, which describe individuals whose gender identity, and often their gender expression,

changes or fluctuates between masculine or feminine expressions. Considering ‘queer’ as a way of describing gender non-conforming expression or behavior creates a clear connection to trans identity, which can be seen as similarly ‘doing’ gender in a non-normative way. Indeed, some educators, such as Harold, use the phrase ‘trans and gender non-conforming’ as a catch-all to refer to the overlapping needs of all individuals whose gender expression—dress, hair, mannerisms, and style—are presented or perceived in non-normative ways. The phrase ‘gender non-conforming’ is especially helpful when referring to youth who may be expressing themselves in non-normative ways but have not adopted a trans gender identity, or have not come out publicly as trans.

For Cooper, there is a relationship between queer expressions of gender and trans expressions of gender as seen within the flexible boundaries between drag and trans:

I think, this is probably the way it came out in my life most vividly, and I think it is a sticky point between trans and gay scholarship, was my relationship with drag queens and drag kings. That history of drag experiences and trans experiences. Thinking about the early days of gay liberation where there’s, for me, an interesting overlap between Stonewall stories that talk about drag queens and Stonewall stories that talk about trans women of color. Where drag and trans-ness get collapsed to one another and have been used for different, mutually beneficial political and ethical arguments. (Cooper)

Because the term transgender has only been popularized in the last 50 years, Cooper points to the difficulty in discerning how individuals in the past might label themselves with today’s terms. This is especially true in the complex boundary between drag and trans identities. And yet, regardless of other labels of gender identity or sexuality, communities on this boundary have often found common ground in utilizing ‘queer’ as an expression. In addition to these two more

personal dimensions of queer, some participants also referenced two other dimensions: first, queer as a theoretical framework or mode of analysis, and second, queer as a politics.

Queer as a theoretical framework or mode of analysis

Queer as a theoretical framework refers to the act of analytically ‘doing’ queer work, queer thinking, queer research, etc. A queer framework is informed by queer theory and its focus is on destabilizing, deconstructing, and problematizing anything which is assumed to be stable, fixed, or normal. Queer theorist Deb Britzman (1995) explains it in this way:

The strategy attempts to get at the unmarked criteria that work to dismiss as irrelevant or valorize as relevant a particular mode of thought, field of study, or insistence upon the real. It is meant to move beyond essentialist/constructivist debates that have been necessary to rethinking questions of social difference, identity risks, and politics, but that tend to stall in stories of origin, arguments of causality, and explanations of conditions. (Britzman, 1995, p. 156).

Paige explained how ‘queering education’, which is the focus of her course, is an example of queer as a framework:

Queer is about the ways that we engage with, in this case, education issues across the board. The questions that we ask. “Queering”, or ‘to queer’, in the ways that I talk about it in this class, is like how are we disrupting the foundations of how we think teaching looks, or how we think gender has looked, or how we think the concourse standards have looked. Queer identity is very central to this course, but also queer as an action or ‘queer’ as an ongoing project, I think that’s the bigger thing that I want my students to walk away with. It is about identity in this class, but it’s also about disrupting normative practices

and assumptions across the board in education in ways that we think about even policy issues. (Paige)

In essence, thinking queerly or doing queer analysis echoes many of the theoretical constructs located in critical and poststructural frameworks, with a particular attention on considering aspects of gender and sexuality binaries, norms, assimilation, and resistance. Considering queer as an analytical framework allows any individual to engage in a queer analysis, to ‘look queerly’ at a topic or situation without having to necessarily identify as queer.

Queer as a Politics

Queer Politics, as it is understood by intersectional scholars such as Cathy Cohen (1997), aims to respond to the racism and classism within the mainstream gay and lesbian movement. As such, a queer politics is anti-assimilationist and subversive, and its goal is an intersectional framework or an “infinite coalition” (Jagose, 1996) where all marginalized or oppressed people come together in order to fight against all dominant norms and oppressive systems. In particular, queer politics is a reaction to identity politics, which assumes/requires a shared identity and shared goals or needs; queer politics recognizes that shared identity leads to exclusion and a false sense of universality. Jagose (1996) refers to this as the “constraining effects of naming” (p. 3).

In thinking about material realities, Cooper talked about the differences and tensions between identity politics and queer politics. Cooper’s thinking on this topic has been significantly influenced by Cohen’s standpoint. Cooper says, “In my own work, I always have to make this distinction between the use of ‘queer’ as a kind of identity marker, and I don’t usually use queer as an identity marker for myself. I think of ‘queer’ as a political stance.” Going further, Cooper suggests that even if one uses queer as an identity, it does not always follow that one also

has a queer politics. The same goes for trans individuals, and Cooper uses Laverne Cox and Caitlyn Jenner as examples of this line of thinking:

For me, there is that tension between an identity politics, which I think is still important politics, and then a queer politics that pushes against the very real arguments of identity politics. So I'm thinking of someone like Caitlin Jenner. Caitlin identifies as trans but I'm not convinced she's interested in a queer politics. Laverne Cox identifies as trans, but I think also has a queer politics. I don't know if either of them identify as queer, and if they do that's fine as well. But I don't know if identifying as queer that makes you necessarily having a queer politics. I suppose part of it is that difference, an analytic distinction between being something and doing something. That's probably one way to see how they fit together and how they don't have to fit together. Just because an individual is gay doesn't mean they have to embrace a queer politics. Just because Caitlin Jenner is trans doesn't mean she has to buy into a queer politics or even a politics that's interested in actually thinking about trans material realities, as she doesn't necessarily seem to do.

Here, Cooper marks an important distinction between gay/queer/trans identities and queer politics: sexual and gender identity markers are not predicated upon, and don't automatically presume, a particular ideological or political stance. Therefore, one can practice a queer politics without using queer as an identity. And vice versa, someone can be queer or trans in identity without supporting an anti-assimilationist or subversive politics.

Throughout my conversations with the participants, my goal was to uncover the ways they were conceptually connecting terms like 'queer' to transgender identities and experiences. What I found was that the participants saw trans and queer connecting through a disruption in

gender norms, through activism and politics, and through a shared vulnerability to oppression – particularly those who are both trans and queer. To this last point, Paige added:

I think the question of where transgender and queer, how those two interact, I think for me with this course it's been clear to me, that kind of in the spirit of Dean Spades' work, centralizing the most vulnerable of the vulnerable is something that I want to take more and more seriously. I'm looking at those readings from Week 3, "Queer Theory's Erasure of Transgender" and then "Queer Theory's Evil Twin" to say that queer doesn't speak about everyone in the same ways. We have to really pay attention to this. In that week, specifically, I think that the relationship between 'transgender' and 'queer', it's like transgender is almost challenging queer and queer theory to show up in some ways.

(Paige)

Fundamental to all of these manifestations of queer was an intentional subversiveness and a commitment to anti-assimilationist practices. The distinctions made by the participants were nuanced in a way that is rarely captured in teacher education texts, or even empirical and conceptual pieces of scholarship.

Heteronormativity/Heterosexism

Heteronormativity has been a term used in academic scholarship since the 1990s, but gained greater popularity in the 2010s (Google Trends, 2017). In 2005, Celia Kitzinger (2005) defined heteronormativity in this way:

The term 'heteronormativity' is widely used...to describe socio-legal, cultural, organizational, and interpersonal practices that derive from and reinforce a set of taken-for-granted presumptions relating to sex and gender. These include the presumptions that there are only two sexes; that it is 'normal' or 'natural' for people of different sexes to be

attracted to one another; that these attractions may be publicly displayed and celebrated; that social institutions such as marriage and the family are appropriately organized around different-sex pairings. (p. 478)

In this definition, heteronormativity clearly includes a reference to the sex binary, challenging the idea that there are only two sexes. Because sex and gender have been and still are heavily conflated, it is difficult to discern whether Kitzinger is also inferring that there are more than two genders, but let us assume that she is. What concerns me is that, other than including the word ‘transgender’ in the acronym LGBT, Kitzinger—and many others who study, discuss or teach heteronormativity—largely do not contend with the sex/gender binary, transgender experiences, or gender identity; instead, they focus much more heavily on the latter presumptions regarding attraction, public affection, and institutional discrimination (Kean, 2017; Nicolazzo, 2015). For this reason, I am hesitant to assume that scholarship or discussions about heteronormativity necessarily includes transgender identities or reflects transgender knowledge. After conducting the Phase 1 analysis of the syllabus readings, this hesitation proved reasonable: it was not always the case that readings on this topic included gender identity in addition to sexual orientation, and some readings included gender identity in a way that was ambiguous. For example, in Sumara & Davis’ article entitled “Interrupting Heteronormativity: Toward a Queer Curriculum Theory”, it is not clear whether the author’s framing of heteronormativity as being related to “behaviors considered proper to a heterosexual identity” (Sumara & Davis, 1991, p. 192) includes transgender people or not, as the authors’ focus is squarely on issues of sexuality and not gender identity. Similarly, an article by García and Slesaransky-Poe (2010) provides an understanding of heteronormativity that explicitly includes problematizing the gender binary, although not necessarily in a way that forwards transgender awareness. The authors provide a conceptual

deconstruction of the connections between gender identity, gender expression and heteronormativity, forwarding the idea that “the gender binary serves to ensure that we participate in the expected patterns of “appropriate” heterosexuality and corresponding gender identity” (García & Slesaransky-Poe, 2010, p. 247). Although the authors say they intend to differentiate sex and gender, they use girl/woman interchangeably with female, and boy/man interchangeably with male. For example, they define ‘sex’ as “the biological and anatomical differences between women and men, that is, their genitalia” (p. 247) but also define the sex binary as “boy or girl” (p. 246), while later describing gender expressions as being ‘male’ or ‘female’ (p. 249). Going further, the authors do not trouble the idea that a ‘male’ sex at birth should lead to a ‘boy’ and then a ‘man’, and the same for a ‘female’ sex at birth leading to a ‘girl’ and then a ‘woman’; instead, they assert this progression as a given. In this sense, the authors discuss only gender non-conforming behaviors among cisgender youth, and they do not acknowledge or discuss transgender or non-binary gender identities in relation to heteronormativity.

For my participants, however, trans oppression was clearly and intricately tied to heteronormativity. I asked Harold and Casey, in particular, about the connection between heteronormativity and trans oppression, because both of their syllabi featured readings with ‘heteronormativity’ or ‘heterosexism’ in the title. Harold provided a particularly powerful response reflecting his understanding of how trans fits into heteronormativity:

Eli: So in your mind, what is the relationship between heteronormativity and transgender issues?

Harold: I think heteronormativity is the root cause of the majority of social and health issues that trans people experience as they are growing up. As they are older, it is the root

cause of social, economic, educational, housing outcomes that trans people experience. From my reading, and I can't say from my lived experience, but from my reading, it's my understanding that trans people, as a whole, experience workplace discrimination at higher rates than cisgender people, experience homelessness at higher rates, experience suicidality at higher rates, suicide attempts at higher rates, suicide completion at higher rates, higher incidences of obesity or depression or anxiety, higher rates of alcohol and drug abuse, smoking. Less likely to complete school. If they do complete school, lower GPAs, higher rates of absences at school. And from my reading, and I think from my observation, heteronormative expectations in school with respect to dress code, with respect to how they want to live their lives, with respect to which gendered facilities they use, which pronouns they use, how we represent them in school life, how we represent them in the curriculum, impacts whether they feel wanted or not wanted, accepted or not accepted, authentic or not.

Casey described the ways in which heteronormativity and patriarchy are interwoven systems of oppression, and how he stresses the importance of understanding their relationships to each other within a larger context. Casey's class was a required course covering a host of different topics, and so in his short time on the topic of gender and sexuality, he said he focused on the larger context of patriarchy, homophobia and heterosexism, the direct relationships between those systems, and how they play out in a classroom environment. In Casey's words, "the issue is not trans identity, the issue is patriarchy, homophobia, and heterosexism".

In summary, my conversations with the participants were fruitful in gaining insights into the various ways these educators were understanding or conceptualizing gender, queer, and heteronormativity in relation to trans. I discovered that all had a fairly similar approach to

teaching gender as a concept, but had divergent and multiple understandings of queer.

Heteronormativity was understood to be the overarching system of oppression targeting all non-heterosexual and non-cisgender people. In the next chapter, I will provide a summary of my findings in addition to discussing major implications of this study, including some discussion on the ways in which I and the participants grappled with various concepts.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of Findings

In this chapter, I aim to highlight some of the key findings and implications that have emerged from this study. These are both conceptual and empirical in nature, because this study aims at pushing both the dominant conceptual frameworks within teacher education and the methodological approaches typically used to explore transgender and other marginalized groups within education. I propose these findings and implications not as a prescriptive demand or as a list of best practices, but as areas of insight and avenues of possibility.

This dissertation focuses on curriculum as a powerful tool in understanding gender and advancing transgender justice. I have aimed to build on prior work exploring how teacher education courses, instructors, and textbook authors prioritize and approach transgender topics, and work that identifies robust pre-service training on transgender topics as essential preparation for teachers' ability to be an active ally to their transgender students. My study contributes a connecting element between gender theory and curriculum theory, understanding curricular choices as politically and ideologically powerful, in line with scholars of critical curriculum theory, and understanding that the dominant cultural view of gender is harmful and constraining, in line with queer and transgender frameworks.

This study is situated within critical and poststructuralist strands of educational research and within education-focused strands of queer and transgender studies. My study builds on the empirical work emerging from these fields in two important ways. First, it explicitly adopts a critical trans theoretical approach to curriculum analysis. Most empirical work in curriculum studies to date is positioned within and does not challenge the gender binary. It is not uncommon, for example, to see studies that claim to center 'gender' in schooling contexts without

considering or even acknowledging the existence of transgender people. My study takes a different approach, simultaneously troubling the idea of binary gender categories and centering transgender experience and knowledge.

Second, my study builds upon previous work by providing conceptual and contextual insights from instructors who are already working to teach gender in expansive ways. I set out to investigate teacher education curriculum from a theoretical and methodological perspective that would allow the instructors' insights to emerge. I believe, following Tuck and Yang's (2013) forwarding of desire-based rather than victim-based research methodology, that it is just as important to highlight and understand the praxis of instructors making positive contributions to teaching trans as it is to understand the more often researched practices of unsupportive instructors or damaging practices.

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I discussed the relevant prior literature and things that we already know about the intersection between transgender topics and teacher education. Findings by Horn et al. (2010) and Sherwin and Jennings (2007) provide a glimpse into the priorities of teacher education programs and their administrators, but these studies did not capture the priorities of the instructors; before the present study, we had little research exploring what individual instructors are prioritizing in their own classes. Based on the findings of this study, we see that instructors prioritized four major themes in the 80 readings related to transgender topics: 1) School context, 2) Personal identity, 3) Structural/institutional influences, and 4) Activism & Theory. Under the theme of school context, student negative school experiences and education policy and practice were the most numerous topics. Under the theme of structural/institutional influences, the family as an institution was most heavily represented, with several readings providing the perspective of parents of transgender youth. There were

significantly fewer readings that covered topics relevant to personal identity, with a total of eight readings under this theme.

In conversations with the case study participants, I found that establishing class norms of vulnerability and openness, utilizing guest speakers, and providing a space for their students to explore their own gender identity were crucial elements in teaching trans. Instructors found most success in teaching trans when a significant number of faculty and administrators were committed to trans-inclusion. Faculty, department chairs, and deans are all important actors in moving teacher education in a gender-expansive direction. Teacher education programs must play a central role in advancing the movement toward safer, more affirming schools for youth of all genders. The institutional context encountered by the participants were often, but not always, a reflection of issues at the local and state level. The reliance on transitory labor is also a significant factor in the lack of stability or longevity of transgender topics in teacher education courses.

Previous studies have discovered that multicultural and foundations textbooks largely ignore, underrepresent or misrepresent transgender identities, experiences and knowledges (Kean, 2017; MacGillivray & Jennings, 2008; Young & Middleton, 2002); what we did not know before this study is whether instructors are actually using these books in their courses; and if they are not, what other readings they use and how they choose them. The data from this study show that instructors who meet the gender-expansive criteria are not using these textbooks. One participant used an anthology text that was cited by Kean (2017) as having positive and accurate coverage of transgender issues, but otherwise, participants in the case study did not rely on textbooks for a majority of their readings. Instead, they hand-picked personal narratives, empirical studies, non-profit research reports, theoretical pieces, video testimonials, policy

papers, and other resources for their curriculum. For many of my participants, and for me, course development of this kind is a labor of love.

Previous research informs us that pre-service and in-service teachers feel uncomfortable & unprepared to support transgender students or make curricular & pedagogical improvements (Brant, 2017; Meyer, 2008; Payne & Smith, 2014). What we didn't know before this study is how teacher educators are working to improve pre-service preparation in this area. Participants in this study shared insights on certain curricular and pedagogical moves they are making when teaching transgender, such as emphasizing the importance of reflection and self-growth, discomforting the comfortable, and centering the experiential knowledge of trans people and their families.

Implications for theory and practice

The first major implication of this study is that educators are grappling with multiple and sometimes contradictory definitions and conceptualizations. There was nothing standardized or replicable about how the participants defined many of the terms we discussed, such as 'gender', 'queer', and 'transgender'. Their understandings of these terms were deeply informed by their own experiences and positionalities. As I discovered from my conversations with participants, many of these terms can have multiple dimensions – 'queer', for example, can be used as an identity category, a behavior or expression, a theoretical or analytical framework, and/or as a form of politics. It is clear that not all educators do, or should, define or use terms such as 'queer' in the same way; however, I do find it essential that educators critically reflect upon and articulate how they are understanding and using these terms in their teaching and scholarship.

All of the participants in this study taught gender as a social construct, specifically distinguishing it from biological sex, which is a common approach for many educators, in my

experience. Beyond this, several participants used this framing as a way to identify similarities in the everyday gender experiences of cis and trans people, and also to provide an entry into challenging and problematizing the rigidity of the gender binary as it is socially constructed. This was a promising finding for me, because in my own (anecdotal) experience, cisgender educators typically don't offer a nuanced or trans-inclusive understanding of gender in their classes. The participants showed why it is important to understand that within a society where gender is socially constructed, there are people whose self-determined gender identity breaks that highly restrictive binary. Educators who conceive of gender as something that we *do* rather than something we *are*, or understand gender to be performative, should also consider how socially unintelligible identities, expressions and behaviors fit into that conceptualization and ways in which to teach gender in a more trans-inclusive way, as the educators in this study did.

Paige helped changed my understanding of educators who use queer as a framing that includes transgender topics – she said, “I trouble that framing even though I also use that framing”. It clarified for me that using the framing of queer, with trans subsumed within it, does not necessarily mean that you do not find the inclusion of trans within queer problematic or that you do not trouble this categorization in your teaching. Paige had a willingness to question the inclusion of trans within queer, both in her own conceptualization and within her curriculum. This was a refreshing and affirming finding for me. Still, I wonder whether Paige's approach to queer is commonplace, considering her extra-ordinary background with teaching trans and queer topics.

The participants rightfully identified structural discrimination and systemic oppression that causes violence against trans people, and they consistently identified this phenomenon as heteronormativity. Harold identified heteronormativity as having “an element of gender identity

and gender expression as well as sexual orientation and romantic attraction”. This clarification was helpful in seeing that heteronormativity is a system of oppression relevant to transgender people’s lives, and it aids in understanding the complex relationships between sex, gender, and sexuality, but it does not necessarily work as a theoretical construct that can consider transgender people’s experiences outside of interpersonal relationships, marriage/family related institutional structures. To that end, I want to suggest that we need another more specific term to understanding structural oppression against trans people and that is genderism, which is outlined in the first principle of the Critical Trans Framework that I am forwarding. The need for this term was illuminated when Casey said: “I also introduced heterosexism, homophobia, and how it’s all intertwined. Definitely I would stress how the phenomenon of, the oppression of LGBT people. I don’t know the best way to characterize that, and that was part of it. What’s the best language?”. Whereas heteronormativity centers norms of sexuality, marriage, and family, genderism is uniquely focused on gender and all of its various levels and manifestations, irrespective of one’s sexual or romantic orientations. Simply put, genderism is a more relevant and specific means of understanding transgender oppression that centers issues of gender and de-centers issues of sexuality.

The second major implication of this study is the cyclical nature of the lack of training, inclusion, integration of transgender topics in all levels of education. Participants did not feel that their own schooling, including their doctoral programs, prepared them to teach transgender topics. Several participants lamented on the difficulty of finding trans-related curriculum for their own courses because it was not something provided in mainstream educational coursework. Any marginalized area of research is more difficult to find and takes additional time to read. As a

graduate student and as an instructor, it is simpler to call upon the work that has been introduced and recommended to you even though it may not be the most accurate or representative.

Teacher education must recognize transgender people's needs and be responsive to them, attending to the 'epistemology of ignorance' (Mills, 1997; Tuana, 2008) around transgender issues. Second, teacher education has a responsibility to transgender youth to ensure teachers are prepared and justice-minded. Teacher educators must feel comfortable and confident in transgender topics and must be able to model this approach with their students. There must be a programmatic and curricular focus on what it means to teach and affirm all students, especially trans students. We need to not only provide preservice teachers with foundational knowledge and terminology, but provide opportunities to grapple with and implement gender diverse ideas in content methods courses and field experiences. And finally, teacher education needs the voices of transgender people in order to better respond to their needs. This is particularly true for the most marginalized transgender communities such as trans women of color, trans people with disabilities, and undocumented trans people. Teacher education also needs to provide preservice teachers with tools to use when responding to and supporting transgender youth.

The third major implication of this study relates to the present socio-political moment as being gripped by fear and rage. I conducted the one-on-one interviews with participants from October through December of 2016. In the midst of the interviews, Donald Trump won the electoral college vote and became the President of the United States. It is fair to say that the participants of this study assumed, or at least strongly hoped, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton would win the election; I think it is also fair to say that some of us were in shock or denial when Trump won the electoral college vote. It was not until our group discussion in January of 2017, less than a week from Inauguration Day, that I and my participants were

coming to terms with what had happened, and what could happen next. The participants displayed a belief in the power of alliances, coalitions and community to create social transformation, but spoke with hesitation about what is possible in this new political landscape.

Writing this chapter now in December 2017, Trump and his administration have enacted executive orders and rescinded important policies and recommendations set forth by President Obama protecting and supporting trans individuals and other vulnerable populations. These changes are not just isolated to the Department of Education, but have also involved the Department of Justice and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. We are seeing now a rise in both fear and rage. Some are acting upon beliefs rooted in ignorance, fear, and hate; some are fearful for their lives and livelihoods, as federal and some state governments continue to pull funding from social welfare programs and the Affordable Care Act. There is also an abundance of rage; people are taking to the streets, raging at the injustice playing out daily, sometimes hourly, in overwhelming amounts. These actions and the climate of hostility and oppression they provoke have major implications for the efforts to transform teacher education into a gender-expansive and liberatory space.

Limits of the Study

All the participants were White and cisgender, though not all were gender conforming. Considering this positionality, what they knew about trans experience they had learned from a friend, read in a book, or understood through a student. Therefore, the study was limited by the lack of transgender participants or people of color. In future studies, it will be important to do the necessary work of identifying trans educators and/or educators from various racial and ethnic communities, in order to gain valuable insights that were lacking from this study.

Though it was my intention to create a supportive group of instructors who could actively work together on curriculum development or other projects, it did not turn out this way in reality. All the participants were excited to ‘meet’ each other virtually, respected each other and shared openly during our conversation. Since then (January 2017), it has been difficult to re-convene the group and take further action. I contacted the participants to see about meeting up at the AERA conference in April, but only two of the four were attending. When I reached out to them a couple of times over the passing months, only one or two folks responded. This is not to shame them but to point out that maintaining a community and working together on projects is immensely difficult considering all the responsibilities that educators are faced with, particularly considering our geographic distance from each other. And especially, more than the problem of distance, is the daily anxiety so many have felt since Trump took office, the constant concern of and for our most vulnerable populations, every day a new and more terrifying future comes into view. I cannot fault my participants for not being able to fit this onto their already overflowing plates. Still, it is important to find the love and joy in this work. Community-building and coalition-building are essential to surviving and thriving in this neoliberal, trans-antagonistic culture.

Concluding Thoughts

Butler (1988) suggests that through critiquing and questioning the social construction of gender, we may be able to rise from beneath its oppressive force. In order to do this, we must consider how or why we as a culture have such deeply entrenched ideas regarding gender, examine the mundane and implicit beliefs we hold about appropriate gender performance. When all of us, especially educators, are immersed in an epistemology of gender that is binary and restrictive, we are less able to imagine, explore, and express our multifaceted selves. We are less

able to accept these imaginations, explorations, and expressions in others. We may inadvertently support an oppressive gender ideology and approach gender diversity with fear and ignorance. Instead of relying on an essentialist view of gender as either/or, educators must create tools and strategies that help us interrogate our own gender and practice epistemic resistance.

This study provides insights into the curricular practices of teacher educators, and creates a network of educators whose goal is to continue moving teacher education toward trans-inclusiveness together. My participants and I are excited about our plan to create and publish this framework in an upcoming book, which will also include the beginnings of a list of essential texts on transgender topics in education. Many of the participants displayed a belief in the importance and power of alliances and community to create social transformation. Together, we intend to use our collective wisdom and experience to advance the transformation of teacher education in the long run. In the short run, we hope to bring trans and trans-allied educators like ourselves out of isolation, and into a closer relationship and dialogue. In closing, I end with an inspirational quote: “Don’t forget to act. For it is the action grounded in reflection, it is the praxis, that will transform the world” (Blackburn, 2014, p. 55-56).

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Call for Participation

Dear Teacher Educators,

This letter extends an invitation to you to join my research project. For my dissertation study, I am interested in learning about what transgender themes or issues teacher educators are including in their curricula. The first phase of the study will be comprised of a thematic analysis of syllabi. To that end, I am asking for teacher educators of all ranks (faculty, fixed-term, graduate instructors, etc.) to send me a copy of your most recent syllabus featuring issues of gender and/or sexuality with a specific focus on transgender issues. You can participate by filling out [this short survey](#) and sending an electronic version of your syllabus, including the readings/course schedule, to keaneli@msu.edu. I am looking to gather the widest possible range of syllabi; the institution type or program type does not matter, as long as the course is explicitly intended for pre-service teachers. The courses can be required or electives.

There are no known risks or costs to participating in this study. Your participation in this study will not be financially compensated, but your participation will provide insights into the practices of teacher educators with regard to transgender topics. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain anonymous. Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no to participating, and the right to change your mind at any time and withdraw your syllabus from consideration in the study.

If you have concerns or questions about this study, or to report an injury, please contact Dr. Terry Flennaugh at 517-353-9337, flennaug@msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, irb@msu.edu, or 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing MI 48824.

Sincerely,
Eli Kean

Appendix B: Syllabus Matrix

Gender-Restrictive Syllabi

	<u>Syllabus 1</u>	<u>Syllabus 2</u>	<u>Syllabus 3</u>	<u>Syllabus 4</u>
<i>Required or Elective?</i>	Required	Required	Required	Elective (PhD level course)
<i>Trans Included?</i>	Yes	No	Yes	Inherently but not explicitly
<i>How much Trans?</i>	One reading on LGBT youth; includes 5 transgender participants (out of 30)	None	2 readings (one of which is optional); potentially other (unlisted) readings digitally provided to students on Blackboard	N/A
<i>Where is Trans within the course sequence?</i>	1 day in Week 10 out of 15; after history of public schooling (4 weeks), Race & Ethnicity (1 week), Social Class (2 weeks)	There is a week titled 'Gender and sexual identities' but none of the readings refer to transgender people.	Second to last week of class (Week 15 of 16)	No explicit mention of trans*. Lots of focus on 'queer' and one reading with LGBTQ acronym in title.
<i>What readings are explicitly trans-inclusive?</i>	Grossman, A.H., Haney, A.P., Edwards, P., Aless, E.J., Aron, M., and Howell, T.J. (2009). "Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth talk about experiencing and coping with school violence: A qualitative study". Journal of LGBT Youth 6(1), p. 24-46.	One reading called "Playing with Gender" describes the gender identity development of kids in kindergarten, but relies on a binary understanding of gender.	Kroeger (2008) "Doing the Difficult", written by instructor of course, uses LGBTQ acronym but does not talk specifically about transgender people. Second reading is an optional book: Nutt, E. (2015).	Trans may or may not be included in the readings with a 'queer' focus.

	"Becoming Nicole"			
<i>Themes/Perspectives in the Readings?</i>	High school student experience (empirical study): victim stance, means of coping, school recommendations	Gender identity development in early elementary; gender norms	Transgender kids (binary), how families navigate having a transgender child	N/A
<i>Explicit intersections of identity?</i>	No.	N/A	No	N/A
<i>Other trans-inclusive curricular elements?</i>	None	No. Instructor included a 'safe space' graphic on the top of 1st page of the syllabus. Midterm is same week as gender & sexual identity readings, so students are not required to write reflection on that topic.	No	N/A
<i>Gender-Expansive?</i>	No, because only one article to cover the whole of LGBTQ identified students, and transgender participants are underrepresented in the study.	No, because trans* topics are not explicitly covered.	No, because the T in LGBTQ is largely silent.	No, because there are no readings that speak specifically to trans*, and the course is at the PhD level (outside scope)

Gender-Expansive Syllabi NOT in the Case Study

	<u>Syllabus 5</u>	<u>Syllabus 6</u>
Required or Elective?	Elective	Elective
Trans Included?	Yes	Yes
How much Trans?	Thirteen readings explicitly mentioned trans* in the title and/or are written by transgender people.	Out of eight readings, three explicitly discuss trans issues in the title.
Where is Trans within the course sequence?	Transgender is explicitly mentioned (in readings, topics or discussion questions) in four of six weeks. beginning, middle, and end.	First and second week (two of three weeks) incorporate trans readings.
What readings are explicitly trans-inclusive?	(See syllabus)	Transgender Oppression by Catalano & Shlasko (pp. 425-431) PPS Memorandum: Supporting our transgender students and PPS FAQ Trans Woman Manifesto by Serano (pp. 443-446)
Themes/Perspectives in the Readings?	Transgender theory, systems of oppression, social institutions (media/pop culture, medicine, law), social movements. At least four pieces written by transgender people.	Oppressive systems; personal perspective of trans woman; education policies (local, state, federal)
Any explicit intersections of identity?	Very intersectional with issues of sexuality, disability, race.	No
Other trans-inclusive curricular elements?	Assignments including critical review, analysis papers, etc. pull from readings; could easily include trans* topics	Many of the assignments use the phrase "gender and sexuality" to note that students should focus on both. Does not frequently specify gender identity.
Gender-Expansive?	Yes, because it is intersectional, heavy on readings by and about trans* people, includes complex view of trans* people in various social institutions, discusses systems of oppression	Yes, because they address systemic oppression and include first-person narrative from a trans person.

Gender-Expansive Syllabi in the Case Study

Syllabus 7

Syllabus 8

Syllabus 9

Syllabus 10

<i>Required or Elective?</i>	Required	Elective	Elective	Required
<i>Trans Included?</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>How much Trans?</i>	4 readings	12 readings with titles explicitly addressing trans*	23 readings with titles explicitly addressing trans*	Explicitly, 1 reading; though there are several other readings on gender norms, social construction of gender, heterosexism.
<i>Where is Trans within the course sequence?</i>	Week 7 (Reconceptualizing curriculum) and Week 13 (The queer and trans curriculum), of 17 weeks	Dispersed throughout: Weeks 3, 4, 9, 14, 16	Dispersed throughout: Weeks 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13	Week 9, at the top of a 5 week unit of gender, heterosexism, homophobia
<i>What readings are explicitly trans-inclusive?</i>	(See syllabus)	(See syllabus)	(See syllabus)	Kate Bornstein - "Which Outlaws? Or, Who was that masked man?"
<i>Themes/Perspectives in the Readings?</i>	Intersection of gender, race & sexuality; gender theory; systems of oppression; experiences of transgender students	transgender theory; teacher education; heteronormativity; trans* children; trans-inclusion in elementary curriculum; systems of oppression; social institutions; bullying; education policy; transgender authors	psychology of gender identity development & gender dysphoria, heteronormativity, education policy, systems of oppression, experiences of trans youth, experiences of trans youth of color, families with trans children, bullying and violence, trans-inclusion in elementary curriculum;	Trans author; Heteronormativity; gender norms

			transitioning youth, school support structures (counseling, facilities, extracurriculars); sex education	
<i>Any explicit intersections of identity?</i>	Yes, intersecting race and gender (McCready reading)	Yes, race/ethnicity (latinx) and transgender. Many other intersections between 'queer' or 'LGBTQ' and disability, race (black, asian, latino, men of color, women of color)	Yes, race/ethnicity and transgender	No
<i>Other trans-inclusive curricular elements?</i>	Assignments relate to the readings and are open-ended, so students would likely need to engage with trans topics in some assignments.	Nothing explicit, but inherent in assignments focused on 'queer' or 'queering'	Trans student panel, trans school administrator guest speaker, weekly essential questions	No
<i>Gender-Expansive?</i>	Yes, because it is intersectional, includes complex view of trans* people in various social institutions, discusses systems of oppression	Yes, because it is intersectional, includes complex view of trans* people in various social institutions, discusses systems of oppression, includes several trans* authors.	Yes, because it is intersectional, includes complex view of trans* people in various social institutions, discusses systems of oppression, includes several trans* authors.	Yes (slightly), because it includes a trans author and explores systems of oppression

Appendix C: Topics/Themes of Transgender-related Readings

I. School Context

- A. Student negative school experiences (victimhood, means of coping with violence, school bullying)
 - i. Grossman, A.H., Haney, A.P., Edwards, P., Aless, E.J., Aron, M., and Howell, T.J. (2009). "Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth talk about experiencing and coping with school violence: A qualitative study". *Journal of LGBT Youth* 6(1), p. 24-46. High school student experience (empirical study): victim stance, means of coping, school recommendations. Participants were diverse in terms of race and class, and went to urban schools, but "this study did not address issues related to typical urban characteristics, such as poverty, community disorder, racial and ethnic discrimination"
 - ii. GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2012). *Playgrounds and Prejudice: Elementary School Climate in the United States, A Survey of Students and Teachers*. New York: GLSEN.
 - iii. Aragon, S. R., Poteat, V. P., Espelage, D. L., & Koenig, B. W. (2014). The influence of peer victimization on educational outcomes for LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ high school Students. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 11(1), 1-1
 - iv. Meyer, E. J. (2015, January 25). School dangerous for LGBT youth despite legal protections: New data show high risks for LGBT youth at school. *Psychology Today*.
 - v. Biegel, S. (2010). Confronting the challenges faced by transgender youth. In *The right to be out: Sexual orientation and gender identity in America's public schools* (pp. 175-195). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
 - vi. Wyss, S. E. (2004). 'This was my hell': the violence experienced by gender non-conforming youth in US high schools. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 17(5), 709-730.
 - vii. Grossman, A. H., & D'Augelli, A. R. (2006). Transgender youth: Invisible and vulnerable. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 51(1), 111-128. doi: 10.1300/J082v51n01_06
- B. Trans-inclusion in elementary school
 - i. Ryan, C. L., Patraw, J. M., & Bednar, M. (2013). Discussing princess boys and pregnant men: Teaching about gender diversity and transgender experiences within an elementary school curriculum. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 10(1-2), 83-105.
 - ii. Payne, E., & Smith, M. (2014). The big freak out: Educator fear in response to the presence of transgender elementary school students. *Journal of homosexuality*, 61(3), 399- 418.
 - iii. Slesaransky-Poe, G., Ruzzi, L., Dimedio, C., & Stanley, J. (2013). Is this the right elementary school for my gender nonconforming child? *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 10(1-2), 29-44.
- C. Education policies or practices
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sexuality, in all its strange and unexpected manifestations, was seen as ordinary” (Gilbert, p. 25). “In this paper, I have assembled three examples of times when gayness has emerged as controversy and pushed against the limits of educational thought and practice—debates about same-sex marriage, a story about a transgendered youth transitioning in high school, and explicit representations of sexuality in a teacher education classroom. Each example offers a different vantage to consider the qualities of gayness and their relation to teaching and learning. In these examples, I consider how a turn to hospitality might make possible an education that welcomes gayness as ordinary in its manifestations and as a quality of experience that could be made relevant for anyone” (Gilbert, p. 26)

- ii. Quinn, T., & Meiners, E. R. (2011). Teacher education, struggles for social justice, and the historical erasure of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer lives. *Studying diversity in teacher education*, 135-151.
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D. School or district recommendations

- i. GLSEN’s model policies on Enumeration and Bullying
- ii. State and School District guidelines for the support of students and staff who are transgender and/or gender nonconforming
- iii. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2012). *Nondiscrimination on the basis of gender identity Guidance for Massachusetts public schools: Creating safe and supportive school environment*. Boston, MA: Author.
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E. Experiences of trans youth of color

- i. Burdge, H., Licona, A. C., Hyemingway, Z.T. (2014). LGBTQ Youth of Color: Discipline Disparities, School Push-Out, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline. San Francisco, CA: Gay-Straight Alliance Network and Tucson, AZ: Crossroads Collaborative at the University of Arizona.
 - ii. Diaz, E. M. and Kosciw, J. G. (2009). Shared differences: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students of color in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN. (pp. ix- xiv).
 - iii. Bridges, E. (2007). The impact of homophobia and racism on GLBTQ youth of color. Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth.
 - iv. Lance McCREady – “Understand the Marginalization of Gay and Gender Non-Conforming Black Male Students” *“This article proposes a multidimensional framework that takes into account multiple categories of difference and forms of oppression to understand and suggest interventions for gay and gender nonconforming Black male students in urban schools.”* “The term gender non-conforming refers to individuals who blend attributes stereotypically associated with various forms of masculinity and femininity (Connell, 1987)”
- F. Trans youth resilience and/or resistance
 - i. Cruz, C. (2011). LGBTQ street youth talk back: a meditation on resistance and Witnessing. International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Vol. 24, No. 5, September–October 2011, 547–558
 - ii. Scourfield, J., Roen, K., & McDermott, L. (2008). Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people's experiences of distress: Resilience, ambivalence and self destructive behaviour. Health & Social Care in the Community, 16(3), 329-336
 - iii. Singh, A. (2013). Transgender youth of color and resilience: Negotiating oppression and finding support. Sex Roles, 68(11-12), 690-702.
- G. Sex education
 - i. McGarry, R. (2013). Build a curriculum that includes everyone: Ensuring that schools are more accepting of LGBT students and issues requires more than passing mentions of diversity in sex education classes. Phi Delta Kappan, 94 (5), 27.
 - ii. Gowen, L. K., & Wings-Yanez, N. (2014). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youths' perspectives of inclusive school-based sexuality education. The Journal of Sex Research, 51(7), 788-800.
 - iii. Temblador, A. (2015, March 3). Why is LGBT-inclusive sex education still so taboo? Huffpost Gay Voices.
 - iv. Slater, H. (2013, June 21). LGBT-inclusive sex education means healthier youth and safer schools. Center for American Progress.

II. Personal Identity and Interpersonal Relations

A. Gender identity development

- i. One reading called "Playing with Gender" describes the gender identity development of kids in kindergarten, but relies on a binary understanding of gender.

- ii. Olson, K. (2015). Transgender Kids Show Consistent Gender Identity Across Measures.
- iii. American Psychology Association. (2011). Definition of terms: Sex, Gender, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientations. Washington, DC: Author.
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- B. Microaggressions
 - i. Nordmarken, S. (2014). Microaggressions. *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 1(1-2), 129-134. doi: 10.1215/23289252-239981
- C. Medical transition of youth
 - i. Orr, A., Baum, J., Brown, J., Gill, E., Kahn, E., & Salem, A. (n.d.). *Schools in transition: A guide for supporting transgender students in K-12 schools*. Washington, DC: American Civil Liberties Union, Gender Spectrum, Human Rights Campaign, National Center for Lesbian Rights, National Education Association
- D. Gender dysphoria
 - i. American Psychology Association. (2013). *Gender dysphoria: Fact sheet*. Washington, DC: Author.
- E. Pronouns
 - i. Shlasko, D. (2015, February 9). How using 'they' as a singular pronoun can change the world. *Feministing*.

III. Structural/Institutional Influences

- A. Families or Parents with transgender children
 - i. Nutt, E. (2015). "Becoming Nicole"
 - ii. Padawer, Ruth. (August 8, 2012). What's so bad about a boy who wants to wear a dress? *The New York Times*.
 - iii. Spiegel, A. (Host). (2008, May 7). Two families grapple with sons' gender identity. *This American Life*. [Podcast.] Chicago: Chicago Public Radio.
 - iv. Beam, C. (2008) *Transparent: Love, Family, and Living the T with Transgender Teenagers*. New York: Mariner Books. (pp. 10-16, and pp. 61-66).
- B. Social institutions (media, pop culture, medicine, law, marriage)
 - i. Spade, D. (2015). Introduction. *Normal life: Administrative violence, critical trans politics, and the limits of law*. Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 1-19.
 - ii. Spade, D. (2011). What's wrong with rights?
 - iii. Herman, J. L. (2013). Gendered restrooms and minority stress: The public regulation of gender and its impact on transgender people's lives. *Journal of Public Management and Social Policy*, 19(1), 65-79.
 - iv. T. Beauchamp - *Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility: Transgender Bodies and U.S. State Surveillance After 9/11*
 - v. Dean Spade – "Mutilating Gender"
- C. Heterosexism/Heteronormativity

- i. Dennis Sumara & Brent Davis - Interrupting Heteronormativity: Toward a Queer Curriculum Theory: "Working from the premise that discussions of curriculum are not only sexualized, but heterosexualized, we argue that studies of sexuality must become intertwined with all questions of curricular relations" (Sumara and Davis, p. 191). "'Queer' is not meant as a signifier that represents gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered identities. Rather, 'queer' functions as a marker representing interpretive work that refuses what Halley has called 'the heterosexual bribe'-that is, the cultural rewards afforded those whose public performances of self are contained within that narrow band of behaviors considered proper to a heterosexual identity" (Sumara and Davis, p. 192).
- ii. García, A. M., & Slesaransky-Poe, G. (2010). The heteronormative classroom: Questioning and liberating practices. *The Teacher Educator*, 45(4), 244-256. "In this article, we expand the conceptual notions and the corresponding practical implications that challenge the heteronormative classroom, and that create a more expansive and less dichotomous environment for children, giving them latitude to cross traditional gender roles"
- iii. Blackburn, M. V., & Smith, J. M. (2010). Moving Beyond the Inclusion of LGBT Themed Literature in English Language Arts Classrooms: Interrogating Heteronormativity and Exploring Intersectionality. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53(8), 625-634.
- iv. Schilt, K., & Westbrook, L. (2009). Doing gender, doing heteronormativity: "gender normals," transgender people, and the social maintenance of heterosexuality.
- v. Toomey, R. B., McGuire, J. K., & Russell, S. T. (2012). Heteronormativity, school climates, and perceived safety for gender nonconforming peers. *Journal of Adolescence*, 35(1), 187-196. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.03.001>

IV. Activism & Theory

A. Social movements

- i. Mayo, C. (2013). Background to LGBTQ Movements for Equality with a Focus on K-12 Related Issues. *LGBTQ youth and education: Policies and practices*, 17-31.
- ii. Leslie Feinberg – "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time has Come"
- iii. Isaac West – "PISSAR's Critically Queer and Disabled Politics"
- iv. Eli Clare – "Body Shame, Body Pride: Lessons from the Disability Rights Movement"

B. Transgender theory

- i. Kate Bornstein – "Which Outlaws? Or, 'Who was That Masked Man?'"
- ii. Judith Butler – "Diagnosing Gender"
- iii. Stryker, S. (2004). Transgender studies: Queer theory's evil twin. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 10(2), 212-215.
- iv. Susan Stryker – "(De)subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies"
- v. Joan W. Scott – "Gender: Still Useful for Analysis"

- vi. Jacqueline Rose – “Who do you think you are?”
- vii. Stephen Whittle – “Where did we go wrong? Feminism and Trans Theory – Two Teams on the Same Side”
- viii. Cressida Heyes “Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory: The Case of Transgender”
- ix. J. J. Halberstam - “Transgender Butch: Butch/FTM Border Wars and the Masculine Continuum”
- x. Gayle Rubin – “Of Catamites and Kings: Reflections on Butch, Gender, and Boundaries”
- xi. Cathy Cohen - “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens”
- xii. Judith Butler “Critically Queer”
- xiii. Gayle Salamon – “Boys of the Lex: Transgender and the Rhetorics of Materiality”

Appendix D: Guiding questions for interviews

One-on-One Interviews

1. What's the definition of gender that you try to get your students to understand?
2. If you define transgender in your class, what definition do you use?
3. How does transgender fit into your understanding of Queer/Heterosexism/Patriarchy, if at all?
4. Has there been any specific experience(s) in your life that has influenced your understanding of gender diversity/transgender?
5. Can you tell me more about [Readings X and Y or Week 9 and 10]?
 - a. How did you choose these readings?
 - b. How do you use these readings together?
6. How is trans part of assignments?
7. Can you think of a time where a student might have explicitly embraced or outwardly resisted learning about trans topics?
8. What would you like to see come out of this research study? In other words, how can my research help you?

Group Interview/Dialogue

1. Introductions (name, pronoun, institution, course title)
2. What do you think it's most important for pre-service teachers to know about trans issues, and why?
3. Have there been any 'a-ha' moments (for you or your students) in your class while discussing trans topics?
4. What are the contextual factors that matter, when it comes to increasing trans-inclusion in Teacher Prep?
5. What could we do or create that could advance these ideas/possibilities?

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