AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Amélie Ollivier for the degree of Master of Arts in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies presented on June 16, 2017.

Title: "I Couldn't Bring Myself to Say It": Challenging Heteronormativity in Teacher Education Programs.

Abstract approved: _____

Nana Osei-Kofi

School is a hostile environment for many LGBTQ youth. Teachers participate, consciously or unconsciously, in perpetuating oppressive heteronormative expectations in the classroom both through the overt and covert curriculum. Yet, pre-service teachers are under-trained about questions related to gender and sexuality during their teacher preparation. This qualitative study explores the reasons behind this lack of widespread training by focusing on the experiences of eight teacher educators in a public university located in the Northwest of the United States. Data was collected over the course of nine months through the recording of interviews with teacher educators, the analysis of syllabi, class observations, and an online survey answered by eighteen pre-service teachers. Data was then analyzed through an intersectional theoretical framework relying on queer theory, Queer of Color and Queer Indigenous Critiques, and critical pedagogy. Four themes emerged from this analysis, pointing to the limits of certain practices, and to the obstacles faced by teacher educators who were generally hesitant to include non-normative genders and sexualities in their curriculum: Practices, Self, Others, and Institution. Discourses at work around gender and sexuality in education, and the impact that neoliberalism's stranglehold on higher education exerts on faculty's practices highlight the structural factors that also come into play in the absence of preparation for future teachers to challenge heteronormativity.

"I Couldn't Bring Myself to Say It":
Challenging Heteronormativity in Teacher Education Programs

by
Amélie Ollivier

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Arts

Presented June 16, 2017
Commencement June 2017

Master of Arts thesis of Amélie Ollivier presented on June 16, 2017

APPROVED:

_____

Major Professor, representing Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

_____

Director of the School of Language, Culture and Society

_____

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

_____

Amélie Ollivier, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my chair, Dr. Osei-Kofi, for providing me with meaningful feedback and support throughout this process and for giving me the time I needed to conduct this research properly. Many thanks to my committee members: Dr. Boovy, for helping me narrow this project down from the start, Dr. Vue, for her invaluable help with the design of this qualitative study, and Dr. Barnd, for pitching in as a grad rep.

I also want to thank my cohort members for introducing me to new ideas and perspectives, and for providing support at times when we all felt a little hopeless. Special thanks to Reshma, Sanju, and Abritty for the joyful moments that allowed me to keep going, much love to you three.

Thank you to Brenda Mc Cullough, who was able to secure a position as a Teaching Assistant in French for me, and without whom I could not have joined this program. Thanks, Brenda, for your flexibility and kindness.

Many thanks to the eight teacher educators who participated in this study. Obviously, this project would not exist without you. I am truly grateful for the precious time you accepted to spend with me and for your openness during our conversations.

Finally, I want to thank my partner, Clint, for his unwavering love and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

LIST OF TABLES

I.   Introduction to the study

A.   General context

In the last decade or so, questions pertaining to non-normative gender and sexual

identities have come to the forefront of numerous public debates in the United States. From the

fight for the extension of marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples, to the repeal of Don't Ask,

Don't Tell, to the more recent clashes over which bathroom trans* students can use, to the

increased broadcasting of shows and movies that portray LGBTQ characters in a more positive

light, discussions that were probably deemed unconceivable by many before the turn into the

new millennium are now ubiquitous, if not unanimous. It is tempting to think that this is a sign

that times are changing, and that new generations are slowly pushing away the conservative

agendas of their parents, replacing old laws with new policies that are more inclusive and

respectful of gender and sexual diversity. Undeniably, things have been changing and topics that

were taboo twenty years ago are finding their way into daily conversations today. Yet, it is

crucial to keep a critical eye on an evolution that, if it is long overdue, tends to hide deeper

structural issues that are kept out of sight, under unrolled wedding carpets and army uniforms.

Indeed, the recognition of the individual rights of LGBTQ people might not be sufficient to

transform society at large and to ensure that heteronormativity, along with other forms of

oppression, is questioned and unsettled. A thorough examination of the systemic reproduction of

norms that rely upon the marginalization and exploitation of countless people is required to

avoid the incorporation into the mainstream of a few designated people at the expense of

numerous others, and for structural change to take place. The recent election of Donald Trump to

the head of the so-called most powerful democracy in the world reveals the limits of a political system that was built, like many others in the Western world, on settler colonialism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and capitalism. The perfect embodiment of how these forces are entwined, Trump and his ascension to the US presidency demonstrate that we cannot expect to dismantle one without challenging the others.

Unfortunately, education plays a key role as an institution in perpetuating norms that promote assimilation into a model that is funded on the exclusion of those who do not conform to social expectations based on Eurocentric white middle-class heteronormative values. From kindergarten to higher education, schools tend to act as state apparatuses, contributing to shaping students into model citizens and to sorting out those who will fit in and those who will not, feeding the latter to the low-wage job market and the prison-industrial complex that rely on cheap docile labor. A brief inspection of the high school graduation rates in the US for 2012-2013 shows that although the national graduation average is 81.4%, this percentage drops dramatically for American Indian students (69.7%), Black students (70.7%), Hispanic students (75.2%), low income student (73.3%) and children with disabilities (61.9%).[1] Moreover, in 2007-2008, the percentage of public high school teachers with neither a college major nor standard certification in the subject that was their main teaching assignment was drastically higher in schools where students were predominantly Black or Hispanic.[2] Furthermore, high school students whose gender and sexuality do not align with heteronormative standards are much more likely to miss school due to the hostile environment they face there, and when their

[1] US Department of Education "Achievement Gap Narrows as High School Graduation Rates for Minority Students Improve Faster than Rest of Nation" US Department of Education, 2015. Retrieved from http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/achievement-gap-narrows-high-school-graduation-rates-minority-students-improve-faster-rest-nation

[2] Aud, Susan, Fox, Mary Ann and KewalRamani, Angelina "Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups". US department of Education/IES/National Center for Education Statistics, 2010. Retrieved from http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/AIR-NCESracial_stats__trends1_0.pdf

non-normative gender and sexual identities intersect with other marginalized identities, such as race, institutional oppression is felt more strongly.

Nevertheless, as an educator, I also believe that education is a powerful avenue to begin to challenge existing power relations, particularly if teachers enable their students to think critically and to act upon the world around them. This means, however, that K-12 teachers themselves must be willing and able to create the conditions whereby students will become critical thinkers. This, in turn, requires that teachers have had the opportunity to examine their own identities in the light of systems of privilege and oppression. Depending on the social locations of these educators, the only time when they might be provided with such an opportunity could be during their teacher preparation. The question, then, is do teachers receive training that encourage them to reflect upon their positionality, and more specifically, are they prepared to challenge heteronormativity in their future practices? Research shows that there is no widespread preparation of pre-service teachers on this topic across the United States.[3] This research project is motivated by a desire to understand the reasons behind the absence of such training in numerous US teacher education programs.

B.   Researcher's positionality and motivation for this study

As an educator who went through the teacher-training process in France, after 8 years teaching in high school I came to realize how little training I had received about diversity in general and questions surrounding sexuality and gender in particular. Although I considered myself liberal in terms of social values, and introduced more diversity in class material, aiming

---

[3] Gorski, Paul C., Davis, Shannon, N., Reiter, Abigail. "An Examination of the (In)visibility of Sexual Orientation, Heterosexism, Homophobia, and Other LGBTQ Concerns in U.S. Multicultural Teacher Education Coursework" *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 10:224–248, 2013.

to question assumptions about gender and sexuality, I often feared I would do more harm than good if discussions became heated in the classroom. As a straight cisgender white woman who grew up in a heteronormative society, I also know that I unwillingly participate in perpetuating oppressive norms and often catch myself, sometimes too late, asking or saying something that is imbued in heteronormative assumptions, thus reproducing micro-aggressions that contribute to the violence experienced daily by queer people.

This personal experience as a high school teacher in France is what has motivated me to look further into these questions, as it provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my own practices and shortcomings, while situating them within a larger sociocultural context. I started this research process with the assumption that, for some educators, the tendency to have and reproduce heteronormative behaviors is largely due to our lack of awareness and knowledge about questions related to non-normative gender and sexual identities. I also assume that it is equally the result of uncertainty regarding our ability to tackle such controversial issues in the classroom. In the US context, I anticipate that K-12 teachers might also feel immense pressure outside of the classroom from parents, colleagues or administrators who might question or oppose practices inclusive of diverse gender identities and sexualities, to the point where teachers might legitimately fear being fired.[4] Given this environment, we could expect that pre-service educators would benefit from training focused on how to bring up these difficult questions in the K-12 classroom so they are willing and feel better prepared to deal with the personal and professional implications of challenging heteronormativity in the workplace. Yet, such preparation is lacking in US teacher education programs, just as it is lacking in France.

---

[4] Kalmbach Phillips, Donna, Legard Larson, Mindy. "Preservice teachers respond to And Tango Makes Three: deconstructing disciplinary power and the heteronormative in teacher education" in *Gender and Education* Vol. 24, No. 2, March 2012, pp 159–175

C. Research statement

With this project, I intend to contribute to the research on the relation between education and heteronormativity by examining the ways teacher educators reproduce or question oppressive norms pertaining to gender and sexuality in their practices. I hope to provide information that might enable teacher educators to challenge the reproduction of this form of oppression and to equip pre-service teachers with tools to disrupt heteronormative assumptions in the classroom.[5]

Through this qualitative study, I explore the practices of eight teacher educators working in three different teacher preparation programs within a university located in the Northwest of the United States, and try to understand the way they perceive their ability to challenge oppressive norms, and the obstacles that may prevent them from doing so. This research is guided by two main questions: (1) How do teacher educators in this study prepare pre-service teachers to challenge heteronormativity in their future practices, if at all? (2) What factors may influence teacher educators' practices when it comes to challenging heteronormativity in teacher education programs?

D. Research biases

As mentioned before, this research is informed by my experience and identity as a French straight cisgender high school teacher who struggled to find ways to be inclusive of LGBTQ identities in her practices. I started this research wondering, rather naively, why my teacher education program in France had not prompted me, as a pre-service teacher, to raise questions related to equity and diversity, and to take a critical stand when considering the numerous ways

---

[5] DePalma, Renée. "Choosing to lose our gender expertise: queering sex/gender in school settings" in *Sex Education*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2013, pp.1–15.

education participates in the reproduction of oppressive norms such as heteronormativity. This positionality means that, to a certain extent, I can identify with educators, both K-12 teachers and teacher educators, who are willing to bring up gender and sexuality in their practices, but unsure of how to do so. However, because of my nationality, I probably am not entirely aware of the specific power relations at play in the US context that may add to the social pressure felt by some educators not to introduce these questions in their curriculum.

Moreover, despite my attempts to constantly examine my biases, I am considering these issues from the safe perspective of my privileged positionality as a straight cisgender white person. This position has certainly impacted this research, from the design of the study to the final discussion, as well as the interactions I had with participants. Additionally, this project is conducted in the context of a Master's degree, which implies that its completion and validation by the university system require abiding by certain norms and regulations. This means that through this research itself, I might unconsciously perpetuate the norms and values that I mean to unsettle.

E.   Definition of terms

In this paper, I use several terms that may not be familiar to all readers. Indeed, I personally was introduced to some of these words only as a result of my experience as a graduate student in a Women's studies program. As I mention in my final discussion, language is key to understanding power relations, and our ignorance of certain words and concepts can reflect the power dynamics that ensure that we remain unexposed to certain knowledge that would disrupt systems of oppression. Thus, in this section, I provide readers with definitions that should enable a better understanding of identities and of norms that shape these identities.

Sex: Sex refers to biological characteristics that describe an individual, such as, but not limited to internal and external genitalia or sex hormones. Although sex is often thought of in binary terms (male/female), a significant number of people are *intersex*, meaning they were born with biological characteristics that do not fit neatly in the division between male and female. This reality prompts some scholars to point out that our perception of sex is socially constructed and that we privilege a binary understanding of sex over a more complex one.[6]

Gender: Gender is a social construction that is often equated with sex but that is distinct from biological characteristics. Gender identity and gender expression are two components of gender. *Gender identity* is "our internal experience and naming of our gender."[7] Most people identify as a man or a woman, but some people identify as somewhere in between, or neither. *Gender expression* is "the way we show our gender to the world around us (through such things as clothing, hairstyles, and mannerisms)."[8] Most people's sex, gender identity and gender expression align along social norms that assume, for instance, that someone born with a female sex should identify as a woman and express their gender in a feminine way. Yet, for many people such an alignment does not reflect their inner sense of self.

Cisgender: Cisgender refers to someone whose gender identity aligns with their assigned gender at birth, which itself was based on their sex.

Transgender or **Trans***: In this paper, transgender or trans* refer to people whose gender identities and/or expressions are not aligned with the gender they were assigned at birth. I also use these words as umbrella terms to refer to people who identify as gender non-

---

[6] Fausto-Sterling, Anne. *Sex/Gender: Biology in a Social World*. Hoboken: Francis: Taylor & Amp, 2012.
[7] Gender Spectrum. "Understanding Gender". https://www.genderspectrum.org/quick-links/understanding-gender/
[8] *Ibid.*

conforming, such as but not limited to, genderqueer, genderfluid, genderless or Two-Spirit people.

LGBTQ: This acronym refers to people whose sexual identities (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer) and gender identities (Transgender, Queer) do not conform to dominant social norms. Although additional letters may be added to this acronym, I use it as an umbrella term that includes any identity that is marginalized because it challenges hegemonic sexual and gender expectations. When I am citing research, I may adjust the acronym to reflect the wording used by the researchers.

Queer: Queer is a term that has been re-appropriated by the LGBTQ community and which I use in this paper to describe sexual and gender identities and expressions that do not conform to dominant norms.

Hidden curriculum: The hidden curriculum is "a set of implicit messages relating to knowledge, values, norms of behavior and attitudes that learners experience in and through educational processes." [9] Although educators might not be aware of it, they contribute to the reproduction of norms which they have internalized through their socialization process, and which permeate their teaching practices, from the language they unconsciously use to the pedagogical choices they intentionally make. One such set of norms the hidden curriculum helps perpetuate is heteronormativity, defined below.

Heteronormativity: "Heteronormativity is the assumption [conscious or unconscious] that heterosexuality and cisgender identities are natural, normal, and socially appropriate. It is the standard by which other sexual practices and gender identities are deemed deviant."[10]

---

[9] Skelton, Alan. "Studying hidden curricula: Developing a perspective in the light of postmodern insights" in *Curriculum Studies*, 5(2) (1997): 177-193, p. 188.

[10] Mann, Susan Archer. *Doing Feminist Theory: From Modernity to Postmodernity*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012, p.416

Defined more broadly, heteronormativity is tied to expectations regarding norms about sexual practices, relationships and gender identities. For instance, the sexual practices, relationships and gender identities of many ethnic and racial groups have often been deemed deviant throughout history based on white middle class heteronormative standards.

Homonormativity: Homonormativity is a term developed by queer theorists to point to the limits of a gay and lesbian political agenda that is "organized exclusively around the pursuit of equal rights and the rights granted to white, middle-class heterosexuals, such as privacy, domesticity, consumption, and patriotic citizenship."[11] These scholars argue that by solely aiming for incorporation into the mainstream, people who hold marginalized identities participate in the perpetuation of oppressive norms as they do not question the structural causes of discrimination.

F. Outline of the thesis

In this thesis, I attempt to identify the reasons behind a lack of preparation of pre-service teachers to tackle heteronormativity in their classrooms, by focusing on the experiences of eight teacher educators in a large land-grant university of the Pacific Northwest. Although I draw from my personal experience as an educator, I inscribe this research in larger efforts that aim to challenge hegemonic powers that persist in the United-States, in a socio-political context that promotes neoliberal values and their reliance on settler colonialism, white supremacy and heteropatriarchy.

In the second chapter of this paper, Literature Review and Theoretical Framework, I present briefly the scholarly work that focuses on the reproduction of heteronormativity in

---

[11] *Ibid.* p, 416-417

education and its impact on K-12 students. I also summarize the literature on the role educators at every level play in perpetuating this form of oppression, and the lack of preparation that characterizes teacher training in the US. Next, I introduce the conceptual framework that I use throughout this study to analyze and discuss the data collected. I conclude this chapter with a presentation of the theories and critiques that informed my work, namely queer theory, Queer of Color and Queer Indigenous critiques, and critical pedagogy.

In the third chapter, Methodology and Methods, I explain my choice for a qualitative methodological approach; describe the setting and context in which the research took place; introduce the participants; present the various data collection methods I used; describe the steps I followed to analyze and interpret the data; and define the impact that my positionality as a researcher has had on this research.

The fourth chapter, Results and Analysis, presents the results of my analysis of the data I collected over a period of one year on this specific site. It is organized by themes and subthemes that emerged through my examination of the data. The main themes explored in this chapter are Practices, Self, Others, and Institution.

In the last chapter of this thesis, Discussion and Conclusion, I reflect upon the implications raised by the analysis of the results. I first consider them in light of previous research, then I focus on two aspects of these considerations, namely the importance of the power of discourse and language when maintaining or challenging heteronormativity, and the role neoliberalism plays in creating an environment that hinders collaboration and thus collective resistance to hegemonic powers. Finally, I provide recommendations for teacher education programs that encourage the examination and subversion of heteronormative practices. I conclude with a description of several directions for future research on this topic.

II.   Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

A.   Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce a brief review of the literature that starts with an analysis of the dramatic impact of heteronormativity in K-12 classrooms as it affects LGBTQ students in particularly worrying ways. I then move from K-12 students to K-12 teachers as data shows a lack of intervention and preparation on their part to deal with these issues. After looking into pre-service teachers' professional dispositions and identity formation, I continue with a review of the literature that focuses on teacher education programs and that reveals a widespread absence of LGBTQ-inclusion in these programs' curricula. I conclude this review of the literature with a summary of the little research that has been conducted on teacher educators' perceptions of their practices regarding the interruption of heteronormativity in education. In this chapter, I also introduce the theoretical framework that I use throughout this study to analyze and discuss the data collected during this research: I present the theories and critiques that informed my work, namely queer theory, Queer of Color and Queer Indigenous critiques, and critical pedagogy.

B.   Review of Prior Research

1.   LGBTQ youth and school

Schooling plays a crucial role in identity formation as it provides a social environment that influences the way we perceive ourselves and others.[12] Thus, it is necessary for the

---

[12] Maccoby, E. E. "Gender and group process: a developmental perspective". In *Readings on the development of children* (*4th ed.*), edited by M. Gauvain, & M. Cole, 187–191. New York: Worth, 2005.

education system to offer every student an environment in which they can both thrive and critically examine their sense of self as it relates to others in society. Yet, data reveals that students whose gender or sexuality does not align with heteronormative expectations are much more likely to feel excluded or even threatened at school than their non-LGBTQ peers. A 2015 survey by GLSEN reports that the most common types of biased remarks high school students heard were expressions using "gay" in a negative way, (55.0% heard them often or very often), sexist remarks (56.0% heard them often or very often), and racist remarks (55.4% heard them often or very often).[13] Similarly, LGBTQ students experienced higher levels of bias-based bullying and harassment. Specifically, compared to non-LGBTQ students, they were more likely to be bullied or harassed based on actual or perceived sexual orientation (67.0% vs. 13.5%), gender expression (59.7% vs. 17.6%), gender (39.9% vs. 17.0%), appearance and body size (68.4% vs. 50.3%), ability (26.7% vs. 12.2%) and race (36.7% vs. 31.2%).[14] As a result, LGBTQ students were twice as likely to have missed school in the month before the survey because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.[15]

Furthermore, LGBTQ youth of color face multiple forms of discrimination which increase their chances of being bullied and dropping out of school. Research led by the Gay Straight Alliance Network and the University of Arizona shows that nearly a third of participants who were bullied experienced harassment based on both race/ethnic identity and gender identity/sexual orientation. Unsurprisingly, this group reported the lowest feelings of safety at

---

D'Augelli, Anthony R., and Patterson, Charlotte J. *Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identities over the Lifespan Psychological Perspectives*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

[13] Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teachers.* New York: GLSEN, 2016. p.13-14

[14] *Ibid*. p.25

[15] *Ibid*. p.23

school.[16] LGBTQ youth of color also reported increased surveillance and policing, harsh school discipline and biased application of policies, as well as being blamed for their own victimization.[17] For the authors, this creates the conditions for a "school push-out" which sets LGBTQ youth of color on a path towards the juvenile justice system, in which LGBTQ youth make up approximately 15% of the juvenile detention population (vs. 6% of the general population),[18] thus contributing to the perpetuation of the school to prison pipeline affecting youth of color.

Finally, suicide attempts among sexual minority youth are much higher than for their heterosexual peers (8.3 % vs. 2%), with lesbian, gay and bisexual Latino/a and Native American/Pacific Islander youth being found to have a higher prevalence of suicide attempts than white lesbian gay and bisexual youth.[19] Transgender and gender non-conforming people also face a much higher risk of attempting suicide, with, for instance, 45% of 18-24 year-old and 56% of Native American or Alaska Native transgender and gender non-normative identified individuals having attempted suicide. Harassment, bullying, or assault by other students and/or by teachers due to anti-transgender bias while in school is also a common experience shared by more than half transgender and gender non-conforming identified adults who attempt suicide.[20]

---

[16] Burdge, H., Licona, A. C., Hyemingway, Z. T. *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, 2014 Retrieved from https://gsanetwork.org/files/aboutus/LGBTQ_brief_FINAL-web.pdf

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Irvine, A., *"We've Had Three of Them": Addressing the Invisibility of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Gender Non-Conforming Youths in the Juvenile Justice System.* Columbia Journal of Gender and Law. (19) 3, 676-677 (2010).

[19] Bostwick, Wendy B., Meyer, Ilan, Aranda, Russell, Frances Stephen, Hughes, Tonda, Birkett, Michelle, Mustanski Brian "Mental Health and Suicidality Among Racially/Ethnically Diverse Sexual Minority Youths" *Am J Public Health.* 2014 Jun; 104(6): 1129–1136

[20] Haas, Ann P., Philip L. Rodgers, and Jody L. Herman. "Suicide attempts among transgender and gender non-conforming adults." *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law,* 2014.

Depicting LGBTQ youth with such grim data might inadvertently contribute to reinforcing prejudices against this diverse group of people, and it is important to emphasize that many LGBTQ-identified students thrive both academically and personally. However, it is also crucial to recognize this harsh reality in order to underline the significant role that education can play as an institution both in reproducing or deconstructing hidden heteronormative expectations that affect all students, faculty, and staff in schools every day at every level, but that have an especially dramatic impact on the lives of students who do not conform to these norms.

2. K-12 Teachers and Heteronormativity

Although research shows that most teachers recognize it is part of their role as educators to ensure safe and supportive school environments for LGBTQ students, many struggle when it comes to addressing LGBTQ-related issues in their schools. For instance, teachers report being more comfortable addressing bias and bullying related to race, ability, or religion than incidents involving sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.[21] Moreover, only half of teachers actually engage in specific efforts to support LGBTQ students, such as displaying visible symbols of support, incorporating LGBT topics into their curriculum, or advocating for inclusive policies in their schools.[22] Even when teachers do incorporate LGBTQ topics in their teaching, it is not clear whether they go beyond basic inclusion to challenge norms and critique systems of oppression such as heterosexism.[23] Other studies, however, point to teachers' absence of intervention when LGBTQ students are bullied and even to their active participation in bullying through mockery or criticism of students' gender identity or expression. Some scholars thus

---

[21] Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teachers.* New York: GLSEN, 2016, p.64
[22] *Ibid.* p.65
[23] Snapp, Shannon D., Burdge, Hilary, Licona, Adela C., Moody, Raymond L. and Russell, Stephen T. "Students' Perspectives on LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum" in *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 48:2 (2015) 249-265

insist that providing safe spaces through Gay Straight Alliances or including diversity statements in the school's official policy are not enough to bring about change if they are not accompanied by a deeper systemic analysis of the ways heteronormativity works within schools.[24]

On the whole, K-12 teachers tend to reproduce, consciously or not, heteronormative attitudes in the classroom, from assigning specifically gendered tasks to boys and girls in elementary schools,[25] to ignoring students' active plea to be more inclusive of queer issues in the curriculum,[26] or to engaging in processes that reinforce students' normative understanding of masculinity and sexuality.[27] Indeed, the intentional and unintentional messages that are conveyed at school regarding gender identity and sexuality provide the heteronormative environment in which children negotiate their own identities throughout the years. At school, from the youngest age, children are often divided into groups by gender,[28] are assigned color codes by gender ("blue for the boys, pink for the girls"), are read books about heterosexual families solely, are asked about their crushes (only deemed acceptable if involving children of the opposite gender), are scolded or suspended if they wear an item of clothing that does not match their assumed gender, and more generally are expected to behave according to their gender ("boys don't cry", "ladies do not raise their voices").[29] Teachers are expected to abide by the same rules and although it is perfectly acceptable for a heterosexual educator at any level to mention their partner, it is often impossible for a gay or lesbian teacher to do so without legitimate fear of

---

[24] Freitag, M. "Safety in unity: One school's story of identity and community" *The Handbook of Gender and Sexualities in Education.* Peter Lang: New York. 2014.
[25] Connell, R.W. "Teaching the Boys: New Research on Masculinity, and Gender Strategies for Schools." *Teachers College Record* 98, no. 2 (1996): 206–35.
[26] Snapp, Shannon D., Burdge, Hilary, Licona, Adela C., Moody, Raymond L. and Russell, Stephen T. "Students' Perspectives on LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum"
[27] Pascoe, C. J. *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. p.58
[28] Woolley, Susan, W. "**"Boys Over Here, Girls Over There": A Critical Literacy of Binary Gender in Schools". *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 2(3) (2015): 376-394
[29] Bryan, Jennifer. *From the Dress-Up Corner to the Senior Prom: Navigating Gender and Sexuality Diversity in PreK-12 Schools*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

retaliation from parents or the school administration.[30] This heteronormative bias and its impact on student identity development needs to be made visible to educators if this form of oppression is to be challenged at the institutional and structural levels. Indeed, K-12 teachers who receive professional development in LGBTQ issues tend to engage in LGBTQ-supportive practices at a much higher level than those who do not (70% vs 40%).[31] Yet, beyond providing a welcoming environment for LGBTQ students, teachers must be encouraged to recognize their own, sometimes unwilling, participation in the perpetuation of a set of expectations based on rigid definitions of gender and sexuality.

3. Pre-service teachers' professional dispositions and identity formation

The importance of teacher dispositions has been officially recognized by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) since 2000.[32] Professional standards set by the NCATE emphasize the need for teacher education programs to ensure that "[c]urriculum, field experiences, and clinical practice promote candidates' development of knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions related to diversity,"[33] diversity being defined by NCATE as "[d]ifferences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area."[34] Teacher dispositions, which can be described as a teacher's beliefs and

---

[30] Murray, Olivia, Jo.*Queer Inclusion in Teacher Education : Bridging Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

[31] Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. *From Teasing to Torment*.

[32] Ford, Theron N., and Linda Quinn. "First year teacher education candidates: what are their perceptions about multicultural education?" *Multicultural Education*, vol. 17, no. 4 (2010), p. 18. Retrieved from: *Academic OneFile*, go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=AONE&sw=w&u=s8405248&v=2.1&id=GALE%7CA259680522&it=r&asid=a3a341 32e0b6f8c4c81280303d8402c7. Accessed 21 May 2017.

[33] NCATE. *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions*. National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008, p.34

[34] *Ibid*. p.86

attitudes, largely contribute to the learning, motivation and development of students, as well as to the formation of a teacher's identity and professional growth.[35]

K-12 teachers' professional dispositions toward questions of gender identity and sexuality vary greatly whether we consider their stated believes or their actual practices. It is important to note that although a large majority of K-12 teachers agree that they have an obligation to ensure safe and supportive learning environments for LGBTQ students, about 1 out of 10 disagrees.[36] Even among those who do agree that it is their professional responsibility to do so, many do not act on this belief, with over 40% of them explaining that addressing LGBTQ issues in their classroom did not seem necessary as these questions did not come up in class, and with about 10% stating they did not know how to address these questions.[37] This data suggests that teachers first need to be aware of the pervasiveness and impact of heteronormativity in schools before they can be expected to develop professional dispositions and acquire skills that challenge dominant paradigms.

Such awareness and dispositions might be acquired during teacher training, which is an opportune time for pre-service teachers to examine their teacher identity. Like most identities, teacher identity is formed through experience and may vary through time and space.[38] Indeed, pre-service teachers have begun to develop their teacher identity long before their integration within a teacher training program. Their own experience with the education system as well as

---

[35] Ford, Theron N., & Quinn, Linda. (2010). "First year teacher education candidates" p.18

[36] Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. *From Teasing to Torment.*

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] Davey, Ronnie. *The Professional Identity of Teacher Educators: Career on the Cusp?* Teacher Quality and School Development Series. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2013, p.31
Vavrus, Michael. "Sexuality, Schooling, and Teacher Identity Formation: A Critical Pedagogy for Teacher Education." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 25, no. 3 (2009): 383-90.
Luehmann, April Lynn. "Identity Development as a Lens to Science Teacher Preparation." *Science Education* 91, no. 5 (2007): 822-39.
Sosu, Edward and Gray, Donald. "Investigating Change in Epistemic Beliefs: An Evaluation of the Impact of Student Teachers' Beliefs on Instructional Preference and Teaching Competence." *International Journal of Educational Research* 53 (2012): 80-92.

their experience of diversity influence their dispositions toward diverse students in the

classroom. As most pre-service teachers in the US are white and very likely cisgender and

heterosexual in majority, their experience with diversity when it comes to race, ethnicity, and

gender identity and sexuality may be limited. Student teachers' dispositions toward non-

normative genders and sexualities have been shown to vary, with some pre-service teachers

resisting the introduction of queer-inclusive material in teacher education programs while others

are eager to be better prepared to deal with gender and sexuality questions in the classroom.[39]

For instance, research conducted in Texas in 2008 shows that more than 30% of the pre-

service teachers surveyed considered gay and lesbian relationships as wrong or a sin.[40] Other

research points to pre-service teachers' inability to conceptualize the intersection of racism and

heterosexism. Indeed, because they perceive racism as a historical reality only and heterosexism

as a contemporary issue, some student teachers are unable to analyze the ways these two systems

of oppression are co-constituted and fail to recognize the specific forms of discrimination that

queer students of color experience, thus hindering their ability to interrupt the reproduction of

heteronormativity in their classrooms, and perpetuating the widespread equation of queerness

with whiteness.[41] However, research also shows that teacher candidates who were provided with

instruction about LGBT youth strongly appreciated this new knowledge.[42] Additionally, asking

pre-teachers to reflect upon their own experiences as students in the education system regarding

---

[39] Wyatt Tammy J., Oswalt, Sara B., White, Christopher and Peterson, Fred L. "Are tomorrow's teacher ready to deal with diverse students? Teacher candidates' attitude toward gay males and lesbians." *Teacher education quarterly*, Spring 2008; Sears, James,T.. *Gay Lesbian and Transgender issue in education: program, policies and practices.* Routledge, 2005; Gorski, Paul C., Davis, Shannon, N., Reiter, Abigail. "An Examination of the (In)visibility of Sexual Orientation, Heterosexism, Homophobia, and Other LGBTQ Concerns in U.S. Multicultural Teacher Education Coursework" *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 10 (2013): 224–248

[40] Wyatt, Tammy Jordan, Oswalt, Sara B., White, Christopher, and Peterson, Fred L. "Are Tomorrow's Teachers Ready to Deal with Diverse Students?" p.171

[41] Shelton, Stephanie Anne, and Meghan E. Barnes. ""Racism Just Isn't an Issue Anymore": Preservice Teachers' Resistances to the Intersections of Sexuality and Race." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 55 (2016): 165.

[42] Athanases, S., & Larrabee, T. "Toward a consistent stance in teaching for equity: Learning to advocate for lesbian- and gay-identified youth". *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 19(2) (2003): 237–261.

issues of gender and sexuality can help them become aware of their own positionality in the power dynamics that affect students, and thus can impact pre-service teachers' dispositions toward LGBTQ issues in the classroom.[43]

Thus, recognizing teacher identity as socially constituted and fluid implies that teacher education programs can contribute to teachers' identity formation. As student teachers become aware of the need to challenge heteronormativity in their future professional environment, they will likely be more inclined to reflect upon their dispositions toward gender and sexual diversity, and to transform their practices in meaningful ways.

4.   Questioning Heteronormativity in Teacher Education Programs

More than 70% of surveyed K-12 teachers think that efforts made in teacher training to create safer schools for LGBTQ students would be helpful, with more than 25% of them thinking it would be extremely helpful.[44] Yet, research shows a lack of widespread training for pre-service teachers regarding LGBTQ issues and silence often prevails in teacher education programs about these questions, including in multicultural coursework that focuses on diversity.[45] For instance, studies found that 44.4% of the elementary teacher preparation programs surveyed and 40% of the secondary teacher programs did not include sexual orientation topics within official program curricula, although many such programs stated their commitment to the promotion of diversity.[46] When included, these topics are usually limited to foundational and multicultural courses, and are rarely included in methods classes and classes

---

[43] Vavrus, Michael. "Sexuality, Schooling, and Teacher Identity Formation"

[44] Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. *From Teasing to Torment.* p.74-75

[45] Snapp, Shannon and co. "Students' Perspectives on LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum"; Gorski, P. C. and co. "An examination of the (in) visibility of sexual orientation, heterosexism, homophobia, and other LGBTQ concerns"; Wyatt Tammy J., "Are tomorrow's teacher ready to deal with diverse students?"

[46] Jennings, Todd & Sherwin, Gary. "Sexual orientation topics in elementary teacher preparation programs in the USA." *Teaching Education*, 19:4 (2008): 261-278,
Sherwin, Gary & Jennings, Todd. "Feared, Forgotten, or Forbidden: Sexual orientation topics in secondary teacher preparation programs in the USA. *Teaching Education, 17*(3) (2006): 207-223.

related to field placements. Furthermore, although an increasing number of foundational and multicultural textbooks include LGBTQ topics, they remain very superficial in their treatment as they fail to address the diversity of LGBTQ identities and the interplay of various systems of oppression, thus ignoring the deeper structural forces at work in the reproduction of heteronormativity.[47]

Consequently, scholars call for more research on teacher education programs and insist that LGBTQ issues should be included in curricula more thoroughly and more broadly, not limiting these questions to the single multicultural course pre-service teachers will take during their entire teacher preparation. However, scholars also warn that teacher educators should not be satisfied with an "add-and-stir" approach, but use queer theory to challenge heteronormativity and binary logics typical of Western cultures. Indeed, many scholars critique a liberal understanding of multicultural education that only focuses on diversity through the celebration of differences and visibility, and thus contributes to reinforcing a binary understanding of the self as constituted against the Other, without addressing the power relations and inequalities that make this identity formation possible. Such an approach, they contend, tends to focus on individual differences and biases, and fails to encourage pre-service teachers to engage with systemic discrimination.[48]

---

[47] Jennings, Todd. "Is the mere mention enough? Representation across five different venues of educator preparation." In *Gender and sexualities in Education: A reader.* Edited by D. Carlson & E. Meyer. New York: Peter Lang, 2014. pp 400-413

[48] Lehr, Jane L. "Beyond Nature." In *Queering Straight Teachers: Discourse and Identity in Education* Edited by Pinar, William, and Rodriguez, Nelson M.. Place of Publication Not Identified: Peter Lang, 2007.
Macintosh, Lori. "Does Anyone Have a Band-Aid? Anti-Homophobia Discourses and Pedagogical Impossibilities." *Educational Studies* 41, no. 1 (2007): 33-43, p.40
Carlson, Dennis. "Who Am I? Gay Identity and a Democratic Politics of the Self." In *Queer theory in education*. Edited by Pinar, W. F. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998. p107-119
Payne, Elizabethe C., and Melissa J. Smith. "Safety, Celebration, and Risk: Educator Responses to LGBTQ Professional Development." *Teaching Education* 23, no. 3 (2012): 265-85.
Murray, Olivia Jo. "'Outing' Queer issues in teacher preparation programs. How Pre-Service Teachers Experience Sexual and Gender Diversity in Their Field Placements." Doctoral Dissertation, Portland State University, 2011

Similarly, homonormative assimilationist strategies that consist in underlining the idea that LGBTQ people are just like cisgender and heterosexual people amount to promoting dominant notions of normalcy and respectability that exclude people whose identities and practices are deemed too transgressive to be represented in an educational setting aiming for inclusion. This is especially true of people of color and economically disenfranchised people, whether or not they identify as LGBTQ, whose lifestyles have historically been cast as deviant by white middle and upper class standards.[49] Thus, modelling the use of inclusive curricula and positive representations in teacher education programs is not sufficient if it is not accompanied by work that aims to guide pre-service teachers toward self-examination and a questioning of issues such as heterosexism, racism, classism or ableism at the larger structural level. Only if such examination takes place can preservice teachers begin to be equipped with tools that allow them to fully integrate questions of gender and sexuality in their discipline and to lead confidently potentially heated discussions about these topics in their classrooms.

Yet, how can teacher educators, who themselves are "susceptible to the same heteronorming socializations as their K–12 counterparts",[50] prepare pre-service teachers to challenge heteronormativity in an educational context, higher education, that is also perceived as threatening to many LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff?

5.   Teacher educators and heteronormativity

Allen, Louisa. "Queer pedagogy and the limits of thought: teaching sexualities at university" in *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34:4 (2015): 763-775

 Renn, Kristen A. "LGBT and Queer Research in Higher Education: The State and Status of the Field." *Educational Researcher* 39, no. 2 (2010): 132-41.

[49] Jennings, T. "Teaching transgressive representations of LGBTQ people in educator preparation: Is conformity required for inclusion?" *The Educational Forum*, *79*(4) (2015): 451-458.

[50] Gorski, P. C., Davis, S. N., & Reiter, A. "An examination of the (in) visibility of sexual orientation, heterosexism, homophobia, and other LGBTQ concerns" p.229.

In a growing body of self-studies, a number of teacher educators have written about their own attempts to include LGBTQ content in their curriculum and to challenge heteronormativity in their professional environment, questioning the effectiveness of their practices and encouraging more research in this area.[51] However, very little research has been published on the training teacher educators receive pertaining to LGBTQ questions, and on the obstacles that prevent teacher educators from incorporating these questions in their daily interactions with pre-service teachers. More generally, the literature on teacher education in the West "continues to lack references on the critical examination of teacher educators' underlying beliefs and dispositions."[52]

Teacher educators mostly come from the same education system K-12 students and pre-service teachers do, with a large proportion of faculty having taught in K-12 schools before becoming teacher educators and turning to teacher education with relatively little formal preparation in this field.[53] Research also shows that, just like pre-service teachers, faculty in teacher education programs are mostly white. Moreover, seasoned teacher educators consider their knowledge of multicultural issues as low, compared to teacher educators who entered the field more recently.[54] In these conditions, one can legitimately expect that most teacher educators

---

[51] Macintosh, Lori. "Does Anyone Have a Band-Aid?" p.40.
Petrovic, John E., and Jerry Rosiek. "Disrupting the Heteronormative Subjectivities of Christian Pre-Service Teachers: A Deweyan Prolegomenon." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 36, no. 2 (2003): 161-69.
Alvarez McHatton, Patricia, Harold Keller, Barbara Shircliffe, Carlos Zalaquett, and Stevenson, Michael R. "Examining Efforts to Infuse Diversity Within One College of Education." *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 2, no. 3 (2009): 127-35.
Asher, Nina. "Made in the (Multicultural) U.S.A.: Unpacking Tensions of Race, Culture, Gender, and Sexuality in Education. (Author Abstract)(Report)." *Educational Researcher*. Educational Researcher, Annual, 2007.
[52] Cameron, M. and Baker, R. *Research on Initial Teach education in New Zealand, 1993-2004: Literature Review and annotated bibliography*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 2004, p.35
[53] Davey, Ronnie. *The Professional Identity of Teacher Educators: Career on the Cusp?* Teacher Quality and School Development Series. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2013.
[54] Goodwin, A. Lin, Laura Smith, Mariana Souto-Manning, Ranita Cheruvu, Mei Ying Tan, Rebecca Reed, and Lauren Taveras. "What Should Teacher Educators Know and Be Able to Do? Perspectives from Practicing Teacher Educators." *Journal of Teacher Education* 65, no. 4 (2014): 284-302.

have not been exposed to educational practices and theories deconstructing heteronormative beliefs and attitudes, unless their personal and professional interests led them to explore these issues on their own. However, although 58% of schools of education surveyed in the US offer faculty training on diversity that includes some LGBTQ content, only 37.7% offer training that focuses on LGBTQ inclusion in the curriculum, and almost one fourth of schools of education do not offer LGBTQ-related training to their faculty.[55] On the whole, this means that faculty in many schools of education across the country are undertrained in LGBTQ issues, in spite of 71.2% of schools of education including the terms "social justice" or "inclusion for all" in their mission statement, and even as 74.1% of surveyed deans believe their faculty need to become more "culturally competent" regarding LGBTQ issues.[56] In the worst cases, this lack of active institutional support can be understood by pre-service teachers and faculty alike as condoning prevailing heteronormative attitudes and beliefs.[57]

Not surprisingly, research shows that lack of knowledge on the part of teacher educators regarding LGBTQ issues in education impacts faculty comfort level with addressing these questions. Similarly, pre-service teachers' discomfort and disinterest with these issues is correlated to faculty's lack of knowledge.[58] Yet, even when teacher educators possess the awareness, knowledge and motivation necessary to tackle those questions in their practices, they do not always do so. In a study conducted with Australian teacher educators, Robinson and Ferfolja points out that although most of the teacher educators they interviewed agreed that

---

[55] Douglas, Barbara Jean A. "Faculty Trainings". In *Critical concepts in queer studies and education: An international guide for the twenty-first century*. Edited by Rodriguez, N., Martino, Wayne, Ingrey, Jennifer C., & Brockenbrough, Edward. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. pp.87-94

[56] *Ibid.*

[57] Wickens, Corrine M. & Sandlin, Jennifer A. "Homophobia and heterosexism in a college of education: a culture of fear, a culture of silence". *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23:6 (2010): 651-670

[58] Jennings, Todd. "Addressing diversity in US teacher preparation programs: A survey of elementary and secondary programs' priorities and challenges from across the United States of America". *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*(8) (2007): 1258-1271.

questions pertaining to heterosexism should be part of pre-service teachers' education, analysis

of their answers also pointed to factors that prevented them from engaging fully into these

practices or from doing so effectively.[59] Often, those educators who were committed to

promoting social justice goals in their university classrooms considered that heterosexism was

less relevant, in an already overcrowded curriculum, than addressing issues related to racialized

and ethnic identities. The authors underline the necessity to address social justice issues from an

intersectional perspective so as to avoid creating a feeling of competition between various

systems of oppression by focusing instead on the ways they are interlocked. Other teacher

educators felt that the younger the children pre-service teachers would work with, the less

developmentally appropriate it was to mention questions of sexuality, since elementary children

are (mistakenly) perceived as asexual and innocent. Furthermore, for teacher educators who felt

a strong personal commitment to address social justice issues, another obstacle they faced was

the likelihood of being perceived as having an agenda, particularly if they belonged to a

community that experiences discrimination.[60]

Overall, scholars agree that more research is needed to further examine teacher educators'

attitudes and knowledge about LGBTQ issues and how "faculty beliefs interact with program

design, program priorities, and student outcomes."[61]

6.   Relevance of this study

As mentioned above, very little research has been conducted that looks into obstacles

preventing teacher educators from implementing LGBTQ-inclusive practices and, more

importantly, from leading pre-service teachers into an examination of their positionality

---

[59] Robinson,Kerry H. and Ferfolja, Tania. "Playing It Up, Playing It Down, Playing It Safe: Queering Teacher Education." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 24, no. 4 (2008): 846-58.
[60] *Ibid.*
[61] Jennings, Todd. "Addressing diversity in US teacher preparation programs" p.1266

regarding hegemonic paradigms such as heteronormativity. This study explores how, if at all, eight teacher educators from several teacher education programs in a public university in the Pacific Northwest believe they prepare their students to challenge heterosexism in their future profession. The research also examines the obstacles that may prevent these teacher educators from actively integrating these questions into their curricula. It is my hope that such research is a useful contribution to the literature that strives to interrogate the role of education in perpetuating systems of oppression in general, and especially to the work of teacher education programs and faculty that endeavor to promote social justice by questioning heteronormativity.

C.   Theoretical Framework

In order to conduct this research, I rely on a theoretical framework that brings together diverse perspectives on the ways different forms of oppression intersect with heteronormativity and how this plays out in education. In this section, I first introduce each theoretical approach, namely queer theory, Queer of Color and Queer Indigenous Critiques, and critical pedagogy. I conclude with an analysis of how queer pedagogues of color, like Kevin Kumashiro, have taken up these questions to inform their research and practices in the field of education.

1.   Queer Theory

Building on poststructuralism, feminist theory, and gay and lesbian scholarship, queer theory has pointed to the socially constructed nature of sex, gender, and sexuality as well as to the distinction between these three concepts in order to expose the heterosexist norms that dominate in the United States and more generally in Western societies. Drawing on Lacan, Derrida and Foucault, Judith Butler argues that gender identity, like other identities, are

constructed through language, discourse, and cultural practices.[62] Through the repetition of such discourses and practices, most individuals have internalized what have become naturalized categories that are thought of in binary terms such as male/female, man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual. This process has also led to the merging of sex, gender, and sexuality into one concept, as most people today equate male genitalia with men and masculinity, and female genitalia with women and femininity, often assuming that these two categories are complementary in terms of sexual activity and romantic relationships. The reiteration and performance of this merging and pairing through various social norms and codes have created a heteronormative standard that relies on the expectation that anyone fits or should fit into this binary arrangement, and that those who fall out of the norm are to be excluded or disciplined.[63]

Queer theory strives to deconstruct heteronormativity by challenging binary thinking and categorization, and insisting on the fluidity of individuals' gender identities, sexualities and sex which are often thought of as unquestionably biologically fixed.[64] For Butler, gender identities have been naturalized through rituals that are both imposed upon and enacted by individuals. Gender, she argues, is a performance that has been constructed as a social representation of a "core", an inner self tied to our sex. She contends that this seemingly natural and ideal fixed gender identity is a chimera which we ceaselessly try to embody, yet will never be able to reach because it doesn't actually exist. Put differently, gender is more an expression of an identity that we feel compelled to achieve in a given society than who we truly are. Similarly, for queer scholars, sexuality has more to do with doing than being. Objects of desire and sexual practices

---

[62] Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. NY: Routledge, 1990
Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. NY: Routledge, 2004
[63] *Ibid.*
[64] Touraille, Priscille, and Gibson, Justin W. "On the Critiques of the Concept of Sex: An Interview with Anne Fausto-Sterling." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 27, no. 1 (2016): 189-205.
Claire Ainsworth. "Sex Redefined." *Nature* 518, no. 7539 (2015): 288.

can change throughout a lifetime and the meanings attached to them evolve across times and places as they are dependent on cultural norms and practices.

Labelling individuals as "heterosexual" or "homosexual" is a relatively recent practice[65] which has participated in the creation of rigid sexual identities that precludes any flexibility and change, thus participating in maintaining a normative and oppressive set of references. Queer theory aims to deconstruct such binary structures and to expose the processes of identity formation at work within them as the self-identification of hegemonic identities as "normal referents" is dependent on the creation of "deviant Others".[66] Thus, queer theorists point to the necessity to move away from attempts to remedy homophobia, which tends to individualize fear and loathing of LGBT individuals, and to examine instead how "homophobia as a discourse centers heterosexuality as the normal."[67]

2. Queer of Color Critique and Queer Indigenous Studies

Despite queer theory's attempt to challenge binaries and to promote a conception of gender and sexuality as fluid and unstable, queer scholars of color like Cathy Cohen and Roderick Ferguson have pointed to the tendency of queer politics to be organized around another dichotomy opposing heterosexuals on the one hand and queer people on the other, foregrounding heterosexism as a system of oppression and ignoring the intersection of other systems of power involving race, class or gender.[68] These scholars, like women of color feminists before them,[69]

---

[65] Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality Volume 1: An introduction*. London: Vintage Books, 1976/1990
[66] Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
[67] Britzman, Deborah, P. "Is there a queer pedagogy? Or, stop reading straight." *Educational Theory*, 45(2), (1995): 151-165, p.158
[68] Cohen, Cathy J. "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3, no. 4 (1997): 437.
Ferguson, Roderick. *Aberrations in Black*: *Toward a Queer of Color Critique*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
[69] See for instance: Combahee River Collective, Author. *The Combahee River Collective Statement: Black Feminist Organizing in the Seventies and Eighties*. Albany, NY: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1986; Moraga, Cherríe., and Anzaldúa, Gloria. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. New York:

maintain that intersectionality must be privileged as an analytical tool in order to give a voice to those who find themselves at the margins. For them, the socially lived knowledge of people who are at the crossroads of several forms of oppression, such as racism and heteropatriarchy, must be taken into account in order to tackle hegemonic powers in their multiplicity. Queer of Color critiques and Queer Indigenous studies thus insist on the need to define heteronormativity more broadly as "the dominant constructed norm of state-sanctioned white middle- and upper-class heterosexuality,"[70] a norm that, in the United-States, finds its roots in settler colonialism, capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy.[71] These authors demonstrate how people of color and indigenous people's sexualities and gender identities have historically been constructed as non-normative and deviant, even in the case of heterosexual relationships, as exemplified by the suspicion toward matrilineal indigenous societies, single black mothers, or Muslim men.

Scholars also warn that if activists want to uphold the political promise of queer theory to unsettle hegemonic powers, they must resist the temptation of assimilation into dominant institutions. As mainstream gay culture remains strikingly white in the U.S, and as the push for civil rights and inclusion in the military have made great progress in the last decade (in spite of potential backlash in the coming years), scholars like Muñoz call for *disidentification*, "a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology", "one that neither opts to assimilate within such a structure, nor strictly opposes it."[72] Queer of Color and Queer Indigenous scholars thus point out

---

Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, 1983; Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8; Hill Collins, Patricia. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

[70] *Ibid.* p.441

[71] Driskill, Qwo-Li. *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011.
Morgensen, Scott Lauria. *Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

[72] Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

the need to question homonormativity as well as heteronormativity in so far as homonormativity

partakes in oppressive practices at the local and global level through participation in neoliberal

consumer society and nationalist ideology that privilege white U.S. citizens over poor people of

color around the world.[73] Indeed, neoliberalism, which is characterized by the disinvestment of

the state from public programs such as education, and by a deregulation of the market favoring

the capital over workers' rights, both locally and globally, relies on the transnational exploitation

of a cheap labor force that is mostly constituted of people of color. As neoliberalism also thrives

on the exploitation of resources located under and above ground, it requires the appropriation of

land, a process that is ensured by neocolonial practices abroad, and settler colonialism in the

United-States. Because the United-States is a settler state, a state built through the colonization

of territories and the attempted eradication of the Indigenous peoples living on these lands, such

an appropriation of resources requires the constant erasure of Native people, through

racialization and cultural processes that aim to weaken Native identity and to reinforce white

supremacy, as they might otherwise reclaim their rights and threaten profit-making enterprises.[74]

Thus, Queer of Color and Queer Indigenous critiques argue that neoliberalism, settler

colonialism, white supremacy and heteropatriarchy intersect and feed on one another to maintain

themselves, and should be examined and challenged through a framework that takes into

consideration the intersections of these systems of oppression. For instance, these scholars call

our attention to the dangers tied to the official recognition of movements and identities once

deemed on the margins of mainstream society, such as the gay and lesbian movement, as their

incorporation into dominant institutions threatens to void them of their subversive potential

---

[73] Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
[74] Tuck, Eve, Yang, Wayne K. "Decolonization is not a metaphor" in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. Vol. 1, No.1 (2012): 1-40.

while excluding further other marginalized populations.[75] Indeed, these scholars have called

attention to the limits of a gay and lesbian political agenda that solely aims to gain individual

rights, such as the right to marry or to be openly gay in the army, without examining the issues

tied to these institutions. They advance that the incorporation of a privileged few into a

neoliberal culture that reduces citizens (understood as participants in the civil society, regardless

of their nationality) to patriotic consumers who uphold imperialistic policies without engaging in

a critique of dominant social, economic, and political paradigms is simply not acceptable. Queer

activists and scholars, they contend, must challenge neoliberalism, settler colonialism and white

supremacy even as they attempt to expose heterosexism and deconstruct gender binaries.

Such a warning points to the danger of solely promoting an uncritical inclusion of

underrepresented groups in education, as it does not prompt a deeper analysis of the larger

structural factors that make exclusion possible in the first place.

3.   Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy recognizes that education is not politically neutral and contributes to

the reproduction of social, cultural and political inequalities in Western societies. Critical

theorists argue that in the United-States, education is increasingly designed to prepare students to

meet the needs of a neoliberal system that expects them to become future consumers and

workers. Through the current banking education system,[76] students thus passively consume

knowledge and are molded for the job market as schools and universities provide them with

marketable skills. Critical pedagogy rejects this approach to education and calls for developing

---

[75] Ferguson, Roderick A. *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*.
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.
Spade, Dean. *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*. Brooklyn, NY:
South End Press, 2011.
Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007
[76] Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum, 2000.

critical consciousness in students so as to give them the tools to engage with society as informed citizens who can challenge the status quo that maintains power relations in place. In order to achieve this goal, critical pedagogy examines the conditions under which knowledge, values and classroom practices are produced and promoted, uncovering the invisible hands that exercise control over those, and critiquing a traditional pedagogy that operates "under the sway of technical mastery, instrumental logic, and various other fundamentalisms that acquire their authority by erasing any trace of subaltern histories, class struggles, and racial and gender inequalities and injustices."[77] Critical theorists also point out the necessity to examine both the formal and the hidden curricula, the latter being defined by Henry Giroux as unstated norms, values and beliefs that are conveyed to students through the formal content of the curriculum but also through the social relations taking place at school and in the classroom.[78]

Critical pedagogy scholars like Paulo Freire, bell hooks, and Henry Giroux thus encourage educators to teach students to transgress the boundaries laid down by traditional education through a liberatory pedagogy founded on the premise that the lived experiences of the students should be at the core of their learning experience, especially when their voices have been silenced by dominant powers throughout history.[79] In order to insure those voices are heard, critical educators must remain aware of the "forces that sometimes prevent people from speaking openly and critically, whether they are part of a hidden curriculum of either racism, class oppression, or gender discrimination, or part of those institutional and ideological mechanisms

---

[77] Giroux, Henry A. *On Critical Pedagogy*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011, p.5
[78] Giroux, Henry A., and Anthony N. Penna. "Social Education in the Classroom: The Dynamics of the Hidden Curriculum." *Theory & Research in Social Education* 7, no. 1 (1979): 21-42.
[79] hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

that silence students under the pretext of a claim to professionalism, objectivity, or unaccountable authority."[80]

4.   Queer Theory meets Critical Pedagogy

In this section, I offer an overview of the convergence between critical pedagogy, queer theory, as well as Queer of Color and Queer Indigenous critiques, as this conjunction can inform a thorough analysis of heteronormativity in education.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, queer theory exposes the socially constructed nature of sex, gender and sexuality but also points to the ways they are policed by society. For Foucault, who informs the work of many queer theory scholars, any behavior that is deemed deviant from the norm is either pathologized by the medical field, punished by the law or disciplined by individuals who perceive such challenges to the norm as a threat to the established heteronormative order.[81] Educators, along with doctors or priests, have played a key role in creating and maintaining norms pertaining to sex, sexuality or gender. From the separation of boys and girls to the monitoring of sexual habits and the policing of gender expressions, school staff are controlling students' bodies, a form of regulation and discipline that participates in the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations that Foucault described as "biopower." The exercise of this biopower is rendered even more effective through the internalization of norms and self-policing by the students themselves.[82] Thus, through the monitoring of students' bodies, the education system participates in the consolidation of norms that enable the reproduction of a heteronormative society.[83] This control is obvious when it is applied through rules and

---

[80] Giroux, Henry A. *On Critical Pedagogy*. p.124
[81] Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Random House, 1975/1990
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] *Ibid.*

regulations.[84] Yet, it can also be insidious when performed through discourse. Indeed, both the official discourse of the material studied in class and the invisible yet influential discourse of the hidden curriculum – this set of norms and values that educators transmit unknowingly – participate in reproducing a heteronormative narrative.[85]

Queer pedagogy then, aims to render visible this heteronormative narrative imbedded in the hidden curriculum. However, it also warns educators of the inefficacy of multicultural education practices that solely consist in incorporating knowledge about the Other in the curriculum and instructional methods.[86] Learning "*as*, *for* or *about* queer subject(s)"[87] falls short of what queer pedagogy aims to achieve, which is unsettling students' understanding of their own identity formation and positionality rather than accepting the Other out of a sense of pure generosity or moral responsibility. Thus, for queer pedagogues, ignorance should not be defined as the simple lack of knowledge about Others that can be resolved by learning about different groups. These scholars argue that ignorance and knowledge, like other supposed binary pairs, are not oppositional but co-constitutive, as gaining knowledge requires not simply that we add to what we already think we know, it demands that we unlearn previous knowledge that we took for granted. Indeed, for them, queer pedagogy asks that we examine how ignorance is "resistance to knowledge," in so far as ignorance is what one "cannot bear to know", as such knowledge would endanger our sense of self. For Suzanne Luhmann,

> [s]uch queer pedagogy does not hold the promise of a successful remedy against
> homophobia, nor is it a cure for the lack of self-esteem. This pedagogy is not
> (just) about a different curriculum or new methods of instruction. It is an inquiry

[84] Allen, Louisa. "'The 5-cm rule': biopower, sexuality and schooling" in *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, Vol. 30, No. 4, (December 2009): 443-456.

[85] Carpenter, Vicki M., Lee, Debora. "Teacher education and the hidden curriculum of heteronormativity" in *Curriculum Matters* Vol.6 (2010): 99-119

[86] Carlson, Dennis "Who Am I? Gay Identity and a Democratic Politics of the Self" In *Queer Theory in Education*. Edited by Pinar, William. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1998, 107-119

[87] Luhmann, Susanne "Queering/Querying Pedagogy? Or, Pedagogy is a Pretty Queer Thing?" In *Queer Theory in Education*. Edited by Pinar, William. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1998, 141-155, p.152

into the conditions that make learning possible or prevent learning. It suggests a conversation about what I can bear to know and what I refuse when I refuse certain identifications. What is at stake in this pedagogy is the deeply social or dialogic situation of subject formation, the processes of how we make ourselves through and against others.[88]

Queer pedagogy, like critical pedagogy, thus calls for an education system that brings critical awareness to students, encouraging them to unlearn previous knowledge by making privilege visible and by positioning themselves in these power dynamics. For Kevin Kumashiro, such anti-oppressive education is "a pedagogy of crisis" that involves some discomfort as students (and, I would add, educators) are required to queer their sense of self before being able to challenge institutional and structural discriminations.[89] Kumashiro also insists on the need for teachers to constantly trouble their understanding of oppression by raising questions about the intersection of racism and heterosexism and reaffirming the existence of queers of color. A situated understanding of oppression that focuses on specific contexts and intersections, and that prevents overgeneralization, he contends, is also crucial to acknowledge the complex ways oppression is being repeated even as we try to challenge it.[90]

D.   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of the literature that focuses on questions pertaining to heteronormativity in education and which points to the need to examine the reasons why pre-service teachers are not being trained on a wider scale to challenge norms that permeate the education system in particularly harmful ways. I have also introduced the theoretical

---

[88] *Ibid*, p.153

[89] Kumashiro, Kevin K. *Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Antioppressive Pedagogy*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2002, p.108

[90] Kumashiro, Kevin K. *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality: Queer Students of Color and Anti-Oppressive Education*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001

perspectives of a broad range of scholars who interrogate these norms and who ask that we place

them in an analysis of larger structural issues that affect society at large. In the conceptual map

below, I attempt to describe the relations between the behaviors and practices reported in the

literature review, and broader oppressive systems denounced by the scholars I cited, that both

benefit from and rely upon the maintenance of heteronormativity.
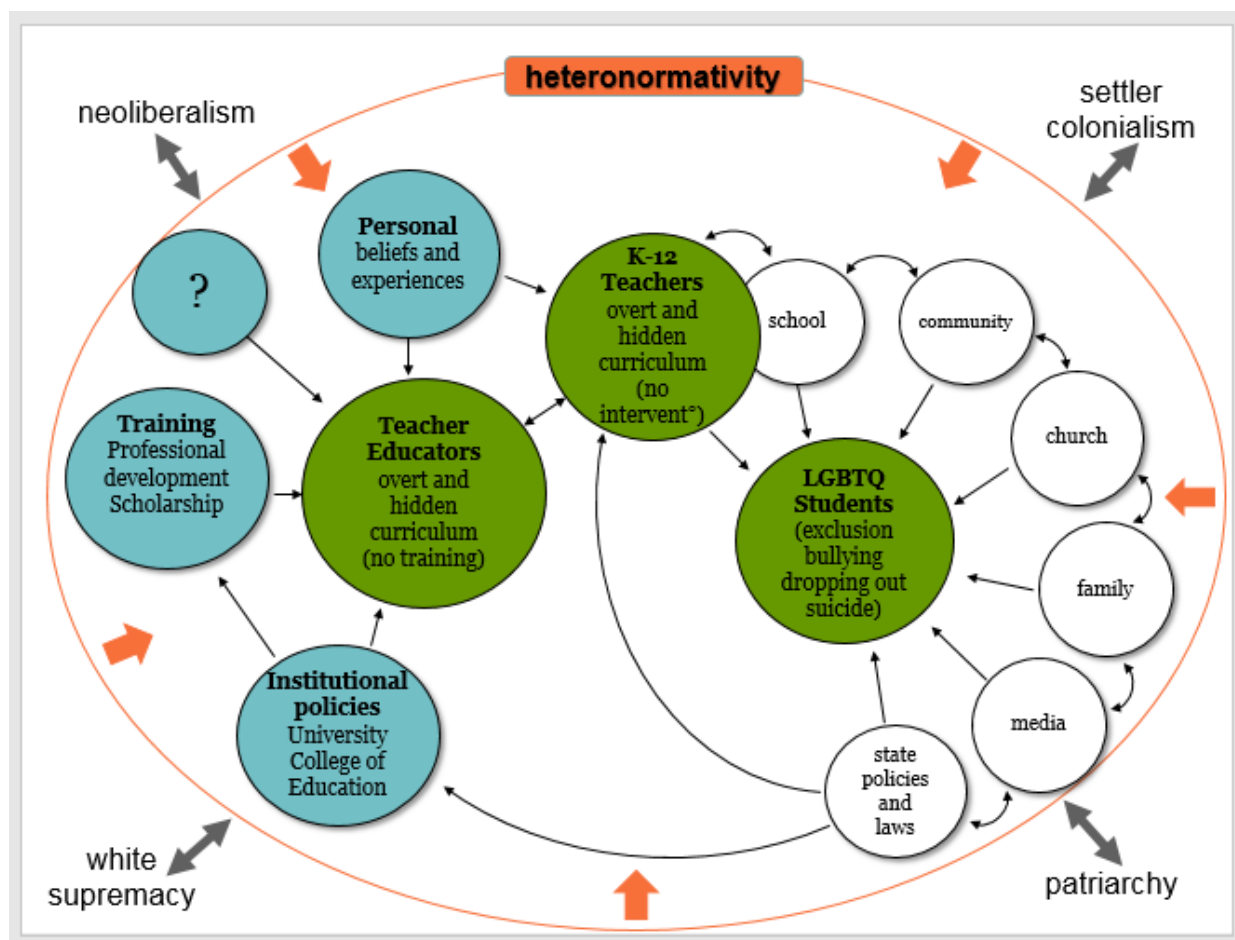
Figure: Conceptual framework.

In the following chapter, I reiterate the research questions that are informed by

the conceptual framework presented above and that guide this project. I then proceed

with a definition of the methodology I have used to answer these research questions,

followed by a presentation of the setting and the participants involved in this research, a description of the data collection methods I relied upon, and of the theoretical lenses I employed to analyze this data.

III. Methodology and Methods

A. Introduction

As the review of literature in the preceding chapter demonstrates, heteronormativity in school settings might remain invisible to those who fit in the norms and abide by them consciously or unconsciously, yet is experienced in especially oppressive ways by those students and teachers who do not conform to gender and sexual expectations. Many teachers, however, do not interrupt the reproduction of these oppressive norms as they do not perceive the need to do so, or as they feel unprepared to tackle these questions in their classrooms. As research shows that numerous teacher education programs do not offer opportunities to pre-service teachers to reflect on their own gender and sexual identities, or to develop skills to bring up these questions in their curriculum, the need to explore the experiences and practices of teacher educators regarding these questions becomes apparent. In this chapter, I present the research methodology and methods that will allow me to answer the following questions: (1) How do teacher educators in this study prepare pre-service teachers to challenge heteronormativity in their future practices, if at all? (2) What factors may influence teacher educators' practices when it comes to challenging heteronormativity in teacher education programs?

I start this section with a presentation of the qualitative methodological approach I have selected, namely a feminist critical ethnography, a choice that is informed by the theoretical framework that guide this research. I proceed with introducing the site and participants involved, eight teacher educators and eighteen pre-service teachers who work and study in a large land-grant university in the Pacific Northwest. Next, I move to a description of the various data

collection methods I used and which consist in interviews, an online survey, classroom observations and the analysis of syllabi. I continue with a presentation of the theoretical lenses that I am relying upon to analyze and interpret the data: the intersecting lenses of queer theories and critical pedagogy defined in the previous chapter. Finally, I conclude with a presentation of my positionality as a researcher and the ways this social location may have influenced the research process.

B. A Qualitative Methodological Approach: Feminist Critical Ethnography

1. Rationale for selecting a qualitative approach

Several quantitative studies have focused on the inclusion of LGBTQ topics in foundational education courses and textbooks, as well as in teacher education programs and syllabi, demonstrating that these questions were not widely attended to in the United-States, and if they were covered, it was often too superficially.[91]

My research questions are inspired both by my own experience as a high school teacher in France and by the quantitative analysis of this widespread absence of a systematic and thorough inclusion of questions pertaining to heteronormativity in the preparation of K-12 teachers. The purpose of a qualitative approach is to acquire a deeper understanding of specific individual experiences set in a particular sociocultural context. Although this type of research may provide insights into experiences that are part of a broader social phenomenon, it is not intended to be generalized, and finds value in its specificities. I have decided to conduct a

---

[91] See Todd Jennings' research, as well as Gorski, Paul C., Davis, Shannon, N., Reiter, Abigail. "An Examination of the (In)visibility of Sexual Orientation, Heterosexism, Homophobia, and Other LGBTQ Concerns in U.S. Multicultural Teacher Education Coursework". *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 10 (2013):224–248,

qualitative research for this project so as to learn about the individual circumstances that prevent, if at all, teacher educators from challenging heteronormativity in their practices.

2.   Feminist Critical Ethnography

This qualitative study relies on a methodology that draws from critical ethnography and feminist standpoint research practices. These two approaches acknowledge that power structures and systems of privilege serve to marginalize individuals who do not fit in mainstream definitions of the norm. Both approaches also call for action and change, research being one step toward the transformation of reality.[92]

From a methodological point of view, critical ethnography requires a detailed analysis of the participants' lived experiences in a specific context. This approach favors fieldwork and a variety of data collection techniques such as participant observations and interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and artifact analysis. In this study, the interviews conducted with teacher educators are central to my analysis, providing me with in-depth knowledge of these educators' perspectives, a perspective that is missing in the literature on how questions of gender and sexuality emerge in teacher education programs. My understanding of their experiences is also informed by other data collected through a review of syllabi, classroom observations, and a survey of pre-service teachers' dispositions toward these questions. An analysis of the larger sociocultural and historical context also provides a point of connection between the individual beliefs and attitudes of the participants, and wider structural expressions of social norms such heteronormativity.[93]

---

[92] Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. SAGE, 2013, p.37.
[93] Chang, Yin-Kun. "Through Queers' Eyes: Critical Educational Ethnography in Queer Studies" in *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies,* Volume 27, Issue 2 (April 2005): 171-208

While one key feature of "conventional" ethnography is the study of a culture-sharing group, critical ethnography, as well as feminist research practices, acknowledge that descriptions of a culture are shaped by "the interests of the researcher, the sponsors of the project, the audience, and the dominant communities".[94] As such, self-reflexivity is key for the researcher, myself, in order to acknowledge fully and openly my positionality even as I attempted to explore and interpret research participants' culture from a wider perspective. Yet, critical ethnography is not politically neutral, and neither is the researcher. Critical ethnography and feminist research practices explicitly assume that cultures are positioned unequally in power relations. Thus, critical ethnography is "ethnography with a political intent" as it openly addresses issues of power, control and social justice. Such political intent appears clearly in this study as it aims to challenge the status quo regarding the perpetuation of heteronormativity in education.

Furthermore, feminist scholars have pointed to the need for researchers to stop focusing solely "on those whom the powerful govern"[95] and to turn their attention instead to "the powerful, their institutions, policies and practices."[96] Research on queer issues in education often focuses on LGBTQ-identified students and teachers.[97] Given my positionality as a straight, cisgender, white woman with professional experience in education, I attempted instead, in this research, to follow Sandra Harding's call to "study up" or "to study ourselves."[98] That is to say, I

---

[94] TESOL. "Qualitative Research: (Critical) Ethnography Guidelines". Retrieved from: https://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/journals/tesol-quarterly/tesol-quarterly-research-guidelines/qualitative-research-%28critical%29-ethnography-guidelines#sthash.ObNAC6O5.dpuf

[95] Harding, Sandra, and Kathryn Norberg. "New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies: An Introduction." *Signs* 30, no. 4 (2005): 2009-2015, p.2011

[96] *Ibid*, p.2011

[97] Chang, Yin-Kun. "Through Queers' Eyes: Critical Educational Ethnography in Queer Studies" in *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies,* Volume 27, Issue 2 (April 2005): 171-208, p.176

[98] Harding, Sandra G. *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. Bloomington: Milton Keynes [Buckinghamshire]: Indiana University Press; Open University Press, 1987, p.8

studied the practices of teacher educators who, to a certain extent and in spite of intersecting identities that may partly contradict this statement, occupy a position of power in the education system in so far as they are closer to the top of the educational pyramid than, say, K-12 students or teachers. In other words, although teacher educators' status in higher education is ambiguous,[99] they certainly exercise institutional power since they influence future K-12 teachers' practices, which will directly impact the lives of K-12 students and their families.

Finally, as reciprocity and respect for the participants are also key to critical ethnography and feminist research practices, I have attempted to conduct this study collaboratively and avoided practices that would exploit or objectify participants.[100] More specifically, I have tried to provide the teacher educators who participated in this research with resources that could enrich their practices in accordance with the purpose of this study. I have also invited them, through member checking, to provide feedback on the results section of this paper to ensure that I did not misinterpret their words, overemphasized certain aspects of their practices, or was inaccurate in my representation of the data collected. All the participants (teacher educators) provided feedback on at least the first version of the results section of this paper, and seemed satisfied with the way I reported their words and presented their experiences.

C.   Setting and Site selection

1.   National, State and Local Contexts

The public university selected for this research is located in the Pacific Northwest, a region of the United-States that, in spite of some conservative rural areas, is usually considered as rather socially liberal. For instance, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton obtained 52.5% of

---

[99] Davey, Ronnie. *The Professional Identity of Teacher Educators: Career on the Cusp?* p.5
[100] Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. SAGE, 2013, p.29

the popular vote in the state of Washington and 50.1% in Oregon in the 2016 presidential elections that took place during this study.[101] Moreover, in recent years, the state where this study was located passed and promoted several progressive laws and directives pertaining to gender and sexuality in education. In 2007, an Equality Act explicitly forbade discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression in public and charter school education. More specifically, at the time this study began, the state's Department of Education issued a 15-page document laying guidelines for the state's educational community to create safe and supportive environments for transgender students of all ages. This document was issued a few days before President Obama's directive on transgender students' rights was made public and declared sweeping protections for transgender students under Title IX, in a national context characterized by legal turmoil over bathroom access for gender non-conforming students that was widely covered by the media. Although the Trump administration rescinded the federal directive in February 2017, education officials in the state where the study took place declared that transgender students' rights would still be protected under the guidelines issued in 2016. While this official state policy does not necessarily reflect the positions and practices of more conservative school districts in the state which might be emboldened by the attack on LGBTQ rights at the federal level, it does lay out expectations that participate in creating a more progressive climate throughout this geographical area and influence policies at the university level. Furthermore, the city where the university is implanted also passed, during this study, a policy that ensured official recognition of non-binary gender identity, confirming that the setting for this research was generally welcoming of gender diversity at the institutional level.

---

[101] The New York Times. "Presidential Election Results: Donald J. Trump Wins" Feb. 10, 2017.

2.   The university

Two main reasons guided my choice to select the university for this research. First, this educational institution seemed to provide a good example of a middle-of-the-road campus with a diversity of political stances both in the student population and among faculty and programs. Indeed, although located in a rather liberal part of the state, as a land grant university with a focus on agriculture, science and engineering, one might expect a sizable portion of the student population and faculty to be on the moderate to conservative side of the political spectrum.[102] Secondly, because a close acquaintance of mine was a graduate student in this institution, I had direct access to the university culture and climate, was informed of and involved in the daily campus activities, and easily obtained official communication from the institution regarding, among other matters, its stance on questions of diversity, equity and inclusion, a position that might impact teacher educators' beliefs, knowledge and attitudes toward LGBTQ issues.

It is important to note that despite the university's proclaimed commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, the campus climate remains oppressive for some students. Indeed, students and faculty have expressed the necessity to actively address issues of equity and inclusion, especially regarding racism, which students of color experience on campus both at the personal and institutional level and which they denounced in a speak out they organized shortly before this study began. Several public instances of racism and islamophobia occurred on campus during this study, with, for instance, the display of anti-Muslim messages on the university's pavements, and the circulation of signs and materials containing messages promoting white nationalism, racism and xenophobia. Such attitudes and believes can be inscribed in a larger historical context of institutional discrimination and white supremacy, as both the university and

---

[102] Gross, Neil. *Why Are Professors Liberal and Why Do Conservatives Care?* Cumberland: Harvard University Press, 2013, p.47.

the state where the research took place are stained by a long history of exclusion and discrimination against people of color, especially black people.

Nevertheless, the university's official stance on diversity today can be perceived, in general, as progressive, especially in light of Donald Trump's election to the presidency. For instance, the institution made an official commitment to be a sanctuary university for undocumented migrants. Moreover, two policies complying with the state's 2016 Department of Education guidelines regarding questions of gender and sexuality were set in place at the university level during this study. The first one ensures that students can use the name that corresponds to their gender identity in "professional settings," such as on class rosters or student IDs. The other one concerns student housing and stipulates that starting in the Fall of 2017 roommate matching for all students will be based on gender identity, and no longer biological sex, with the ability for students to select from ten different gender identities. Additionally, two prominent university figures openly identify as transwomen and have been active in raising questions related to trans* issues for several years. Furthermore, two student-fee-funded organizations also provide resources and support for LGBTQ-identified students on campus, one of them especially focusing on LGBTQ students of color who face discriminations that are specific to their intersecting identities.

Thus, it seems safe to assume that the official stance both at the state and university level regarding LGBTQ-inclusion in education provides a context that allows faculty in this institution to address those questions with little risk of facing negative repercussions. It is important to note, however, that the College of Education's official position on questions regarding gender and sexual identities is not as clear. For instance, in its conceptual framework, the college's mission and values statement expresses a commitment to social justice that acknowledges and embraces inclusivity. Yet, as of March 2017, the College's definition of "inclusivity" doesn't include

gender identity, gender expression or sexual identity. The absence of a clear policy on questions that are so controversial in the United-States might be interpreted by faculty (and students) at best as lack of interest on the part of the College of Education, and at worst as lack of support or even disapproval of LGBTQ questions in teacher education. This in turn might impact teacher educators' practices.

D.   Participants

1.   Teacher educators

After obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board, I recruited eight teacher educators in the spring and summer of 2016, using different sampling strategies. Following a snowball method, I initially contacted two faculty members who either introduced me to other teacher educators in person, provided me with the contact information of colleagues that might be interested in the research, or invited me to meetings where I was able to share my research interests with other faculty members. After emailing or meeting with several potential participants I broadened by research and contacted about ten other teacher educators through their official university email addresses (see Appendix A for recruitment tools).

All the teacher educators who agreed to participate in this study met and even exceeded the criteria which I had set for this recruitment process. My intention was indeed to gather a small group of diverse faculty members whose different experiences and identities would provide a broad range of perspectives regarding gender and sexuality in teacher education programs. First, in their official positions as doctoral students, instructors, or tenure-track faculty, participants could offer distinct point of views about these questions due to their administrative status and teaching experience. Moreover, as PhD candidates and non-tenure track

instructors teach a considerable number of courses in the College of Education, they play a significant role in preparing pre-service teachers for their future career, which makes their input even more valuable. Diversity in the programs they belong to and disciplines they teach was also a key criterion allowing me to explore different outlooks, since I anticipated that faculty teaching cultural and linguistic diversity may have a different understanding of issues related to gender and sexuality than, say, faculty teaching math or agricultural education. They might also perceive different obstacles to the introduction of these topics in their curriculum and their daily practices. Finally, diversity in gender, sexual identity, and ethnicity among participant, although limited, allowed an even wider range of viewpoints to emerge in this research.

The table and vignettes that follow provide more information on the eight participants' demographics and experiences, highlighting factors that may have driven them to participate in this study, while attempting to protect the confidentiality of the information they shared. Participants were invited to choose their own pseudonyms, which four of them did while the other four agreed to let me select one for them. They were also invited to provide information about their race or ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. To avoid imposing a limited number of pre-selected options for these demographics, no options were suggested, which explains the diverse vocabulary used for some of the categories. The expression "sexual orientation", rather than "sexual identity", was used as a category as it seemed more readily understandable for participants who may not have heard of "sexual identity" and who could potentially have confused this term with sex, or gender identity. The term "gender identity" seemed easier to understand, although several participants did ask me to confirm their understanding of this expression as they were filling out this information. I specified that participants were free to leave out any information they did not want to share and one participant declined to share his sexual orientation/identity.

Table 1: Teacher educators' demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Race or Ethnicity	Gender Identity	Sexual Orientation
Hugo	55	White	Male	Heterosexual
Ishmael	59	White (Irishman)	Male	Straight
Janneke	29	White	Female	Heterosexual
Louis	40	White	Male	-
Lucas	38	Latino	Male	Heterosexual
Maura	38	Latina/Mexican	Female	Straight
Martha	62	White	Female	Heterosexual
Meredith	36	White	Female	Lesbian

Hugo

Hugo is an instructor in the College of Education where he teaches science education courses. He has taught higher education classes for 16 years and worked in high schools for two years. A stay-at-home dad for several years, gender has been on his mind for a while. He is working toward implementing teaching strategies that are inclusive and wants to prepare pre-service teachers educators to work with diverse students.

Ishmael

Ishmael has been a senior instructor for 12 years in the College of Education where he teaches foundational courses to undergraduate and graduate students. He also taught in a K-12 setting for 16 years, an experience which, to him, is key to being able to connect with and prepare future K-12 teachers. A well-read person and a self-defined Marxist working-class Irishman, he has engaged with critical pedagogy for many years and strives to infuse his curriculum with the political and philosophical tenets of this approach.

Janneke

Janneke is a PhD candidate in her final year in the College of Education. She has taught mathematics and "how to teach" courses for the last 8 years either as a teaching assistant or lead instructor, and student taught mathematics in high school for 3 months. Both the training with a focus on critical pedagogy she received as a doctoral student and her sibling's identity as a transgender person have made her acutely aware of the need to address questions related to gender and sexuality in education.

Louis

Louis is a PhD candidate in the Agricultural Education Program where he has been an instructor for the last 3 years. He taught high school agriculture and was an FFA (Future Farmers of America) advisor for 13 years, an experience he draws on to prepare future K-12 teachers in his field to meet the individual needs of their students.

Lucas

Lucas is a professor in the College of Education where he teaches methods courses for elementary pre-service teachers. He has taught in teacher education programs for the last 8 years, either as a doctoral student or a professor, and worked as a K-12 bilingual education teacher for a little over half a decade. He draws from critical pedagogy and LatCrit frameworks in his research on social justice in education. He is eager to put these theories into practice in his training of pre-service teachers so they become advocates for their students and encourage them to acknowledge and resist oppressive, racist and sexist frameworks in their schools.

Maura

Maura is completing her final year as a doctoral candidate and has worked in teacher education as a teaching assistant and as an instructor of record for the last 7 years. The courses she teaches in the College of Education focus on bilingual education, literacy, and social studies. She is determined to provide pre-service teachers with the tools they need to empower all K-12 students. She taught in elementary and middle school for 6 years, an experience that brought to her attention the need to train pre-service teachers regarding questions of gender and sexuality in education.

Martha

Martha is an assistant professor in the College of Education where she teaches science education courses and critical pedagogy. She has been teaching in higher education for 16 years and taught biology in K-12 settings for 8 years. A feminist since the 1970s, she is also well-versed in critical pedagogy and is passionate about issues of equity and inclusion which she strives to promote in her teaching practices as well as in her college and the university at large.

Meredith

Meredith is a clinical associate professor in the College of Public Health and she has taught physical education to pre-service teachers since 2008. Her teacher education program's focus on students with disabilities has led her to examine issues of equity and inclusion in education. This experience, added to her own sexual identity, impacts her awareness of questions pertaining to gender and sexuality in teacher education.

2.   **Pre-service teachers**

Eighteen pre-service teachers also participated in this study through an online questionnaire which focused on their knowledge of, dispositions toward and reactions to queer-inclusive material and practices introduced in their teacher education programs. These participants were recruited in the fall and winter terms through the eight teacher educators who accepted to be part of the study and who taught those pre-service teachers. Teacher educators agreed to share, with the pre-service students they taught, an email containing information about the study as well as a link toward the survey. To ensure that the answers would remain confidential, data anonymization was turned on in the online survey tool, so that no IP addresses were captured. The only criterion for students to be able to participate in the study was that they should be enrolled as pre-service teachers in a teacher training program either at the undergraduate or graduate level (see Appendix B for recruitment tools). The table below provides information about the demographics of the 18 pre-service teachers who answered the

open-ended questionnaire. Just like teacher educators' demographics, pre-service teachers were invited to self-identify information about their race or ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation which explains the diverse vocabulary used for some of the categories. Similarly, the expression "sexual orientation" rather than "sexual identity" was used to ensure participants would not confuse this term with sex, or gender identity. Two answers suggest that it might have been appropriate to define "gender identity" and "sexual orientation" further for clarity's sake.

Table 2: Pre-service teachers' demographics

Age	Year (junior, senior, graduate)	Race and/or Ethnicity	Gender identity	Sexual orientation
21	Senior	Asian American	Male	Bi
26	Senior	White/Caucasian	Female	Heterosexual
25	Senior	Mexican	Male	Bisexual
22	Senior	White	Male	Heterosexual
23	Senior	White	Male	Straight
21	Senior	White	Female	Heterosexual
22	Senior	White	Female	Heterosexual
24	Senior	White	Male	Straight
36	Senior	White	Female	Straight
23	Graduate	White	Female	Heterosexual
23	Graduate	White	Female	Straight
21	Graduate	Caucasian	Sexually frustrated and confused	Frustrated
28	Graduate	Caucasian	Female	Heterosexual
22	Graduate	White	Female	Female
22	Graduate	White	Female	Heterosexual
21	Graduate	White	Female	Straight
23	Graduate	White	F	Heterosexual
27	Graduate	White	Female	Lesbian

3.   Participants' consent

After teacher educators expressed their interest in this research, they were invited to read a verbal consent card by email prior to the first interview as well as on the first day of the interview. Consent from pre-service teachers was acquired online, before they answered the questionnaire. The email that was shared with pre-service teachers regarding the survey also included information about their consent to be observed during classroom observations. They received this email prior to the class observations I conducted and were invited to contact me if they did not want me to record their participation in class in my field notes (see Appendix C for consent forms).

E.   Data Collection

This study relied on mixed-methods to collect data, in order to ensure that my interpretation of the data was informed by diverse sources that presented various aspects of the issues I researched. As with the participant selection, this enabled me to gain greater depth in my understanding of obstacles that come in the way of teacher training regarding questions of gender and sexuality.

1.   Recorded semi-structured individual interviews with teacher educators

Twenty-two semi-structured individual interviews, ranging from 30 to 90 minutes each, allowed me to obtain data on the self-reflexive process that teacher educator participants undertook in the context of this research project to interrogate their practices and identify the challenges they may face in their questioning of heteronormativity. Each of the eight teacher educators participating in this study met with me at least twice to record these interviews. Most participants were able to attend 3 interviews spread out over a period of 10 months (from June

2016 through March 2017), but due to professional and personal circumstances two of the participants recorded two interviews only, one in the early fall of 2016 and another in March 2017.

The first interviews, which were recorded in the late spring and early fall terms of 2016, focused on the way teacher educators perceived issues of gender and sexuality in their field or disciplines, their past or present inclusion of LGBTQ-related content in their practices, and the obstacles they felt they had encountered or might face in trying to implement LGBTQ inclusive strategies. These interviews gave me insights into the participants' awareness of, knowledge about and general dispositions toward these questions and the difficulties they encountered or envisioned.

The second set of interviews took place at the end of the fall term 2016 and beginning of the winter term 2017, after I provided participants with a suggested reading, *Queer Inclusion in Teacher Education: Bridging Theory, Research and Practice* (2015) by Olivia Murray. These second interviews explored the participants' reactions to and reflections about this reading pertaining to the inclusion of LGBTQ topics in teacher education programs. I invited them to share their thoughts about the reading and to reflect on whether they could relate it to their own experiences and practices as teacher educators. Most participants read at least sections of the book, which allowed us to discuss whether they perceived new challenges or on the contrary if they felt such material might facilitate the implementation of new strategies in their own practices.

A third set of interviews was recorded in March 2017. Prior to these interviews, I provided participants with a list of readings that they were invited to select from to enlarge their understanding of gender and sexuality in teacher education (see Appendix D for the reading list). They were also invited to attend two public events related to LGBTQ inclusion in teacher

education and which took place on campus during the last week of January and the first week of February 2017. The three guest speakers for these events were teacher educators from other universities whose work focuses on ensuring that LGBTQ topics were part and parcel of their teacher training programs. During the last interview, participants were invited to share their thoughts about the presentation(s) they attended and the readings they completed, if any. Five participants had attended at least one event, with three of them attending at least part of both presentations. Only one of the participants was able to browse through some of the readings provided, although another participant had already explored the literature on this topic as it related to their discipline following the first interview. During this last interview, participants were also asked to appraise their knowledge of both LGBTQ issues and the reproduction of heteronormativity in teacher education, to share any strategies they may have implemented in their teaching during the concluding term or intended to implement in the following one, and to identify factors that might encourage them or discourage them from attending to these questions in their own practices.

2.   Observations of teacher educators and pre-service teachers

Except for one participant whom I did not observe at all, I observed each teacher educator once as they were teaching pre-service teachers. Although such limited observation did not provide me with enough data to understand teacher educators' culture, it did provide me with the opportunity to be better acquainted with the context in which they work. Moreover, two participants specifically invited me to observe them on days where they were implementing strategies aiming at bringing LGBTQ questions into the classroom, which were valuable insights.

3.   Syllabi analysis

Participants also shared their syllabi, enabling me to analyze the general content of their courses, to identify potential opportunities to bring up questions of gender and sexuality in their curriculum, and to evaluate the inclusivity of the language used in these documents. I especially looked for references to diversity statement that might include gender identity, gender expression, and sexual identity or orientation. I also checked whether teacher educators included the pronouns they were using as a way to signal their awareness of this issue. Additionally, I looked for any reference to diversity and equity in the scheduled tasks and topics that were to be given and examined as part of the pre-service teachers' training.

4.   Survey of pre-service teachers

I collected the answers to an online questionnaire from 18 pre-service teachers who were students in my teacher educator participants' classes at the time of the study (see Appendix E for questionnaire). As mentioned earlier, students were invited to participate in this survey through an email which teacher educators agreed to share with them via the campus online teaching platform. Students were directed to follow a link that brought them to the online research software in use at the university, and after providing their consent, they were able to answer open-ended questions related to their knowledge of, dispositions toward and reactions to queer-inclusive material and practices introduced in their program. Pre-service teachers were also asked to share their demographics in this survey. Data collected through this questionnaire provides a different perspective both on the relevance of the inclusion of LGBTQ topics in teacher education programs and on pre-service teachers' knowledge of and attitudes toward the inclusion of this content in their own future practices.

F.   Data Interpretation

1.   Theoretical framework

I have attempted to analyze the data collected during this research through the theoretical lenses of queer theory, Queer of Color critique, Queer Indigenous studies and critical pedagogy. Queer theory underlines the socially constructed nature of sex, gender and sexuality and the way education fully participates in maintaining and perpetuating heteronormativity both through the overt and hidden curricula, an analysis that is shared by many contemporary critical pedagogy theorists.[103] Queer of Color and Indigenous Queer critiques, for their part, point to the necessity of applying an intersectional analytical framework to identify the ways structural racism, but also neoliberalism and settler colonialism not only rely on one another to maintain a hegemonic heteronormative order but also depend on its perpetuation to exist.[104] Furthermore, these scholars call our attention to the dangers tied to the official recognition of movements and identities once deemed on the margins of mainstream society, such as the gay and lesbian movement, as their incorporation into dominant institutions threatens to void them of their subversive potential while excluding further other marginalized populations.[105] Such a warning points to the danger of solely promoting an uncritical inclusion of underrepresented groups in education, as it does not prompt a deeper analysis of the larger structural factors that make exclusion possible in the first place.

---

[103] hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress;* Kumashiro, Kevin K. *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality;* Giroux, Henry A. *On Critical Pedagogy.*

[104] Driskill, Qwo-Li. *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature.* Morgensen, Scott Lauria. *Spaces between Us;* Ferguson, Roderick. *Aberrations in Black.*

[105] Ferguson, Roderick A. *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference.* Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages.*

Spade, Dean. *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law.* Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 2011.

2.   Data analysis

My analysis of the data has been ongoing and inductive. I transcribed the 22 interviews I conducted within one to five weeks after their recording, using the free software *Express Scribe* and a transcription pedal to facilitate this stage of the work. After each initial transcription, I listened to the recording again to check for any mistake, a process during which I was able to discern emerging codes and to signal in the margins any meaningful hesitations in the participants' elocution. After transcribing and checking all the interviews in each set, I printed the transcriptions and highlighted sections in different colors to organize them in themes and to identify patterns, adding code names in the margins. After the first set of interviews was coded, I created a codebook including the definition of broad organizational categories and a matrix for each of these categories, with rows for participants and columns for emerging substantive category.[106] Within each substantive category, I included the range of answers identified in each participant's answers, when present, as well as direct quotes from the transcripts. This categorizing process allowed me to compare participants' answers more easily within each set of interviews, but also to analyze variations in a single participant's answers over the three interviews. I expanded and modified the codebook after the analysis of each set of interviews.

I used similar, although simpler, categorizing strategies for the syllabi, the field notes I took during classroom observations, and the pre-service teachers' answers to the survey. This material was also analyzed in the light of the data collected through the interviews with teacher educators. These steps were followed by a broader analysis of the interview transcripts and their relationship to the content analysis of the syllabi, to the field notes, and to the survey. This was meant to further my understanding and analysis of the perspectives of the participants by taking

---

[106] Maxwell, Joseph A. *Qualitative research Design*. SAGE, 2013, p.107-108

into consideration the contextualization and relationships among data, relying on connecting strategies to refine my analysis.[107]

The following stage of this data analysis consisted in looking at the coded data through the theoretical framework I had chosen for this study, namely queer theory informed by critical pedagogy, and Queer of Color and Indigenous Queer critiques. This step allowed me to identify the four themes that are discussed and analyzed in the following chapters: Practices, Self, Others, and Institution. I examined these themes in light of the research questions that guide this study and that focus on the strategies teacher educators use to prepare pre-service teachers to challenge heteronormativity in their future practices, as well as on the factors that may influence teacher educators' practices when it comes to challenging heteronormativity in teacher education programs.

Finally, I used member checking to validate my analysis, and shared the first and second drafts of the results and analysis section of this paper with teacher educators, so as to obtain their feedback on any aspect of their practices or of the interviews that they felt I may have over-emphasized or misinterpreted. The eight participants all provided feedback on at least the first version of the results section, which included the themes, quotes and some analysis that was further developed in the second version.

G.   Researcher's positionality

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, feminist and critical ethnography methodological approaches recognize the positionality of the researcher as key in shaping the research project and analysis of the data. Unquestionably, my identity as an educator and as a

---

[107] *Ibid*, p.112-113

straight cisgender white woman from France has had an impact on the design of the study, the data collection and the interpretation of the data.

Indeed, my research questions stem directly from my own experience as a high school teacher struggling to be more inclusive of identities I do not share. Thus, despite my efforts to use an intersectional theoretical framework, it is obvious that my gender and sexual identities, as well as my position as a white French woman, have influenced the questions I raised and the interpretation of the data I obtained as a result of these questions. Furthermore, this identity has positioned me both as an insider and an outsider for the participants in this project, which may have caused some of them to trust me and others to be suspicious of my intentions or ability to conduct this research. Indeed, having taught a foreign language for 8 years in a high school context may have encouraged some participants to trust that my understanding of teaching and education systems would allow me to relate to their own struggles with changing their practices. On the other hand, they may have felt that my experience in France was far removed from the reality of the American context, or that the work of K-12 teachers is very different from the work of teacher educators. These are all questions that I have myself been pondering over throughout this study, feeling at once that I knew what participants meant or felt, but also that my lack of firsthand experience in the American secondary education context and in the field of teacher education prevented me from fully grasping the participants' experiences and perspectives. Similarly, my position as a straight cisgender woman has very likely impacted the comfort level that some participant may have experienced during our interviews, as most of them may have felt more inclined to share information, use certain words, or ask questions they would not have dared ask of a researcher who identified as LGBTQ. On the other hand, they may also have been suspicious of my intent with conducting this study, which may have influenced their answers. Being white and French may have also had a contradictory impact depending on the participants.

For instance, some teacher educators may have felt they could relate to my experience as a native speaker of a different language than English, while others may have been influenced by the expectations attached to French people in general, and white French women in particular.

Finally, it is important to recognize my current status as a Master's student with no previous experience in qualitative research, which certainly has impacted the process and result of this research.

H.   Conclusion

This chapter focused on a description of the feminist critical ethnographic methodological approach I chose for this study as it would answer best the research questions that guide this project. I introduced the site where the research took place, a large land-grant university in the Pacific Northwest, as well as the participants who were involved in this study: eight teacher educators from various programs whom I met regularly over the course of a year, and eighteen pre-service teachers who answered an online survey. I continued with a description of the various data collection methods I used, and pursued with the presentation of the theoretical framework I relied upon in the analytical process that took place both during and after the data was collected. I concluded this section by acknowledging how my positionality as a researcher may have influenced this research.

In the following chapter, Results and Analysis, I present a detailed analysis of the findings resulting from the data collection. These findings are organized along four major themes which emerged during the analytical process: Practices, Self, Others, and Institution. These themes provide answers to the questions raised by this research, namely: (1) How do teacher educators in this study prepare pre-service teachers to challenge heteronormativity in their future

practices, if at all? (2) What factors may influence teacher educators' practices when it comes to

challenging heteronormativity in teacher education programs?

IV.   Results and Analysis

A.   Introduction

This chapter provides a description and examination of the four themes that emerged

from the analysis of the data collected for this study: Practices, Self, Others, and Institution.

These themes point to teacher educators' practices and to factors that both hindered and

facilitated the implementation by these participants of strategies promoting LGBTQ-inclusion or

challenging heteronormativity. In addition, each theme is divided into subthemes that

occasionally represent a wide scope of answers, reflecting the positionalities of teacher educators

whose identities and experiences varied greatly. Thus, although common patterns emerged

throughout interviews, participants' answers also differed in some respects, due to these diverse

lived experiences. Similarly, as participants reflected on their practices, they sometimes

expressed contradictory positions which resulted from the doubts and hesitations that they

believed were pulling them toward opposite directions and made them feel "torn between

inactivity and activity," as one participant said in our last interview.

The first theme, Practices, focuses on how gender and sexuality emerged in the

participants' practices, whether as unplanned conversations, planned inclusion of LGBTQ-

related content, or practices encouraging self-reflexivity and the deconstruction of the hidden

curriculum. This section also looks into the extent to which participants' practices evolved

during the study. The second theme, Self, encompasses factors that influenced participants'

practices and were directly tied to the participants, in particular their identities, knowledge, and

dispositions toward LGBTQ-inclusion and heteronormativity in education. The third theme,

Others, discusses groups of people whom teacher educators identified as possibly hindering

teacher education programs from addressing those questions more actively, or, on the opposite,

potentially facilitating such implementation. Pre-service teachers, members of K-12 school

communities, and other teacher educators were cited as influencing teacher education programs

and faculty. Finally, the last theme, Institution, refers to factors that were perceived by teacher

educators as impediments or incentives related to institutional structures and practices such as

the structure, goals and philosophy of the teacher education program they worked in, the

discipline they taught and the material they used, educational policies at the local, state or federal

level, and the climate at the university level.

B.   Practices

Teacher educators' practices regarding gender and sexuality varied greatly among

participants. Most participants welcomed unplanned conversations about these issues, but not

everyone actively integrated LGBTQ-related content into their work. Some participants tried to

provide student teachers with concrete tools to implement in school settings, while others aimed

to raise awareness and encourage self-reflexivity among pre-service teachers. Moreover, some

participants' practices evolved during the study, sometimes as a result of their involvement with

this research.

1.   Unplanned discussions

For the majority of participants, issues related to LGBTQ students in K-12 settings tended

to come up in class following pre-service teachers' experiences in their field placements. When

such discussions came up spontaneously, participants explained that they welcomed them. Louis,

an instructor in agriculture education who taught K-12 agriculture classes for 13 years, explained

how these conversations emerged in his teacher education classroom:

> Actually, it's come up a couple times. There've been, so our students go out and student teach during the winter term, and three times during that term they come back to campus for a one day seminar and we kind of problem-solve some of the things they're dealing with and there has been an issue where-, I don't remember the details but it seems like in one case, there was a student, it was a male student who had decided he wanted to go by a typically female name and legally had the change made. The parents were supportive so the administration was trying to figure out how to implement a policy that was never in place before. And so this pre-service teacher was asking, "how do I, how do I handle this, what do I do?", and honestly it was a first for me, it had not come up with me, so.
>
> (Louis, Interview 1)

Although Louis explained that he was willing to help his student, this quote demonstrates

that he did not feel entirely prepared to address this question due to his lack of experience as a K-

12 teacher. The language used by Louis ("a male student who had decided he wanted to go by a

typically female name") also confirms that he was not familiar with trans* issues, as the name

change that the student required most likely reflected her desire to align her name with her

gender identity, and not simply a desire to change names. Thus, having such unplanned

conversations in class might not be entirely helpful for pre-service teachers if teacher educator

do not have a deeper understanding of LGBTQ issues.

Martha, who had been teaching sciences in the teacher education program using a critical

pedagogy approach for many years, explained that local school policies or events relayed by the

media also prompted conversations that made their way into the classrooms. She perceived these

occasions as opportunities to talk about gender and sexuality in her classroom:

> There's still certainly very much a binary approach, male/female, so that, I feel that's an evolving thing and it comes up and because it's in the media more, and because now in the school district they made, you know, there's a whole thing about bathrooms, so they made that, so that comes up, when those things come up, they're really rich sources to have some of those more uncomfortable conversations, you know to start that, because it becomes, so it's sort of this system that feeds itself, there are things going on and they're percolating but now they are being picked up by media and social

media and happening so it makes it at a larger conversation, so then you can kind of invite it in to the conversation and then to the classroom and talk about it and then it also opens up, "oh, yeah, I see this happening in my school", so it feeds itself in a good way.

(Martha, Interview 1)

However, as Martha pointed out, being open to the conversation did not mean that educators would intentionally integrate them into their curriculum: "So it comes up and emerges, so I guess there's a space for it but it's not explicitly addressed." This meant that if the topic did not emerge naturally, they would not necessarily be discussed in class. Meredith, who taught small cohorts of future physical education teachers, explained at the beginning of the study that these conversations were dependent on the students' level of interest in these questions:

I would not say that it's every year that we have those discussions, but it does come up, I think it just depends on the students, if my student teachers find it interesting they'll bring it up in class.

(Meredith, Interview 1)

Ensuring that pre-service teachers feel comfortable enough to raise questions pertaining to LGBTQ identities in the teacher education classroom is important as it can provide teacher educators with the opportunity to use their students' lived experiences in the K-12 classrooms in order to bring up broader questions regarding the ways heteronormativity functions institutionally in education. However, relying on the natural emergence of these questions might also be counterproductive. First, when they do come up in the teacher education classroom, these topics might be only perceived as problems to be solved in the school setting by teacher educators who are not fully informed about LGBTQ issues and heteronormativity, and thus miss out on the chance to encourage a deeper questioning of the societal structures that cast queer identities as problematic in the first place. On the other hand, if these questions are never brought up by teacher educators themselves, pre-service teachers might infer that such topics are not

relevant or appropriate in this setting, as silences also constitute a powerful discourse on gender and sexuality.

2.   Pro-active inclusion

The analysis of the syllabi shared by participants revealed that only one participant included an explicit diversity statement in her syllabus that mentioned sexual orientation as encompassed in her definition of diversity. Other participants' syllabi did not contain diversity statements but referred students to national standards as well as to the College of Education's conceptual framework for definitions of diversity and equity. It is important to note that the College of Education's conceptual framework did not list sexual orientation in its definition of diversity at the time of this study. Furthermore, none of the syllabi analyzed referred to the university policy on name in use changes, nor did they state the gender pronouns used by the instructors. Such an analysis remains limited, however, as it does not provide the more detailed information that participants shared about their practices during interviews.

Of the eight teacher educators who participated in this study, four stated that they did not actively include LGBTQ-content in their practices either prior to or during the study. Two did not do so prior to the research, but started implementing inclusive strategies during the research process. The last two participants explained that they already included LGBTQ-content in their curriculum prior to the study, but felt it probably was not enough. Participants stated various reasons for not including such content in their practices. These reasons are analyzed in the following sections of this chapter and can be partly summed up for now by Louis, a PhD candidate, as he described both personal and institutional factors to explain the lack of LGBTQ-inclusion in his practices:

> I don't know that the situation presented itself. It's not something I avoided I just don't,
> I don't know that I, well, I know that I haven't specifically tried to put in place any

strategies. One of the courses I didn't develop, I didn't have anything to do with the curriculum or the syllabus.

<div align="right">(Louis, Interview 3)</div>

Half of the participants stated they used inclusive strategies in their practices throughout the study. Ishmael, who taught social studies in high school for 16 years and used critical pedagogy in his practices both as a K-12 teacher and a teacher educator, explained that he used a comprehensive reading list students could choose from to write book reviews. His list, which he had developed over the course of several years and which he shared with me, included authors like Judith Butler and attempted to encourage students to read literature (both fiction and non-fiction) that dealt with diverse social justice issues, including gender and sexuality. Ishmael also tried to uncover the homo-erotic subtexts of literary classics with his students, and stated that he included references to LGBTQ historical figures in his curriculum:

> Langston Hughes and Bayard Rustin, Langston Hughes is the great poet, and Bayard Rustin, he was a gay man who worked with the civil rights movement, I point that out all the time, I talk about Francis Bacon, I always make it, you know, there's all kinds of people we're studying and there's intersectional kinds of oppression and [so on], I do a lot of that too.

<div align="right">(Ishmael, Interview 2)</div>

Maura and Lucas, both former bilingual education K-12 teachers, introduced gender and sexuality via children's books that figured the stories of LGBTQ children and families, in order to model how elementary pre-service teachers might use them in their own classrooms, practices that I was able to observe as they both invited me into their classroom on the day they presented this material to their students. Lucas had used this strategy over the course of several years, as his own research interest involved using children's literature to challenge gender norms. Maura, for her part implemented this strategy for the first time during this study. Meredith also actively included these questions in her curriculum, starting to do so during the study. Among other

activities, she took her students to an event that dealt with physical education and LGBTQ-related questions in K-12 settings:

> I took my students to a GLSEN-Nike sport summit workshop, a day-long thing up at the Nike campus. And it's the Gay and Lesbian Support for Educators Network, and it's geared towards high school students.[…] So we did a day-long workshop with them and again it was geared towards high school students but I took my student teachers and they got to interact with kids of all backgrounds, so there were I think some good discussion points that came up from that, I don't know if any questions necessarily came up, but a lot of good discussion and just awareness I think that was brought up.
>
> (Meredith, Interview 2)

Such integration into the curriculum might operate as a first step for teacher educators who want to challenge heterosexism, as it is a concrete way of operationalizing their commitment to putting an end to the invisibilization of these questions in the education setting. However, as Maura said after she "taught a lesson about it", there are limits to such inclusion: "I don't think it went necessarily to being queer inclusive, like, really having a conversation about it, but I think it was a starting point for me." Indeed, including LGBTQ identities in the curriculum does not necessarily encourage students to reflect on their own identities.

3.   Challenging the hidden curriculum and promoting self-reflexivity

As Martha and Lucas explicitly pointed out, the integration of LGBTQ content into the curriculum, although necessary, is not sufficient. These participants recognized the limits of certain strategies, and stated that some of their hesitations to include LGBTQ-related content in their curriculum stemmed from their reluctance to bring these questions into the classroom in an "add-and-stir" approach that would only reinforce expectations about hegemonic norms, as Martha explained:

> I think it's relevant, I think it's important. I have to think about how to do it, because what I don't want to do is, "oh, now we're going to talk about those people and then we're going to talk about it, because all the other times we've been talking about, you know, heterosexuals." So it's the same when you're talking about, you know, race or

things, it's like "this is the norm and now, oh yeah, don't forget this" it's like they call it, you know, "the holiday of the month", in a very disparaging way. […] Because I guess at this point, it's not even, I would not even think of it as an add on at this point, it's emergent, if it comes up then we talk about it. But I would really have to give it some thought to think about how it would be in there as a part of the curriculum and not something like "oh, by the way we need to make sure we talk about this".

(Martha, Interview 1)

Lucas, whose experience as a bilingual education K-12 teacher and whose own research interest focused on questions of gender and ethnicity, felt that one way of preventing this superficial approach from happening was a coordinated effort to introduce these questions at the college level:

But I think at the same time when you only do small things here and there, it almost sends a message that it's only important to do in passing, almost like Black History Month, we only really do it during February, right, or things about Latinos, maybe only in September, and so that's the fear that if we don't take it on and have it become part of the mantra, part of the College, then we risk the same thing happening that it just becomes like a passing, […] you're doing it for a little bit and then you're done with it, and it has to really be more of a holistic approach.

(Lucas, Interview 2)

Treating LGBTQ questions as an add-on approach to the curriculum amounts to what Kevin Kumashiro calls "teaching *as*, *for* or *about* the Other," a promotion of diversity and cultural competence that encourages acceptance through assimilation and does not automatically enable pre-service teachers to reflect upon the ways their own gender and sexual identities have been and are constantly defined through heteronormative processes. Such integration needs to be accompanied by a reflection on the role teacher education programs can also play in challenging binary understandings of gender and sexuality in education. However, most participants did not actively challenge heteronormativity by inviting students to reflect on their own gender and sexual identities or by examining the hidden curriculum.

Only a minority of participants seemed to be actively encouraging pre-service teachers to challenge heteronormativity. Martha, who felt she did not address LGBTQ topics enough in her

practices, nevertheless explained that she regularly engaged in attempts to help pre-service

teachers deconstruct the hidden curriculum that they may unknowingly perpetuate:

> I think the part, the framework I use for science teaching is about equity and access so we're always talking about how those things come through, it's like ok, so if you're, so for example when someone was designing a genetics unit and they kept talking about the mother and the father, I kept saying, yes but what if the children that you're doing this with, don't have the mother and the father in the image that you are talking about the mother and the father [..]so how could you reframe this so you could, so what if you have kids in your classroom that have two mothers or two fathers, yes, so biologically there's something, but that doesn't mean that it wasn't in vitro or something like that, so you have to think about how you frame those kinds of things.
>
> (Martha, Interview 2)

Similarly, Meredith, although she was not necessarily familiar with the concept of the

hidden curriculum, avoided the heteronormative language that often predominates when

referring to families in education, a habit she likely developed more easily due to her lived

experience as a lesbian: "I try to be aware of how I use names or discuss families to talk about

either the students that I work with or when we talk about the places they're going to be, talking

you know about you know not just labelling things as mum and dad, you know, or just being

aware I think of the cultural piece that students are going to see in schools." She also actively

encouraged students to examine their biases through activities dedicated to deconstructing

stereotypes: "I had posters put around the room with just words in general, these topic areas, and

we had them brainstorm and had discussions about it and talked about stereotypes and all this

stuff."

Although Martha and Meredith did work toward unveiling unstated norms regarding

sexuality, the majority of participants did not implement similar strategies, in particular

concerning the deconstruction of gender binaries. Most participants did attend to gender in their

practices, as they aimed to encourage pre-service teachers to become aware of gender

expectations, and to avoid reproducing gender stereotypes and perpetuating gender inequalities

between men and women. Participants who engaged in this work attempted to uncover the

hidden curriculum that contributed to perpetuating gender inequalities. Hugo, who taught

science education courses, pointed out:

> Inside education there is a push for more equality, gender equality so that's certainly something that we talk about and try to bring about change. So, making science teachers aware that there are strong stereotypes and that young women starting at elementary school start de-identifying themselves as math and science literate people, so, that's brought up frequently within our profession and within my teaching.
>
> (Hugo, Interview 1)

A majority of teacher educators also commented on their struggle to suppress the

expression "you guys" from their students' or their own vocabulary, as Maura, a social studies

and literacy instructor who taught in K12-bilingual settings for several years, explained:

> Or even thinking about, how do I stay away from "you guys", from saying that. I mean that day I was very aware of it. I'll count down, that's a good way to not say "are you guys ready?", because I do use "guys" a lot so.
>
> (Maura, Interview 2)

However, this widespread focus on inequalities between men and women and the language

used to refer to students was not supported by a deeper examination of heteronormativity.

Attempts to tackle gender inequalities between men and women in K-12 settings is crucial and I

am in no way suggesting that they should be put aside. However, these attempts might benefit

greatly from a larger analysis of the ways gender norms impact our gender and sexual identities.

Indeed, the issue of gender equality might be seized as an opportunity for teacher educators to

bring pre-service teachers closer to an understanding of the way heterosexism is intrinsically tied

to gender expectations and norms. As pre-service teachers gain insight into the workings of

heteronormativity and the impact it had on their own gender and sexual identity development,

they might then be in a better position to recognize the need to challenge it in school, thus

benefiting LGBTQ students who might be more violently impacted by it.

4. **Evolution throughout the study**

Most participants stated during our last interview that they felt more aware or knowledgeable about questions pertaining to LGBTQ-inclusivity and heteronormativity, the majority of them attributing this change to their participation in the research, which they perceived as some form of professional development. Janneke, a PhD candidate who taught math and sciences for several years in the program, stated in our last interview: "I've been glad to be able to be part of this, it's good professional development for me.". Louis, for his part, explained: "I probably have a heightened level of knowledge that's beyond what it was six months ago. I don't know if it's good knowledge, but it's definitely different, it's changed." Hugo, who taught sciences to pre-service teachers, referred to the media, local and national contexts, as potentially influencing him as well:

> So, I haven't put anything into practice, so to speak, but and then it's also, you have, in your study you have this whole backdrop of these issues being right at the forefront so that's a good and a bad thing, right. So it's hard to know how much your work has been influencing me, versus how much that's been going on in the media.
>
> (Hugo, Interview 3)

However, if the presence of these issues in the social and work environment of teacher educators may impacts their level of awareness and knowledge, it does not necessarily influence their classroom practices. Indeed, only two participants' practices clearly evolved throughout the study: Meredith's and Maura's. Meredith's practices changed from being open to discussions when they came up, to actively introducing LGBTQ questions as a topic of conversation, taking her students to LGBTQ-related events and encouraging them to examine their own biases. As she explained, part of her hesitation to do this work in the past had been related to her fear of being perceived as having an agenda, yet factors like having LGBTQ students in her classroom facilitated her work:

And so I think for me sometimes before this, it's not something that I really just bring up, because I don't want to seem like I'm pushing an agenda on my students necessarily, but I do see that, that was also potentially not the right direction to go either, because I think I was missing out on informing them or giving them an opportunity to be more educated with the kids that they're going to be seeing or working with in their school. What has helped I think this year too, is that I have two students in particular […] they both also identify as gay, […] so it's been I think just very helpful for me just to, I think see, how important it is to have those discussions in classes.

(Meredith , Interview 3)

Maura, who, from the start, had also been convinced of the need to be more inclusive yet felt reluctant to act upon this conviction, shared that the research process had forced her to make a clear move in that direction and to design an entire lesson on this topic:

I taught the class last year, and last year I was thinking this is social studies, this is social justice like I'm not doing my job if I'm not being inclusive of, or even beginning the conversation about LGBTQ, and so I thought, like last year I was like but how do I do it, I don't know, I really don't know, and so I thought, ok, next year I'll figure out how to do it, and so if I compare my teaching this year to last year, you know I do think that I've improved, because at least I did something, I did a lesson, I taught a lesson about it, we had a conversation. It didn't go, I don't think it went necessarily to being queer inclusive, like, really having a conversation about it, but I think it was a starting point for me. And even for them. But I also think that it was helpful, definitely, I don't know that I would have, I don't know what I would have done if you hadn't done the presentations, if you hadn't set that up, I don't know that it would have, I don't know that I would have had the tools to talk about it on my own.

(Maura, Interview 3)

Although other participants did not necessarily actively challenge heteronormativity or include LGBTQ content in their practices during this study, they did mention that they would try to do so in the near future. Louis, who explained that teachers in his field were often involved in extra-curricular activities with their students, stated that he might consider involving his pre-service teachers in an activity about ways they could ensure that students of all genders would feel included when planning sleeping arrangements for overnight school trips:

The assignment of them planning a field trip that's overnight with students, because actually it's pretty, I may change the assignment a little, but in the past it's been pretty specific, you have this many female students, you have this many male students, it doesn't address, what if a student identifies as one or the other, or that's not included

at all, so. Potentially, I could change this where it might force them to make that consideration.

<div align="right">(Louis, Interview 3)</div>

Similarly, Janneke expressed her ability to notice an increasing number of opportunities to raise questions about gender and sexuality with her students and explained she intended to encourage more conversations on the topic as these opportunities came up: "We're working with the after school program again and I'll probably spend, I think I'll probably try and notice sort of notice the kids more, and use these observations to have conversations with the pre-service teachers." Furthermore, in an email she sent after member checking this chapter, Martha stated that she would "be making changes to [her] syllabi in the fall to align with the newer university policies on sexual orientation and gender as well as pronouns." Ishmael stated that although he would not assume a leadership position in the program regarding these questions, he would be supportive of others', and would include more material directly related to LGBTQ issues in his own practices:

> Am I going to spearhead those initiatives? No, I'm going to be an ally, I'm going to be a real ally, not just somebody who says it, I'll have people's back and everybody knows that, I always have people's backs. I'm going to be there, I'll be supportive, I'm not going to lead, but in the classroom, I'm going to open up the curriculum, pick the adolescent psy class to include more of this, even *Moonlight*, you know, some clips from that, very important stuff, and particularly you know the whole idea of Machismo, and machismo happening in oppressed subcultures who feel their masculinity has been called into question because of imperialism or colonialism or whatever and yeah, and I bring that up in class a lot.

<div align="right">(Ishmael, Interview 3)</div>

Although these participants may have simply stated their intent to change their practices as they knew I was hoping they would, their answers might also illustrate the process, inscribed in time, that is required for change to take place, as participants felt the need to reflect on these issues before taking the next step. Hugo expressed this most clearly in our last interview:

> The system has been perturbed, my system, a little bit by our discussions and awareness the little reading I've done, and I kind of wait to see what emerges from

that, I mean I'm not "just go out and change things", and that's why, collecting more information before something solid emerges is kind of the way that I see this type of effort happening.

<div align="right">(Hugo, Interview 3)</div>

C.   Self

Regardless of whether they implemented strategies to include LGBTQ-content or challenge heteronormativity in their practices, most participants' awareness of, knowledge about and dispositions toward LGBTQ questions affected their practices, functioning either as motivators or inhibitors. However, they engaged with these questions differently as their personal and professional experiences varied greatly.

1.   Identities and lived experiences

Participants' identities and lived experiences greatly affected their awareness of the need to focus on LGBTQ issues in education. For about half of the participants, awareness of heteronormativity stemmed from their own identities as individuals belonging to underrepresented groups or from their lived experiences, which placed them in positions where they could identify oppressive norms in a more personal way. Thus, Meredith's identity as a lesbian enabled her to be conscious of the way she talked about relationships and families in the classroom, while Janneke recognized challenges that students may face based on her sibling's experience as a transgender person. Lucas, for his part, experienced racism as a Latino man which prompted his interest in working on other issues pertaining to structural discrimination in education, including gender. Maura's own identity as a Latina who worked in bilingual education probably also heightened her awareness of discrimination targeting other identities, as did her experience as a K-12 teacher interacting with the lesbian parents of a kindergarten child which, she explained, made her realize that she needed to transform her practices in order to be

more inclusive. Such direct lived experiences definitely impacted teacher educators' awareness

of questions pertaining to LGBTQ-inclusion in teacher education programs and their dispositions

toward these questions.

On the other hand, two participants also explained that their reluctance to bring up these

questions in class partly stemmed from their lack of lived experience as they did not identify as

LGBTQ. Hugo said:

> And it's the same with talking about queer students, it's that vocabulary, that fluidity with language and experience. Everybody has a shared experience around performance in school, so it's easy to talk about. Not everybody has experience around being in a differential group or being biased against that way, so. […] Once again it's my hesitation around not having the lived experience and feeling farcical like, here is that white male coming again, or here is that white [reads] cisgendered male, you know. That makes me feel uncomfortable, I can't speak about those experiences, because I haven't lived them.
>
> (Hugo, Interview 3)

Ishmael also commented on the limits of his knowledge about LGBTQ questions as it

remained purely intellectual, echoing Hugo's argument about lived experiences. He also

mentioned age as he stated that he felt like "an anachronism," a "dinosaur" who wasn't sure he

should be the one doing this job, pointing to another aspect of his identity as an impediment to

queering his practices.

Hugo and Ishmael both raise the question of the legitimacy of non-LGBTQ educators to

bring up LGBTQ-related topics in their classroom. This seems to echo criticism from

underrepresented communities who are wary of the motivations behind those who take up social

justice work even as they are privileged by the systems of oppression they claim to be fighting.

As a cisgender, straight white educator, I argue that it is crucial to take such criticism into

account, however, it is equally important to reassert the need for cisgender straight white

educators to examine the ways they are also impacted by heteronormativity as it is through such

self-examination that they will be able to recognize their own participation in its reproduction.

This also raises the question of unawareness and ignorance which might be perceived by many

teacher educators as their lack of knowledge on these questions. Yet, as Luhmann and others

point out, ignorance about certain issues is not an absence of knowledge which might be

resolved by filling in the missing information. Ignorance about LGBTQ identities is what makes

heteronormative knowledge possible, and knowing about and understanding the way

heteronormativity affects us all requires the unsettling of previous knowledge. This often results

in cognitive dissonance, an often discomforting process which most of us go through when we

are "grappling with new information in light of old understandings." [108]

However, awareness about these questions did not always prompt an awareness of deeper

structural issues and the ways educators participate in reproducing systemic discrimination. For

instance, Janneke, who was already familiar with the idea that gender is socially constructed,

shared that reading about heteronormativity heightened her awareness of heteronormativity as

systemic and her own participation in perpetuating it:

> So, from the very preface it raised the question for me of whether I believe that
> heterosexual people or cisgender people are superior, and they had a word for that…
> "Cissexism". So I read that and thought "Wow, am I heterosexist? Am I cissexist?"
> and I never thought to ask myself those questions before. So that, I think, a lot, I think
> a big component of achieving social justice is unpacking one's own biases and you
> don't do that until you start asking the question of like "Am I heterosexist or 'insert
> other privilege here'", so that sort of grabbed me right off the hook. […]. I had never
> thought of the world as heteronormative, I fully agree that it is, but that had never
> occurred to me before.
>
> (Janneke, Interview 2)

Awareness and self-reflexivity, although crucial, equally did not ensure that participants

always actively engaged in deconstructing heteronormativity in their practices. Martha, who

applied a critical pedagogy lens in her teaching practices, pointed out:

---

[108] Gorski, Paul C. "Cognitive Dissonance as a Strategy in Social Justice Teaching. (Promising Practices)."
Multicultural Education 17, no. 1 (2009): 54-57.

So I guess, that's really my question, why don't I do it? But I mean, I guess I do, I feel like, I attend to it, but I guess through this conversation I think, oh yeah I just don't, I need to, I mean I really think I need to think about it a little bit more […] If I say I really am supportive and want to do more inclusive work then I really have to sort of reflect on why is a lot of this absent, and not explicitly part of what I do.

(Martha, Interview 1)

Maura, for her part, recognized that she knowingly and unknowingly participated in reproducing heteronormativity, both in her personal life, when she redirected her children's inclinations toward choices that better fit normative gender expectations, and in her work with pre-service teachers:

I think I'm aware of it and I think that that's why I knew it was, I was aware that I needed to address it, I'm sure that there are a lot of ways that I don't even know how I reinscribe these perspectives, these ideologies, this ideology that we have about gender, and I'm sure that I reinscribe them in many different ways, even when I teach.[…] I think I'm probably more aware of it than what I do, than my action […]. Like I'm aware of it, I do think of some ways, how I reinscribe this, this binary, gender binary, and I stay there versus going out, being more inclusive of LGBTQ.

(Maura, Interview 2)

Similarly, teacher educators like Martha or Ishmael, whose work had focused on critical pedagogy for many years, were intellectually aware of the ways systemic heteronormativity affect the teaching profession and their own biases as individuals, yet, as Ishmael explained such intellectual understanding remained detached from a more visceral perception of these questions and he was not always aware of the ways he participated in perpetuating heteronormative expectations:

I think I've showed case that already, that I'm a work in progress, I have a long way to go. I know the stuff intellectually, but I don't think I know it emotionally, I've read the books, I've read the articles, I go to the movies, I do what I'm supposed to do, I read the right stuff, but I have a long way to go.

(Ishmael, Interview 3)

For teacher educators who did not share the identities, experiences, or research interests of other participants, such awareness of heteronormativity and the way it might influence their own behaviors was limited. After reading some material provided during the study, Louis explained:

I did have a thought today, it was interesting, heterosexism I think is the term, I guess I would put myself in that category, which was interesting, I wouldn't have thought of that, I probably wouldn't have used that term in general, but probably because I did not know that term before. […] So, I wouldn't consider myself homophobic, potentially unsure about whether and /or how to approach that subject matter, it's also not something I think about, so maybe beyond consciousness better describes me.

(Louis, Interview 2)

Acknowledging the ways heteronormativity might impact their own practices also seemed challenging for these participants who experienced cognitive dissonance as such awareness contradicted their sense of self, as Hugo explained clearly:

Because you always have this picture of yourself as a – in a certain way, so I view myself as a very open person in terms of LGBTQ and, you know the "I have friends who are gay", you know so all that stuff, our best friends from A. are a gay couple so, I've been, even when I was growing up my parents had gay friends, so it never felt different to me and so as a result I don't feel like I have to – because I have an open mind, I don't think I have to address it in my teaching but maybe that's wrong minded.

(Hugo, Interview 1)

Participants like Hugo, Louis or Ishmael who perceived themselves as tolerant or liberal, acknowledged the difficulty they encountered to admit that their practices might fall short of being inclusive and on the contrary might be reproducing heterosexist norms. This disconnect might be painful, yet coming to terms with this new sense of self is necessary if we are to begin to address implicit biases which we were not previously aware of and reexamine our pedagogical approaches.

2.   Knowledge

Most teacher educators in this study felt that they did not possess the knowledge to bring up these questions in their practices. Knowledge here refers to both factual knowledge about the meaning and use of words and concepts, and to the "know how," the set of skills and experiences that participants often felt they might need to tackle questions of gender and sexuality in teacher education programs.

The majority of participants repeatedly mentioned language as a considerable hurdle that prevented them from feeling confident to address LGBTQ topics in their classes. They often felt they lacked the knowledge of specific terms that would allow them to introduce these questions properly. This uneasiness with language often became apparent when some participants hesitated on the words they were using, such as the acronym LGBTQ, or words such as "cisgender" or "heteronormativity", which some of them read or heard for the first time in the readings they completed or during the presentations they attended. For instance, Hugo explained in our last interview that language was part of the reason why he was not able to include LGBTQ-related content in his practices:

> I didn't see the opening, and part of it is because of lack of language, like, I'm just getting used to "transwomen", "transmen" type of thing, and so, probably a nice tool would be to develop ways to talk about L-G-B-Q-T, L-G-B-Q-T, is that right? […] Yeah, so the language part is kind of important, it's like how do you carry on these conversations and how do you carry them on and maintain comfort level with people so they feel they can participate.
>
> (Hugo, Interview 3)

For Ishmael and for Hugo, trying to work on language was accompanied by the feeling that making mistakes might result into a form of condemnation. Ishmael explained this fear in metaphorical terms :

> I'm really careful with my language, I try to work on the language, I'm working on it. […] I'm trying to be more inclusive with my language […] but, here is the deal, for me it has like become almost a religion and if you make a mistake, you're a blasphemer, and yeah, I'm trying.
>
> (Ishmael, Interview 3)

This concern with language is telling, as it reveals the extent to which heteronormativity maintains itself through a discourse of normality that remains undetected by those who mostly fit in the norms, but acts as a symbolic violence on people whose identities are cast as abnormal or rendered invisible by this discourse. As language related to queer identities is undergoing a major

shift in the United States, and is being picked up by an increasing number of young people whose identities do not fall into a binary understanding of gender, power relationships are uncovered and openly challenged, destabilizing those who, so far, benefited from this power unconsciously.

About half of the participants also felt they did not possess the skills and experiences to be able to introduce such topics or to lead conversations about them. Hugo felt that he lacked the skills to lead conversations about gender and sexuality: "Yeah, those are hard conversations and I can't feel, I can't say that I'm very good at fostering those, right. It's kind of a different skill set." For Janneke, such uneasiness was due to her lack of experience engaging in these conversations in the classroom: "If I were trying to have or to orchestrate a conversation in the classroom about sexuality, I think I would be a little scared, because I just don't, you know, I don't know how it would go and I have no experience facilitating such conversations." Experience, for Louis, meant referring to his own experience in the K-12 setting where he might have encountered situations that he could draw from to help pre-service teachers navigate questions about gender and sexuality in the school context. Not having such experience or some training to compensate for it, he did not feel fully prepared to give his students specific advice:

> I would definitely feel prepared to help them work through problems that they may come in contact with but, without any prior history or examples to rely on, yeah, I don't, I haven't had any kind of training that would help me do that.
>
> (Louis, Interview 1)

Maura, for her part, felt that she could draw from her own experience as a K-12 teacher, but some of her hesitation to address these questions came from practical pedagogical considerations as she was struggling to figure out how to include the topic in her course:

> And I did talk about it a little bit from my own experience but I have been thinking "I need to bring in literature" or "how do I address this?" And that's difficult. I think it's difficult for me. And I think it's mainly because I really don't know how to address it. […] First it's not having the knowledge, because I wasn't taught that. So I think it's me, first it's me, that's one of the, what do I want to say, that's one of the obstacles, I need to figure it out first. […] I think the first thing is me figuring it out, what is it that

I'm going to do, what books am I going to read, children's books or chapter book, that I would include in the curriculum, what articles am I going to have the students read. […] I don't think I have the knowledge at this point to truly address it in a critical way, in a way that might be, hopefully be empowering and transformative for my pre-service teachers.

(Maura, Interview 1)

These participants' concern over their lack of skills and experience introducing controversial topics in their classes and leading conversations about them raise the question of how and when teacher educators can acquire and develop such skills. Like Maura and Louis, Hugo also referred to his lack of training regarding these questions as a factor hindering his ability to introduce them confidently in his practice: "And it's my own lack of probably training, not being able to foster those conversations." As most teacher educators in the US do not receive formal training before integrating teacher education programs, they rely on their previous professional experiences as K-12 teachers to fulfill their new role, provided they taught in K-12 settings. Yet, research shows that such discussions also rarely take place in K-12 settings, a fact that is not surprising since K-12 teachers are widely underprepared to examine these questions during their teacher training, as Maura confirmed at the end of this research, talking about the teacher education program she attended as a student:

Because as an undergraduate student, and even as a master's student I think we had one conversation about it during my Master's program and it was like we watched a video, but it wasn't really, like, how do I go, what do I do, how do I start, what do I use. So I thought that, I personally would have liked that if I would have been in their position, because I wouldn't even know where to start, and so I felt that was a safe way of getting there without starting there.

(Maura, Interview 2)

3. Dispositions

Participants' dispositions toward the relevance of the introduction of LGBTQ-related content into their curriculum or of challenging heteronormativity varied according to their identities and experiences, and is also tied to the cognitive dissonance they might experience.

Although the vast majority of participants were motivated by a strong sense of responsibility to include these questions into their practices, three participants also shared the conflicting feelings that might pull them away from actively implementing some, or additional, queer-inclusive strategies in their classrooms. Incidentally, although one participant insisted that his ethnicity as an Irish man had impacted his lived experience, these 3 participants also shared common identities as white men involved in heterosexual relationships, which may explain why they expressed more doubts and hesitation as to the relevance of including these questions into their practices, and which might illustrate Luhmann's description of ignorance as "resistance to knowledge."

One factor Hugo and Louis quoted was their reluctance to privilege an issue over others, as they felt that they already attended to the need to prepare pre-service teachers to be welcoming and inclusive of diversity. Thus, they were not sure what role teacher education programs should play beyond that. Louis explained that he felt that a general stance on diversity issues might be sufficient:

> So we try and encourage our pre-service teachers to include all their students and from whatever backgrounds, socio-economics, race, gender, whatever and I, sometimes I feel like that's where our role stops, maybe, we should encourage them to be inclusive in general but beyond that I'm not sure if you went down this path of including this topic, what other topics then would you have to include on top of that? So maybe it's me not being educated on how it would look but yeah, I struggle to understand what that would look like, I guess.
>
> (Louis, Interview 2)

Hugo also felt that attending to diverse identities too closely might hinder his job as an educator:

> That made me think about how, how closely, how fine grained do we start pulling apart how we interact with students and how we train our teachers. Because everybody has their own individual capital, and we cannot possibly attend to all of those aspects. And so if we identify pedagogies that attend to queer people, do we have to identify pedagogies that attend to rural people, pedagogies that are attending to people, you know, who have other specific characteristics, and so how fine grained do you get? And, that whole, it puts a lot on teachers, I mean teachers are asked to do so much

already, and so to continue to pile on with having to be aware of every small group makes it very difficult. So, it sounds negative and I felt negative about that.

<div align="right">(Hugo, Interview 3)</div>

Hugo and Louis's comments bring up the question of the role education should play in society and reveal the impact that banking education has on educators who often get caught up in a system that focuses on knowledge acquisition rather than developing critical skills in students. They also point to the limits of a multicultural model that does not address the deeper common causes of discrimination that affect various identities, thus pitching communities against each other instead of analyzing the ways they are related. Ishmael, for instance, although familiar with critical pedagogy, perceived issues of racism and poverty as more pressing and explained that, although he didn't like thinking this way, he felt that people were "interested in LGBTQ questions because they concern whites." His perception of LGBTQ issues as essentially white, elitist and sometimes narcissistic, most likely resulted from the increasing visibility of homonormative representations of the LGBTQ community in the media which tend to promote the assimilation of white middle class gay, lesbian, and trans* people into mainstream society, and rely on the exclusion of queer people of color and poor queer people from the same visibility.

 Ishmael also shared his concern that fluid gender and sexual identities might have an adverse impact on children:

> I'm worried about people making decisions about transitioning before they're really old enough to know definitely, but that again, can they ever know definitely? I don't know, but I am concerned about the magnitude of that, and also just, do you ever really know, or are you just different things at different times in your life, moving along the spectrum. I thought it was interesting, I think we talked about that, you know, the woman who wrote the book, how she was straight, and then she was a lesbian, and she got married and then her female partner is now transitioning into a man, and now she's heterosexual, and I talked to you about this, I said what does that do to their kids?

<div align="right">(Ishmael, Interview 3)</div>

Such a concern for the well-being of children, although genuine, is reminiscent of the arguments used throughout history to oppose non-normative relationships and identities. Indeed, from boarding schools where Native American children were forcefully sent to ensure they would be better prepared to adapt to a "civilized" society and were made to fit Eurocentric heteronormative identities, to the forced sterilization of indigenous women and women of color, to the questioning of single black mother's ability to raise their children, to the general impact of divorce on children, and to other such "Save our Children" campaigns, children are often placed at the forefront of the debate when heteronormativity, understood as a white middle-class understanding of relationships and identities, is under threat. Such focus, instead of enabling an examination of society as imposing hegemonic norms that marginalize those who do not fit in, maintain that those who are marginalized by systemic discrimination are the cause of such an exclusion.

D.   Others

Beyond their own sense of responsibility about the role they could play as individuals in preparing pre-service teachers regarding questions of gender and sexuality, most participants in this study also mentioned external factors which they felt came into play when considering whether or how to introduce these questions into teacher education programs. Either as potential obstacles or as supportive actors, pre-service teachers and other teacher educators were often cited by participants as major factors in the equation. The reactions of in-service K-12 teachers, school administrators, and parents were also mentioned by some participants as possible reasons that would influence their decision to include material that encouraged future educators to challenge heteronormativity in their profession.

1. Pre-service teachers

Participants' perception of pre-service teachers' dispositions toward LGBTQ questions

varied. Yet, on the whole, most of them believed that the majority of student teachers were open

and willing to discuss issues pertaining to gender and sexuality in their teacher education

programs. Indeed, teacher educators felt that this younger generation of teachers was more aware

than their own of LGBTQ questions, and was generally more open to them as well, as Louis

explains:

> Pre-service teachers are typically younger, a younger generation of individuals and so, maybe their mindsets are a little bit different. And they're on a college campus where it's a little more open and, yeah, so I think in that sense I don't see a lot of barriers probably to implementing something here.
>
> <div align="right">(Louis, Interview 1)</div>

For Meredith, such open conversations were also facilitated in her classroom by the

presence of out LGBTQ student teachers who were vocal in their desire to learn about how to be

inclusive and supportive of K-12 students who might also identify as LGBTQ:

> What has helped I think this year too, is that I have two students in particular who were going with me, they both also identify as gay, and so they, that has I think been an interest for them as well in working with kids, so it's just also we've had a lot of good discussions and just being more aware of that and they wanted to know more, and they would ask questions in class, and their peers are very receptive to it too, so it's been I think just very helpful for me just to, I think, see how important it is to have those discussions in classes.
>
> <div align="right">(Meredith, Interview 3)</div>

Teacher educators' appraisal of pre-service teachers' dispositions toward the inclusion of

LGBTQ topics in their teacher education curriculum was confirmed by the majority of the 18

students who answered the survey for this research. Indeed, most of them generally agreed that

they should be trained on questions around gender and sexuality:

> I know a lot of young kids who are now exploring the topic of sexuality more often, and are often bullied or close minded and when asking for help are often met with the same mindset. I think for the safety, comfort and desire to have an open-minded

learning environment, staff need to be trained on current trends, understanding, issues and solutions to dealing with gender and sexuality.

(Preservice teacher 1, Online survey)

Some students felt that although they had received some useful information at one point in their program, in particular in a multicultural education class, they still needed to go deeper into those questions and were eager for more specific advice on ways to be inclusive and to talk about gender and sexuality in their K-12 classes:

I think that what I have learned at [this university] has solidified my philosophy on the matter, however I wish that I was given more concrete tools to help me address conflicts related to gender and sexuality.

(Preservice teacher 2, Online survey)

Interestingly, just like teacher educators themselves, some students emphasized the need for training concerning the language that teachers should master when addressing these questions in the school context. One student, who identified as a lesbian, wrote:

There needs to be more training on transgenderism, proper pronouns to utilize in regards to transgenderism, advocating proper terminology for the LGBQT community, and information on sexuality when working with LGBQT students.

(Pre-service teacher 3, Online survey)

These quotes from teacher educators and pre-service teachers all point to a strong desire from pre-service teachers to gain skills and knowledge to address LGBTQ issues in their future classrooms, skills and knowledge that many teacher educators themselves shared they did not possess. Although a minority of pre-service teachers mentioned self-reflexivity as an important step in their learning process regarding LGBTQ questions, most of their answers seem to be focused on "concrete tools" and "solutions" to address "conflicts". As research shows that only half of in-service K-12 teachers implement LGBTQ-inclusive strategies in their classrooms,[109] it is undeniable that teacher educators should try to model and explicitly address inclusive practices

---

[109] Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. *From Teasing to Torment.*

in their teaching. However, data suggests that in many cases K-12 teachers do not implement such practices because they do not see the need for it. Interestingly, one teacher educator in this study also explained that he would gladly address these questions should he experience "a felt need" for it, but that such a need did not seem to emerge in his current practices. A few other teacher educators also explained that having LGBTQ pre-service teachers encouraged them or would encourage them to be more inclusive in their practices as they felt such practices would directly benefit these students. Once again, this means that pre-service teachers, as well as teacher educators, must first be made aware of the pervasiveness of heteronormativity so they can challenge it in their classrooms regardless of whether or not they have LGBTQ students.

Despite this apparent openness on the part of student teachers, half of the teacher educators felt unsure about how pre-service teachers would react if they included questions pertaining to LGBTQ identities in their curriculum. Maura expressed her fear that students might not react well to these topics, a fear that made her reluctant to implement queer-inclusive strategies:

> If I have negative responses I'll be more cautious, I guess, and see that's the problem, where is the -, I don't know. I know there can be issues, students can be, "hey, why are we learning about this, I don't believe in this, I don't think this belongs in the schools, in the school curriculum." And so I guess once I get a response from them that will influence how I continue or don't continue to do that.[…] You know, I think there is some sort of fear for me, "but what happens if they read something and they're just completely against it, what happens to me?" That is a fear.
>
> (Maura, Interview 1)

Students' reactions and the professional repercussions these may have also concerned Lucas who felt that he would keep including these topics in his curriculum but might suffer the consequences this involved, in particular in the students' evaluation of teaching (SET). As he explained, his position as a professor of color who already brought up issues of race and social justice in his courses contributed to the possible backlash he might experience more harshly if he included LGBTQ issues as well:

[Factors] that might discourage me, I don't know. I guess if, you know, the university's placing a really high value on the SET scores, so the evaluations, and I think it would be disheartening if ever people would be complaining about it in their - , because it seems, in other places people have to take it before they see their grades, and here, students will come after you, and it's usually the ones that are very upset, they are the ones that fill out the SET scores, and so you don't get the [average] scores, but you do get the very angry ones. Which is what I usually get, so it's, because I'm always trying to talk about race and justice and all these things and so. […] And you'd think that would be it, I mean, I don't know that anybody would ever come down and tell me not to do it, I don't know, so. But yeah, even at the end of the day, I think, I take those with a grain of salt, but it's something that I expected, coming as a person of color, in a place that's predominantly white, they do tend to go after you a lot harsher.

(Lucas, Interview 3)

Lucas and Meredith also brought up the question of being perceived by pre-service teachers as having an agenda. For Lucas, this mostly concerned his work on race and ethnicity, but he felt that if his students didn't know he was in a heterosexual relationship, they might also suspect him of having an agenda regarding LGBTQ issues, which could hinder his ability to efficiently bring up these questions into the classroom. For Meredith, who considered that her gender expression somehow revealed her sexual identity as a lesbian, being perceived as forcing an agenda on her students had also made her hesitant to bring up these issues in class in the past:

Part of it too is, because, I mean I'm out to, it's not a secret, but it's not also something that I talk about either, and so I think for me sometimes before this, it's not something that I really just bring up, because I don't want to seem like I'm pushing an agenda on my students necessarily.

(Meredith, Interview 3)

Maura's, Lucas' and Meredith's experiences illustrate the conundrum faced by teacher educators whose identities and experiences of marginalization enable them to have a heightened understanding of discrimination that generates a strong commitment to challenge dominant norms, yet in the meantime place them in a position where they might be accused of having a personal investment in these issues by pre-service teachers and potentially other teacher educators. This again raises the question of whether teacher educators who engage in social

justice work need to share the identities of marginalized communities to do so work. I argue that they should not have to, particularly as the vast majority of teacher educators in the US are cisgender straight white individuals, which would place the responsibility of this work on a minority of teacher educators who already face much higher professional risk doing it.

Hugo and Ishmael, for their part, mentioned potential resistance from conservative and Christian students and the impact this had on their teaching. Although Hugo stated that he did not mind "rocking the boat a little", he also shared at the end of the research process how he realized that he sometimes self-policed his reference to LGBTQ identities. Indeed, in an interaction with a graduate pre-service teacher who identified as Christian, he, as he stated, could not bring himself to suggest to this student that it might be relevant to include LGBTQ-identified participants in their research project on underrepresented identities, anticipating that the pre-service teacher might be antagonistic to the idea due to their religious believes. Similarly, Ishmael had conflicting feelings as he did not want to antagonize these students who might otherwise feel excluded from the conversation on a topic they strongly objected to. Although he still included LGBTQ questions in his curriculum, he felt that he sometimes edited his discourse and adapted his strategies to accommodate these students:

> We get a lot of, you know, big military presence on campus, we have a lot of kids in Ag science and Engineering who are very conservative and one of the things that I feel inhibits me is Christianity. […] But I don't want to alienate those kids, and that is a difficult thing for me, I don't really respect a lot of what goes on in fundamentalist Christianity, I have a real bias against it, but I want to be inclusive, and I know in some ways it's easier for me to exclude them, because that would be kind of politically correct for where I'm coming from, but they are human beings, most of them are young people and I really have to respect where they're coming from, even if I don't agree with it. So I find myself having a neurotic conversation with myself about how do I include and respect without selling myself out and selling what I believe out, you know, and so, yeah, that's a really tough one for me. […] I edit, I self-edit. I still bring up the subjects but I find myself, I will say "well, you know, not everybody believes this, but", you know, and then I'll go on.
>
> <div align="right">(Ishmael, Interview 1)</div>

This balancing act is probably something that most educators encounter in their career if they try to reach out to all of their students. However, it also reveals that we often tend to have more qualms about excluding certain students than others. The question of whom it is acceptable to exclude and antagonize, and most importantly, on what ground, is key to understanding our practices and our discourses, and the way they relate to systems of privilege and oppression. This also raises the question of silence, which operates as a way to reinforce hegemonic powers and contributes to consolidating imbalanced relations between the oppressed and the oppressor, as the latter's views are rarely challenged.

2.   School communities

Most participants also mentioned various actors in the school communities as factors that might hinder an active deconstruction of heteronormativity in teacher education programs, revealing that teacher education programs are not isolated but caught up in the larger web of the educational institution.

For a few participants, in-service teachers were perceived as potentially limiting the work teacher educators could do to encourage pre-service teachers to develop skills regarding LGBTQ questions and to implement those, notably in their field placements. For Ishmael, taking the risk to antagonize in-service teachers in general and cooperating teachers in particular, by sending into K-12 schools pre-service teachers who might be perceived as having an agenda, could have practical repercussions that he felt would be harmful to the teacher education program. Indeed, he explained that good working relations between the College of Education and local schools were necessary to maintain enough placements opportunities for students' practicum. As a result, he felt that pre-service students could not be change agents as of yet, and should not be

encouraged too strongly to implement strategies that might upset their cooperative teachers

during their field placements:

> But I know I don't want them to be called in front of the schoolboard, I don't want
> their name to be appearing in the newspaper and I don't want the community saying
> what's going with those student teachers that are causing all that chaos? I don't want
> a student teacher anymore, that's what's going to happen. And then we don't have any
> placements, and those are very hard to come by. […] We've got to find placements for
> 110 people, we don't want to create -, we have to respect that and that's okay. It's ok,
> it takes time.
>
> (Ishmael, Interview 2)

Meredith also recognized the limited leeway that student teachers had as opposed to

licensed educators, and she advised her students to develop a certain awareness of these issues

but to tread carefully on these questions during their practicum. During the study, a concrete

example of how tension might arise between pre-service and in-service teachers came up when a

pre-service teacher suggested to her mentor teacher that his practices participated in reinforcing

heteronormative expectations that created a gender binary:

> So my students are in an elementary placement site right now, and they, it's a very
> common grouping mechanism to use boys and girls, and so I think that conversation
> that we started having with [the guest speakers], it started to get people to think about,
> "oh, now we're making this binary decision for these kids basically" and so I have two
> students in particular who are very conscientious now about that and have tried to
> really take that out of their teaching so they're not forcing these kids into one category
> or another, and just being aware of that I guess. […] I know one of them even had a
> conversation with her mentor teacher about it, he's somewhat old-school and so was
> not very responsive to not using "boys and girls," so that was an interesting
> conversation that she had, and she was pretty frustrated, I think, with his reaction to
> what her dialogue was with him.
>
> (Meredith, Interview 3)

Such tension doesn't seem to be specific to questions related to gender and sexuality,

however. During a class I observed, several students expressed that they felt frustrated with not

being able to lead their own classroom as they had to adapt to their cooperating teacher's

teaching style. Negotiating with their mentor teacher and the professional environment teachers

work in is indeed necessary if they are to be change agents and transform education from within,

in the long run. However, as student teachers spend time observing their cooperative teachers

and are invited to reflect on their own practices, they might also benefit from examining the

multiple ways heteronormativity is reproduced in education during their field placements. As

they implement subtle changes in their own discourses and practices, pre-service teachers might

also indirectly impact in-service teachers' awareness of certain issues and prompt further

changes along the road. Indeed, it is important to recognize the impact that student teachers can

have on school cultures, as they may operate as bridges between academia and the field, bringing

new ideas and practices to schools.

It is important to note that approximately half of the teacher educators also saw in-service

teachers as having the potential to impact their practices favorably, in particular if they could

share their experience in the school setting either as LGBTQ-identified educators, or as teachers

who had witnessed the negative impacts of heteronormativity in their classrooms. Hugo

explained that some of his reserves might disappear if he was presented with the first-hand

experiences of teachers:

> [I need] more direct experience or more narratives from people that have, like if, if I
> went to the clinical teachers we work with and they said "yeah this happens in my class
> all the time", that "there're these students who are not heteronormative" and that
> "they're picked on" or "my curriculum doesn't help them learn, or they're not learning
> as well as other students", I'd be like, let's do something about this, then. But until I
> see that, until that's you know, kind of, part of the awareness, or clear, then it's hard
> for me to actualize it, to, what's the word, operationalize it.
>
> (Hugo, Interview 3)

Ishmael also felt that their insights would be valuable and regretted that the research

process did not involve meeting with K-12 teachers. Thus, in-service teachers might contribute

to pulling teacher educators one way or another, depending on their dispositions toward these

issues.

Other actors in the school communities were also mentioned by half of the participants as possibly hindering the inclusion and implementation of LGBTQ content and strategies in teacher education programs. Although teacher educators agreed that their students were mostly open to conversations about LGBTQ questions in the university classroom, some also pointed out that when such conversations occurred, pre-service teachers were quickly caught up with their fear of a possible backlash from school administrators or parents if they brought up these questions in K-12 classrooms, a reaction which Lucas witnessed whenever he brought up the question of LGBTQ inclusivity in his teaching, and which I was also able to observe both in his and Maura's classes. As Lucas explains:

> They agree that you know, that is something that we need to pay attention to because students are getting teased or bullied, right, […] then also it's part of acknowledging their difference and their identities and who they are, but then, […] towards the end of the class, they start coming down from that high, and they start saying "wait a minute, what about the parents?" So they start thinking about that, and I think most of the times it's like "the parents, what are the parents going to say?", or they think about the fact they're going to be new teachers and they say "well this is all fine and dandy, but, I'm going to be a new teacher, I don't know if I can stir the pot too much, or I don't know if I can shake too many things around", so, sometimes they worry about being able to keep their jobs as new teachers, but parents, I think, is one of the things that come up more.

<div align="right">(Lucas, Interview 1)</div>

Indeed, some pre-service teachers who had otherwise welcome more training on the topic, did express a more hesitant position in the survey when it came to actually implementing strategies that would be inclusive of LGBTQ questions in their curriculum, and quoted parents and their future school administration as factors that might influence their practices. One pre-service teacher wrote: "I think that it would be important to include discussions in regards to gender identities, but I also think that there would be a lot of push back from parents." Another explained: "I will have to review the policies that the teachers in my future district have about those discussions." Such fear seemed legitimate to participants like Ishmael or Meredith who

could identify specific school communities where they expected pre-service teachers might experience some serious "push-back" if they were trying to bring up these questions in class. As visible in the quote at the beginning of this section, Ishmael worried about the possibility of a violent and public backlash against student teachers from particularly conservative communities in the area which had demonstrated in a recent past strong opposition to social justice issues being brought into the classroom. He believed that new teachers had to first gage the general climate of the schools they worked in before introducing topics that might be deemed controversial by the school community: "It takes so much longer, it's so much more nuanced, and you have to embrace the culture of the school, and you have to become aware, and you have to learn from other people you're teaching with, who are doing it every day and try to figure it out." Maura herself shared that she also feared that parents (this time pre-service teacher's) might react negatively if she introduced LGBTQ issues in her curriculum. In our first interview she explained: "I mean I do think like 'ok I'm going to do this with students, am I going to get parent phone calls', you know, parents like 'why is my child learning about this?', you know, I don't know how open [this state] is." Her own fear allowed her to sympathize with her students' reactions after she had introduced the topic in her course, later in the research process: "A lot of the students were like, "I don't think I would read this, like I wouldn't feel comfortable reading this", and that makes sense […] one thing they mentioned was parents, they are worried about repercussions of parents, just like I am, you know, so."

These experiences echo Ishmael's fear of antagonizing white Christian students earlier in this section. Indeed, fear of repercussions often stems from the fear of antagonizing people who are in a position of privilege, in this case straight cisgender parents and school administrators. Thus, as we steer away from upsetting them, we consciously or unconsciously exclude those who are more likely to be powerless and to remain silent. In some cases, however, they do not

remain silent and expose our own biases, as Maura experienced when the mothers of a

kindergarten child explained they were saddened that only one of them received a Mother's Day

card. Maura acknowledged that, because of this experience as a K-12 teacher, parents might also

act as motivators for her to change her practices since she wanted to ensure that her students

would be able to provide LGBTQ families with a welcoming and supportive environment:

> I think my own experience of - I wasn't prepared for it. And it's a de-service, I think, for families, especially that student particularly, I'm sure I didn't make her family feel welcome because I wasn't inclusive, and I certainly wouldn't want that for other students. […] So I think it's my responsibility to think about how I can improve in that area. But I think I've tried, I've started.
>
> (Maura, Interview 2)

As Maura also pointed out later, although the need to make all families welcome is crucial,

the presence of a child with an LGBTQ family should not be a requirement for teachers to unveil

the way heteronormativity impacts us all.

3. Other teacher educators

Many participants also cited the role played by their colleagues in the inclusion or lack of

inclusion of gender and sexuality in the teacher education programs they worked in. Most

participants often noted the lack of conversation about these topics among faculty, in some cases

suggesting that the same taboo that affected the broader US society also affected instructors and

professors who didn't want "to go there". Martha, who explained that, for her part, she did not

experience any discomfort talking about sexuality, pointed to others' reluctance to do so:

> In the teacher preparation programs and even, I think there's a- there's a hesitancy certainly to talk, I think there's easiness to talk about gender in the sense of male/female, but the sexuality, that's still is, I think it makes a lot of people uncomfortable, teaching is an amazingly conservative profession.
>
> (Martha, Interview 1)

Hugo, who explained he was not comfortable leading "difficult conversations", explained that, to his knowledge, such topics rarely emerged among faculty whenever discussions on multiculturalism occurred:

> We talk about, very interesting, we talk about multiculturalism and awareness, cultural competence, and in none of those discussions within the college do we talk about that including gender or sexuality, ever. None, zero, it's never been brought up, as far as I know.
>
> (Hugo, Interview 2)

Lucas, whose research had allowed him to discuss these questions with gay teachers in the K-12 setting, also noted educators' reluctance to talk openly about non-normative gender and sexual identities:

> And so usually, and so that's the conversation around the nation, right, about diversity, and so it tends to just go as far as race and class and ethnicity. But it's really rare that we get into issues of LGBTQ community. That almost always seems to be kind of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, or people are more reticent to take on those.
>
> (Lucas, Interview 1)

Although a few participants noted that the election of Donald Trump raised some concern among faculty and triggered some conversations about racist and islamophobic incidents that occurred in schools, and about the need to reflect on ways to prepare pre-service teachers to react to such incidents, they also noted that heterosexism emerged only superficially during these discussions.

Half of the participants also felt that although teacher educators in their programs stated their support for social justice goals, each had their own area of interest and developed strategies and practices that might not all be as explicitly inclusive as was necessary:

> I think everyone in the college would certainly identify as having some social justice orientation, but how that manifests itself in their teaching and in their curriculum is going to be very different. I think it would be whatever their focal point is for their own work, it could be gender, it could be race and ethnicity, it just could be power dynamics in somehow or other, or it could be more, even more subtle.
>
> (Martha, Interview 2)

One participant explained that not every faculty member in their program might feel comfortable addressing social justice issues in class, and that instructors may need some form of training to enhance their skills in this area:

> I know sometimes they fear about, when bringing up multiculturalism issues, or social justice issues or issues of class and maybe immigration status, language all that, mainly race, sometimes they think that they might not have, or maybe the instructors we have may not have the tools to address that when it comes up in class and I think that's one of the barriers that I could see because I know it's been in the conversation that some of us are more adept at handling those conversations in class, but what happens when we have instructors that we hire, are they comfortable doing it? I think that's one of the issues. If the person doesn't handle that well in class, they're afraid that it might do more damage than good. […] I know that we float around the idea of maybe having staff development.
>
> (Lucas, Interview 2)

Ishmael and Martha, for their parts, noted that teacher educators and the teaching profession in general were all very heteronormative. Ishmael felt that the absence of an LGBTQ faculty member was indeed detrimental to this work:

> Just about every, you know, a good chunk of the people we work with as mentioned, you know, are heteronormative, that's where they're at. And they don't want to look at it and I don't know, it's something we have to look at, and the teaching profession, you know, needs to look at that too.
> […] So you know, gender, often times, doesn't come up the way it should and sexuality, sexuality that is something that doesn't get discussed very often either. I don't think we even have, I think everyone in our, that I know of, is kind of a canonically straight person. And so I don't think those voices are often brought to consciousness in the College of Education, and yeah, so I think there's a real, there's a real problem there.
>
> (Ishmael, Interview 1)

This absence of conversation among faculty created a climate that did not feel entirely supportive for Maura who stated that, although she assumed they would be fine with it, she was unsure about her colleagues' positions and their possible response should students complain about her introducing LGBTQ topics in her curriculum.

> And if it becomes something that, like I said, that I get talked to about, by a co-worker, you know because the students interact with them as well, or by a parent of a student,

or the Dean, I don't know, I guess those are the obstacles that I think that I'm going to, I could possibly encounter.

(Maura, Interview 1)

Many participants regretted this silence and absence of cooperation on the topic as they felt that most people in their programs were open-minded people, and that team work would greatly enhance their confidence, skills, and more generally their ability to do this work. Maura, for instance was disappointed to learn that the research process would not involve focus groups, as she felt this would have provided an opportunity for her to exchange with other instructors:

Yeah, I just think it would be really neat, especially for me, because I feel like this is new to me, it really is, and I think that it would be nice to hear other people's experiences. That would be really neat. And I think it would help, I think I would learn from that as well. I feel like people learn a lot from each other, and so that's why.

(Maura, Interview 1)

Such teamwork involved, in the minds of several participants, exchanging ideas about best practices, observing one another to provide feedback, or simply making sure that the program was a safe place for these conversations to happen:

I think in some of those places discussion around this could be pretty easily implemented and I do think that the faculty that we have here in our programs and school are actually very open to those discussions, so I don't, I think it would probably be actually a really good discussion to have and that might be, you know, going to our coordinator positions and telling them that maybe we need to have a discussion or training around these topics and how to include-, or just brainstorming ideas of how to include specifically this topic within courses, I think we could do easily. We do have discussions quite often about diversity within our own population, and that has brought up some discussions about different strategies, but not specifically related to queer education or anything.

(Meredith, Interview 2)

For Lucas, coordinating an approach to gender and sexuality among faculty members was also key for instructors of color who might otherwise been perceived by students as forcing yet another agenda on their students:

If they see it from more than just one person, I think it's also more effective rather than if it's just "a crazy brown guy that wants to make us feel guilty for all these other

things", and so I think it has to be coming from all directions so that we're not just the ones that are bringing it up.

(Lucas, Interview 3)

One might expect that in the context of a university that gives official signs that it is open to gender and sexual diversity, conversations about these questions would emerge naturally among faculty in a college of education. However, as several participants pointed out, education as a field remains conservative and tends to shy away from controversial subjects, particularly when they deal with sexuality and children. Although most participant described their colleagues as open-minded and assumed they would be willing to engage in conversations about LGBTQ questions, only a minority of them actually attempted to bring up this topic during meetings, and when they did they somehow felt they were interrupting a culture of silence around it, as they were met with nodding and agreement that rarely led to further discussion. This established culture of silence participated in making one participant who had not been in the program for very long unsure of her colleagues' stance on these issues as she felt she could possibly be "talked to" by a fellow educator who might disapprove of her talking about gender and sexuality in class. Silence is a powerful discourse that allows unstated norms to remain unquestioned and thus to perpetuate themselves, inflicting both symbolic and real violence on those deemed abnormal. This taboo around gender and sexuality among teacher educators and society in general is made possible through self-policing and through the policing of others, which, as Foucault analyzed in *Discipline and Punish*, ensures that we are disciplined into being "docile bodies" that do not question the social constructions of sex, sexuality or gender. As an increasing number of faculty members are not tenure-track and thus might be more easily disciplined, the power of self-policing might also be heightened by such institutional change. This raises questions about the way newly hired instructor are introduced to the values supported by colleges of education which, although they often claim to be promoting social justice issues, can

remain vague about the ways they do so, or on the contrary focus on specific forms of oppression while leaving others aside.

The absence of diversity among faculty in education is of course also a concern, and hiring teacher educators with underrepresented identities is key to bringing different perspectives into a program. However, as Lucas also pointed out, placing too much emphasis on the role these educators can play as both experts and leaders in social justice issues might contribute to perpetuating imbalanced power relationships. Indeed, as pre-service teachers often belong to dominant groups they often are unsettled by this work and can easily resist it by casting it as the personal political motivations of a single individual. Thus, it is important for teacher educators who benefit from privileged identities to collaborate and do their share of the work, which starts with breaking the taboo of sex in education.

E.   Institution

Participants also often reflected on the impact of the education system as an institution on their practices in teacher education programs. As was the case for factors related to Self and Others, teacher educators pointed to the institution as providing both incentives and deterrents regarding the inclusion of gender and sexuality in their curriculum. They cited the specificities of the teacher education programs and the university they worked in, their disciplines and the material they used, as well as local, state and federal educational policies and standards as potentially hindering or supporting their practices.

1.   Discipline and material

Half of the participants explained that they were not sure how to integrate gender and sexuality into their disciplines and that the material they used was not always queer-inclusive.

Janneke, for instance struggled to find opportunities to include these questions into her math

courses:

> I think one obstacle, and I'm thinking particularly of teaching people how to teach
> math, I'm not sure where gender and sexuality connect to mathematics as a discipline.
> Mathematics is mathematics, we're like proving stuff about numbers. There's certainly
> in the, if you want to go into the people who do mathematics, then there are gender
> issues, but mathematics itself, no, so one obstacle is how does it connect to the
> disciplinary mathematics content that I'm trying to teach
>
> <div align="right">(Janneke, Interview 1)</div>

Louis faced similar difficulties in most of his agricultural classes as he was not always sure

how these topics would fit in:

> I'm just trying to think about how, so they've talked about for instance, science and
> agriculture or developments in agriculture, I just, I don't know, I guess I just have
> trouble thinking how that would be incorporated, I'm not sure.
>
> <div align="right">(Louis, Interview 2)</div>

Three participants felt that certain courses they taught could lend themselves more easily to

queer-inclusive practices than others. Martha explained:

> This term we're focusing a lot on reading, fluency and comprehension. That's kind of
> the focus of the course, but next term it is about social studies and Language Art and
> Social Studies integrating both and so I think that that would be great.
>
> <div align="right">(Maura, Interview 1)</div>

Several pre-service teachers also mentioned in the survey that they might not be able to

bring LGBTQ issues into their curriculum because of the discipline they taught, in particular

those students training to teach mathematics and agriculture.

Also tied to the discipline question, teacher educators cited the material available to them

as a limiting factor. Lucas especially struggled with how to incorporate gender and sexuality

questions to his math courses, although he had some insights into what might be possible to

achieve if he could find relevant material:

> So, I haven't been able to teach any of the ones where we dive into certain topics and
> so in that math one, I'm going to bring in, I may have them bring in like books about
> numbers, multicultural books about numbers and so, I think – it's going to be very

hard to bring gender with that, unless there's a book about counting and that has to do with that, but we'll see.

<div align="right">(Lucas, Interview 1)</div>

Janneke felt that the math and science material she used employed heteronormative language that perpetuated a binary understanding of gender: "So I guess the obstacle, one obstacle would be the materials I have for teaching, I would say, are not transgender inclusive, they're always "he" or "she"." Meredith noted that the textbooks her physical education program used did not discuss LGBTQ questions: "It's not really discussed in the textbooks that we use necessarily, and it just hasn't been included really as a specific topic of conversation."

On the other hand, some participants explained that when the courses they taught had a dedicated time frame in the syllabus to discuss social justice questions, they felt it provided them with an opening to bring gender and sexuality into the discussion:

> As to right now, I feel like I'm stuck with this course that I had to teach and so I had to find ways of adding, of being creative and adding this in there, so that's why you saw me do that in a social justice day, because it was like, ok, we can do it this day, this is not the day we're thinking about writing lesson plans or oral assessment, or whatever the other ones, and so it's like a place that it fits.
>
> <div align="right">(Lucas, Interview 3)</div>

It is undeniable that some subjects offer more opportunities than others to bring LGBTQ-related content into the curriculum, and a social studies teacher will have access to a much more diverse array of material that specifically focuses on these questions than, say, a math teacher. This is partly due to the nature of the discipline itself, but also to the way the discipline is often presented. Many STEM practitioners inside and outside academia, for instance, largely present their disciplines as value-neutral and apolitical, thus resisting any attempt to uncover the highly political aspects that they promote through the overt and hidden curriculum in their courses, and which participate in consolidating hegemonic structures. Not surprisingly, the material developed in this field, such as textbooks, tends to reflect these positions. Participants who

taught math and sciences in this study were familiar with these notions and encouraged their pre-service teachers to reflect on these questions, although heteronormativity was never brought into focus. If agriculture or STEM educators' ability to use material directly referring to underrepresented groups might be restrained (yet possible), they may find that examining the ways their disciplines reinforce heteronormative assumptions is a better avenue for this work, particularly if they already engage in a similar approach to unveil other systems of oppression. Similarly, this may enable them to find more opportunities to integrate these questions into their daily practices, instead of restricting them to a single lesson throughout the term. Modelling such practices at the level of teacher education program might help pre-service teachers become more apt to interrogate their practices in the long run, regardless of the discipline they teach.

2.   Teacher education programs

For most participants, the structure, philosophy, and goals of their teacher training program may come in the way of implementing queer-inclusive strategies. One argument that most participants put forward was the narrow, or sometimes too wide, understanding of diversity which their program relied on to promote social justice goals. The majority of participants said that their teacher education programs often centered their work on specific questions such as language, ethnicity, or disability. Meredith, who worked in a physical education teacher training program but collaborated with the college of education as well, explained that she perceived clearly how each program had their own distinct focus. One, she said, focused on disability: "The program that I work with is really heavily focused on working with kids with disabilities." The other, she pointed out, focused on language: "In the College of Ed I would say, because we do talk about, we typically talk about English Language Learners as our diverse population we're working with." Ishmael, who tended to emphasize issues related to race and ethnicity in his

work, while trying to maintain an intersectional approach, shared that such focus was the result

of prioritizing certain issues that were perceived as more pressing: "I think one of the things

that's happened is, you know, race is a big thing as I said but also, economic equality […] so

we're kind of doing triage to a certain extent."

On the other hand, Louis, who taught future agriculture teachers, explained that his

department insisted on preparing pre-service teachers to address the academic needs of every

student, but that these needs might not be defined specifically.

> We talk about inclusion quite a bit, usually in terms of language, academic language, helping students acquire academic language, ELL students that are struggling with English language and how to keep classrooms inclusive that way. […] Learners of special needs, it's more educational, educationally related, you know around academics, so we talk about inclusion quite a bit but maybe we don't define it that well.
>
> (Louis, Interview 2)

Many pointed that this understanding of diversity did not include sexuality, and although

their teacher education work almost always involved challenging gender inequalities, their focus

remained on a binary understanding of gender. Lucas, who felt that students often suspected him

of pushing an agenda on them, explained that an official commitment to addressing gender and

sexuality at the college level would encourage more teamwork in this area:

> I mean if it came from the top down, and people always say when this comes from the top down "oh, this is the flavor of the year", but I think if it came from the top, that they saw that like an important-, an initiative for us all to take on, that would be neat as well.
>
> (Lucas, Interview 3)

Ishmael pointed out that questions surrounding trans* issues and sexuality were covered in

a multicultural education class but that this was not always sufficient to provide pre-service

teachers with a nuanced understanding of these questions. Yet, although he felt he should include

gender and sexuality more in his own work, he also felt that in a one-year program he could not

"dig deep" enough into these questions as teacher educators were expected to cover too many areas:

> The other thing about this that's hard is, it's like we're making the curriculum a mile wide but an inch deep, like you only have them for a year basically.
>
> <div align="right">(Ishmael, Interview 3)</div>

These participants' observations are consistent with research which shows that teacher education programs rarely include LGBTQ questions in their already over-crowded curriculum.[110] In many cases, social justice questions are perceived as competing against each other, with issues related to race and ethnicity being seen as more urgent, and sometimes more relevant as well because they are believed to concern more people than gender and sexuality issues.[111] As a result, these questions are often relegated to diversity and multicultural education courses which are expected to cover all of these issues. Although such courses are great opportunities to explicitly address systems of oppression in education, they may not be sufficient for pre-service teachers to explore further how their own discipline or teaching practices reinforce dominant norms. Thus, instead of relying on these courses to introduce topics which are not deemed priorities, teacher education programs might benefit from introducing social justice issues through an intersectional framework that addresses the ways various systems of oppression and privilege operate and intersect in education.[112]

Another issue half of the participants mentioned was the lack of leeway they had in preparing courses which they sometimes perceived as "pre-scripted", in particular when some of the material they were required to use was online material which they had not necessarily contributed to creating. Meredith explained:

---

[110] Robinson,Kerry H. and Ferfolja, Tania. "Playing It Up, Playing It Down, Playing It Safe"
[111] *Ibid.*
[112] *Ibid.*

I also think just because it has -, and again this is just a product of how this program has been set up and why it's set up that it was not a topic of inclusion, and we have -, the content is so structured and laid out that that just hasn't been implemented.

(Meredith, Interview 1)

Lucas felt particularly frustrated by this lack of academic freedom:

So it's terrible but they're so big into standardization that all the other classes, the other 3 courses, they all have to answer the same questions and so, that's a frustration as well, that it has to go through them, so for any change you get made, they would have to be on board with it and all this stuff. We have leeway as to what we do in class, the activities, but they control that other part. Yeah, so it's like we're back to scripted reading, or scripted curriculum.

(Lucas, Interview 3)

Related to the question of standardization, Lucas and Ishmael felt that their teacher education program was too "vocationally" driven, which resulted in educators teaching to the test and focusing their attention on preparing pre-service teachers to obtain licensure and to find a job:

So I think we do have some leeway to do it, we have some, but I think the majority of the time people want to kind of teach to that test that they have to take.

(Lucas, Interview 1)

Ishmael also brought up another aspect of the structure of the program that he felt was limiting teacher educators' ability to work together: the increase in the number of classes offered online. He felt this move toward online education prevented the creation of a community of educators that could foster teamwork: "One of the things that's killing us, between you and me, is online education. We don't have a community. A lot of these people I see just a few times a year."

The focus on pre-service teachers' ability to be ready for licensure and for the job market particularly struck me during the class observations I conducted and the few informal interactions I had with pre-service teachers. Job applications and interviews were indeed often present in conversations, and students' concern about their ability to be hired was obvious, a

concern that is of course legitimate given the student debt many of them contract while in

college. Yet, such an approach to teacher training echoes the general turn toward efficiency and

the resulting standardization of practices that is an outcome of a neoliberal view of education.

Indeed, colleges of education, like other departments across universities, have been redirected

toward new priorities which involve applying business methods to education and preparing

students to fit the needs of the job market instead of helping them develop critical skills. As a

student myself, I received countless numbers of emails inviting me to attend job fairs on campus

and to develop skills that would make me more "marketable," emails that reminded me of the

reasons why I was supposed to attend college. The move toward online education which grows

exponentially throughout the country is another consequence of this model, as it allows

departments to enroll more students and to charge more for online classes that are often

dispensed by underpaid instructors with increased workload.

Not surprisingly, a few participants saw their teacher education program as having the

potential to encourage teacher educators to transform their practices by offering time and

opportunities for professional development at the program level that would result in shared

goals. Maura, who expressed her strong interest in collaborative work on several occasions

during this research process, explained:

> I think having professional development, I think that would help out. I like how, at
> [that other university], she talked about how they talked about it, like it was an issue
> for the college, I don't know if it was the college or just her department, it was
> something important for the -, one of their goals of how they could improve. I think
> that that would be really helpful for me, and I think as well as for others, if there was
> professional development around it or if we made it a goal to improve in that area.
> That would be definitely, it would help me grow, and I think others as well, especially
> when we think about our mission and about being inclusive for all, and what does that
> mean? What does it really look like? Yeah, so that would be helpful.
>
> (Maura, Interview 2)

Similarly, half of the participants also noted that attending conferences where they could meet fellow educators in their field provided rich opportunities to learn from and work with other teacher educators. Indeed, as LGBTQ issues increasingly make their way into education conferences, faculty who were provided with the opportunity to attend sessions dedicated to those questions were able to find a collaborative setting that they did not necessarily have access to in their own university. For Meredith, this was the opportunity to have an overview of the state of her field in this area:

> We went to a conference just this past week, and one of the sessions was on gender issues related to physical education and just awareness of things, and so again just more thought and interacting with other teachers from around the country and getting their impressions about what they're seeing in schools and some of the challenges that they're seeing K through 12, related to locker rooms, related to transgender issues, related to bathrooms, related to anything really.
>
> (Meredith, Interview 3)

Attending a conference presentation on LGBTQ-inclusion confirmed Maura's intention to be more inclusive as it also made her more aware of the need for all teacher educators to tackle this issue. Indeed, one presenter explained the resistance she faced from students as a lesbian teacher educator bringing those questions up in the classroom:

> I went to the AERA conference last spring and so one of the things I was interested in was, I guess I just happened to show up and one of the presentations was about teacher education and talking about LGBTQ as a topic and the professor was sharing her own experience about teaching and students' reaction to that and she was a lesbian, […] and she was just talking about how students were kind of questioning like "is this because you are, this is your personal gender or is this something that we should be talking about?" and so on and so forth. […] And so then I did talk to her and I, "hey can I get some information about what *you*'ve done in your course?" And especially, I think it was very powerful what she said about her experience because she does identify as LGBTQ and how they responded to her, and so I thought that that was also really interesting.
>
> (Maura, Interview 1)

Attending conferences is a great way for teacher educators to expand their intellectual horizons as they exchange with fellow scholars from diverse areas. However, if the conditions

for fruitful collaboration are not met once they return to their workplace, their individual attempts to challenge heteronormativity in their field might remain limited. Thus, attending conferences might not work as a replacement for professional development at the local level.

3.   Policies

Official policies, laws and standards were also mentioned by half the participants as factors that could influence their practices, in particular when they were unsure of the response that would meet their attempts to be more inclusive. Maura, for instance was happy to learn about state laws protecting LGBTQ students as she could use them to legitimize her introduction of LGBTQ topics in her classroom:

> And I did like that she had the laws in her presentation, […] when I saw them I thought "ok, this great because this is a way to, I guess, justify, why I'm doing what I want to do". So I thought that was a great resource, as you noticed it's something that I ended putting in my Powerpoint, when I taught. I thought that was really, really important, because otherwise I feel like it's just kind of me saying "oh, this is an important issue", which I know it is an important issue, but it gave me justification, beyond just me thinking it's important. So that was great.
>
> (Maura, Interview 2)

Janneke, for her part, felt that knowing about the NCATE standards at the federal level was also helpful to back up teacher educators' work in this area:

> I was trying to think of how do we work this into the curriculum so that we are educating our pre-service teachers about this, and having support from standards like this is really helpful in doing that, because it's easy, it's just something we should focus on. So I was happy to see that.
>
> (Janneke, Interview 2)

Lucas and Maura believed that a clear official policy at the level of their teacher education programs would also demonstrate the program's support of these issues:

> I think it would be really helpful, and that's why, when she talked about the laws, I felt oh perfect, that's a way to justify that it is important and that you know there's documentation, so I think it would be helpful, I think it would be great to have it, if we did have something college wide about, specially within teacher education about how

does this apply to this group of students, this multicultural group of students, or multicultural group, I guess.

<div align="right">(Maura, Interview 2)</div>

For Meredith, who identified as a lesbian, adding sexual identity to the College of Education's conceptual framework's definition of diversity was an important way to show students and faculty that the teacher preparation program was a welcoming environment for LGBTQ individuals:

> **Meredith**: I think that that shows again, that we're open and welcoming to everybody.
> **Amélie**: For prospective students?
> **Meredith**: Yeah, and faculty even, because I mean, when I look at, really anything, any organization or company or whatever you know, those terms stand out to me, so yeah that's important that it should be there.

<div align="right">(Meredith, Interview 3)</div>

Clear institutional support for queer identities through policies and laws is key to giving some visibility to an issue that is often ignored in teacher education programs.[113] As the participants above explained, such explicit policies at the college level send signals to students and faculty alike that their program is welcoming and supportive of all identities, regardless of gender or sexual identity. Furthermore, teacher educators can refer to local and federal laws and policies as a means to address resistance from students who might feel such discussions are not appropriate in a teacher education program, in particular when these instructors' identities put them at greater risk of being accused by students of pushing an agenda on students. However, it is important to note the limits of such laws and policies. Indeed, LGBTQ-inclusive diversity statements are emptied of their meaning if they are not accompanied by actual work at college and classroom levels to challenge heteronormativity efficiently. Moreover, relying on laws and policies to justify social justice work, although tempting, can be dangerous in times of

---

[113] Horn, Stacey S. "Visibility Matters: Policy Work as Activism in Teacher Education. (Report)." *Issues in Teacher Education* 19, no. 2 (2010): 65-80.

conservative backlash where such laws and policies are being threatened, as demonstrated after Donald Trump's election and the rescinding of policies protecting trans* students' ability to use bathrooms that matched their gender identities.

4.   University climate

A few teacher educators felt that the university climate also impacted the ways faculty members might perceive LGBTQ issues. Several participants knew that two university administrators openly identified as transwomen, and they saw this as a demonstration that the university was open and supportive. However, Martha and Ishmael also felt that behind the seemingly liberal veneer of progressive policies, the university community remained rather conservative. For Ishmael, the history tied to the campus was tainted with racism which contradicted its professed openness and explained why he felt the university was not as progressive as it should be in many respects:

> This school has a very checkered history. We don't have many African-American students for instance, why? We had a football coach in the 1960s who created this controversy about a kid having an afro and a little bit of a beard and he went absolutely ballistic. Back in, I think 2007, we had students who dressed up in black face in [a] football game. We have a long way to go.[…] Even the pronoun stuff, right, you know, they want to be called, they, theirs, or something. That's just coming here. Very embryonic. I mean we're really behind.
>
> (Ishmael, Interview 2)

Martha for her part, considered that academics tended to master the language of social justice but that such language did not always go beyond words, as demonstrated by the predominance of white men in positions of power. This, she argued, could also impact faculty's decision to tackle certain issues or not, in particular if they were tenure-track faculty:

> And I think that's the piece too, it's like, if you're before your tenure, before you're certain things, you take on some of this stuff at risk to your own professional career. Until you get, until you sort of get far enough into the good old boys' club you can't change it. So there's that piece. But I think that the university has made some overt practices, policies and even positions that attend to that and I think that, it's still, for a

lot of people it's still, academics are really good at using language and saying the right things, but saying and doing are not always the same. So, I mean, we're just a microcosm of other things, but we're just pretty adept at using appropriate language so we can say things that-, people say things but then you look at how do people get promoted, and how do people get put into positions and how, and what gets funded and what doesn't get funded, that tells you a lot about where the university's priorities are.

<div align="right">(Martha, Interview 1)</div>

As Martha and Ishmael explain, the discourse of tolerance and social justice professed at the university level and translated into policies might not be reflective of the actual work done by faculty and administration to change the institution in deeper ways. Not only do pre-tenured faculty members often shun away from controversial work that might threaten their tenure, they also are in large numbers the direct beneficiaries of systems of oppression that privilege them in many ways, and might be reluctant to examine more thoroughly the role they play in perpetuating institutional and systemic discrimination. Moreover, following the neoliberal logic of cost efficiency, an increasing number of non-tenure track faculty such as instructors and graduate student are hired to complete a high proportion of the teaching that take place on colleges. This can impact the university climate as these unprotected and sometimes unexperienced educators might not be in a position to tackle contentious issues such as racism or heterosexism in their department.

F.   Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented a critical analysis of the findings that result from the data collected during interviews with teacher educators, class observations, via online surveys, and through an examination of syllabi provided by participants. The four main themes that emerged in this analysis point to the impact of diverse factors on teacher educators' practices regarding the questioning of heteronormativity, factors situated at the individual and institutional levels. At

the personal level, the identities, knowledge, and dispositions of the participants greatly influenced the way they perceived issues related to non-normative gender and sexual identities and their ability to bring up these questions in their classroom effectively. Yet, teacher educators also felt that interpersonal factors impacted their practices, such as their relations with pre-service teachers and members of the school communities they interacted with, but also other teacher educators' identities and practices. Additionally, participants pointed to the influence institutional structures and policies exerted on their ability to challenge heteronormativity, from the material they used, to the official stance of their program on issues of diversity and equity. The convergence of these various factors resulted in practices that tended to limit the intentional inclusion of these questions into the participants' curricula, as well as the scope and bearing of this inclusion which did not always encourage students to examine their own gendered and sexualized identities.

In the concluding chapter of this study, I will discuss these findings in an attempt to place them in a broader perspective, as they must be inscribed in a larger structural context dominated by powerful discourses that perpetuate hegemonic norms, norms that a neoliberal control of higher education renders difficult to challenge.

V. Discussion and Conclusion

A. Introduction

This research project started with two main research questions that emerged from my experience as a high school teacher in France and my clumsy attempts at trying to be LGBTQ inclusive in my practices. First, I intended to explore how, if at all, teacher educators in the programs under study prepared pre-service teachers to reflect upon gender and sexual identities as they play out in education. This question also called for an analysis of the ways teacher educators might simultaneously challenge and reproduce heteronormative expectations in their teaching practices. My second research question aimed to identify obstacles that might come in the way of providing pre-service teachers with an opportunity to interrogate heteronormativity during their teacher training. In order to answer this question, I looked into both teacher educators' perceptions of potential hindrances to denaturalizing heteronormativity in their teacher education programs, and to pre-service teachers' dispositions toward learning about queer issues in the classroom.

In this concluding chapter, I first look at the findings of this study in the light of previous research. Then, I discuss these findings through a theoretical framework that draws from the intersecting lenses of several scholarly approaches which have built upon one another to address issues pertaining to the reproduction of heteronormativity in the US society and its education system, namely queer theory, queer of color critique, indigenous queer studies and critical pedagogy. This attempt to interpret findings from multiple viewpoints stems from an acknowledgement that too often, queer theory and critical pedagogy have been used, in research

and activism alike, in ways that excluded considerations of certain identities, such as race or ethnicity for queer theory, and non-normative gender or sexuality for critical pedagogy. My own identity as a white middle-class straight cisgender woman places me in a position that requires a constant reflexivity about the privileged position I benefited from to conduct this research, both in my interaction with participants and in the ways I filtered and interpreted the information that I collected.

I will conclude this chapter, and thesis, by drawing from participants' insights and from the literature on heteronormativity in education, to suggest strategies at the individual and college level that might facilitate progress toward challenging this oppressive system. As further research in this area is equally one avenue to unsettle dominant paradigms that impact teacher training programs, I will also make suggestions to encourage future research to focus on teacher education programs as one possible route to begin dismantling heteronormativity in education.

B.   Discussion

1.   Consistency of the findings with previous research

The results analyzed in the previous chapter pointed to a limited inclusion of LGBTQ topics and discussions about heteronormativity in teacher educators' practices. Most participants were welcoming of discussions around queer identities when they emerged naturally, yet, in a few instances only, did teacher educators actively introduce references to LGBTQ identities, and in even fewer cases did some of the participants encourage pre-service teachers to reflect on their own gender and sexual identities and the way most of us have been socialized into heteronormativity. When commenting on the reasons that might explain the general absence of work regarding these questions, teacher educators explained that their own identities, knowledge,

and dispositions consciously and unconsciously affected their awareness of these issues and thus their practices. They also pointed to other actors in education that could influence their practices in the teacher education classroom, such as pre-service teachers and other teacher educators in their programs, and in-service teachers, administrators and parents in the K-12 schools they collaborated with. Finally, teacher educators all underlined institutional factors that impacted their practices, from the discipline and material they taught, to the structure and priorities of their programs, to local and national educational policies, and the climate of the university where they worked.

These findings about teacher educators' practices are consistent with previous research which has shown that the majority of teacher education programs in the United States do not provide training for pre-service teachers regarding LGBTQ issues, despite their stated commitment to diversity.[114] As in many other programs across the country, these topics were introduced in foundational and multicultural courses, but were rarely actively included in methods classes and classes related to field placements, unless they were brought up by students. Attempts at including these questions mostly in an additive approach raise issues which are underlined in the literature on queer pedagogy, and which some participants were aware of. Indeed, scholars point to the limitations of well-meaning inclusive strategies that do not challenge heteronormativity and which are typical of a liberal understanding of multicultural education founded on binary logics that tend to oppose the self and the Other, and thus fail to

---

[114] Snapp, Shannon and co. "Students' Perspectives on LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum"; Gorski, P. C. and co. "An examination of the (in) visibility of sexual orientation, heterosexism, homophobia, and other LGBTQ concerns"; Wyatt Tammy J., "Are tomorrow's teacher ready to deal with diverse students?"; Jennings, Todd & Sherwin, Gary. "Sexual orientation topics in elementary teacher preparation programs in the USA."; Sherwin, Gary & Jennings, Todd. "Feared, Forgotten, or Forbidden."

encourage self-examination as a step toward ending oppression at the individual, institutional and structural levels.[115]

Additionally, the impact of the participants' social locations on their dispositions and practices could be expected, in particular when it comes to their awareness of oppressive systems. Indeed, data shows that, across departments, women and faculty of color are much more likely to include diversity-related content in their teaching material than white men, with women of color having the highest rate of inclusive practices.[116] On the whole, and in spite of marked differences among them, participants who identified as white men appeared more oblivious to the ways they participated in reinforcing dominant gender and sexual norms and were more hesitant to change their practices. On the other hand, participants who held marginalized identities were more pro-active in their practices and less resistant to the idea that they may participate in perpetuating harmful norms, in particular teacher educators who identified as LGBTQ or people of color, and who were more likely to have experienced discrimination based on these aspects of their identity. Yet, as Robinson and Ferfolja point out in their research on teacher educators in Australia, supportive dispositions toward these questions do not always ensure that educators fully engage in practices that challenge heteronormativity effectively, including educators whose marginalized identities place them in positions where they might be perceived as pushing an agenda.[117]

---

[115] Lehr, Jane L. "Beyond Nature."; Macintosh, Lori. "Does Anyone Have a Band-Aid?"; Carlson, Dennis. "Who Am I? Gay Identity and a Democratic Politics of the Self."; Payne, Elizabethe C., and Melissa J. Smith. "Safety, Celebration, and Risk: Educator Responses to LGBTQ Professional Development." Murray, Olivia Jo. "'Outing' Queer issues in teacher preparation programs."; Allen, Louisa. "Queer pedagogy and the limits of thought"; Renn, Kristen A. "LGBT and Queer Research in Higher Education".

[116] Mayhew, Matthew J., and Heidi E. Grunwald. "Factors Contributing to Faculty Incorporation of Diversity-Related Course Content." *The Journal of Higher Education* 77, no. 1 (2006): 148-68.

[117] Robinson,Kerry H. and Ferfolja, Tania. "Playing It Up, Playing It Down, Playing It Safe"

Teacher educators' lack of comfort level and knowledge about LGBTQ issues and language, which many attributed to their lack of training and cited as an impediment, also echoes recent research showing that only 58% of schools of education surveyed in the U.S offered faculty training on diversity issues that included some LGBTQ content.[118] Furthermore, participants regretted the absence of discussion and official inclusion at the college level, which they often perceived as their program's lack of interest about these questions and which impacted their own perception of what issues should be focused on in priority. Such attitude is confirmed by research showing that academic departments play a powerful role in "influencing faculty experiences, perceptions, and behaviors." [119] Thus, an absence of active institutional support in this area can be perceived by teacher educators as an unstated discourse condoning prevailing heteronormative attitudes and beliefs.[120] On the other hand, supportive institutional policies can influence teacher educators' practices, which confirms the tendency of teacher educators to rely on "genuine excuse[s]" as one participant in Robinson and Ferfolja's study explained.

2.   Discussion of the data through the theoretical framework

As mentioned in previous chapters, queer theory underlines the socially constructed nature of sex, gender and sexuality and the way education fully participates in maintaining and perpetuating heteronormativity both through the overt and hidden curricula, an analysis that is shared by many contemporary critical pedagogy theorists.[121] One way gender and sexual identities are socially constructed is through language and discourse, as the reiteration of

---

[118] Douglas, Barbara Jean A. "Faculty Trainings".

[119] Mayhew, Matthew J., and Heidi E. Grunwald. "Factors Contributing to Faculty Incorporation of Diversity-Related Course Content".

[120] Wickens, Corrine M. & Sandlin, Jennifer A. "Homophobia and heterosexism in a college of education: a culture of fear, a culture of silence".

[121] hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress;* Giroux, Henry A. *On Critical Pedagogy.*

normative discourses allows them to become naturalized and internalized. Queer of Color and Indigenous Queer critiques, for their part, point out the necessity to analyze the interplay of various systems of oppression and ask that we should examine the ties between heteronormativity, white supremacy, settler colonialism and neoliberalism.[122] Indeed, these scholars underline that the incorporation into mainstream society of white middle-class LGBTQ individuals participates in pushing other marginalized communities further to the margins, and does not interrogate the hegemonic norms that allow for this exclusion in the first place.[123]

By using this theoretical framework, I am hoping to underline the complexity of intersecting systems of oppression as they permeate the educational system in support of heteronormativity. I also hope to point to the ways structural discrimination impacts teacher education programs, even in a context where intentional individual and institutional discrimination, as defined by Fred L. Pincus,[124] might not be pervasive. Indeed, although I am absolutely not claiming that individual acts of discrimination are inexistent in the teacher education programs under study, the general dispositions of the teacher educators who agreed to participate in this study and the progressive policies set in place in the university where the research was conducted lead me to believe that, in this very specific context, the reasons for the widespread absence of preparation for pre-service teachers to challenge heteronormativity in K-12 settings largely reside in systemic causes. These systemic causes do, however, translate into conscious or unconscious oppressive believes, attitudes and practices both at the individual and institutional level.

---

[122] Driskill, Qwo-Li. *Queer Indigenous;* Morgensen, Scott Lauria. *Spaces between Us*; Ferguson, Roderick. *Aberrations in Black.*

[123] Ferguson, Roderick A. *The Reorder of Things;* Spade, Dean. *Normal Life;* Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages*

[124] Pincus, Fred L. "Discrimination Comes in Many Forms: Individual, Institutional, and Structural. (Multiculturalism and Diversity in Higher Education)." *American Behavioral Scientist* 40, no. 2 (1996): 186-194.

Teacher educators in this study pointed to diverse factors impacting their practices, which I would describe as individual (self), interpersonal (others), and institutional (institution). I argue that these factors are intertwined as they reflect processes of socializations that take place at the personal, interpersonal, and institutional levels, and impact individual identity formations. I will start by examining how these factors are entwined by looking at how questions of language and discourse, which often came up during this research, overlap across these areas, creating power relationships among the various actors mentioned by participants. I will then focus my interpretation of the findings on how the domination of a neoliberal view of education within the university system impedes teacher educators from developing practices that might enable them to interrupt these discourses.

a)   *Powerful discourses*

First, silence emerges as a powerful discourse in the university classroom, at the program's level, but also in the K-12 setting. As non-conforming gender and sexual identities are hardly mentioned among faculty members, rarely included in participants' curricula, absent in the official conceptual framework of the college of education, and avoided in the interactions with most schools where pre-service teachers complete their practicum, teacher education programs participate in maintaining dominant heteronormative discourses that remain unchallenged. Such silence is reinforced by teacher educators who consciously or unconsciously speak the dominant language of heterosexism and cisgenderism, but often ignore the language and concepts developed by marginalized groups to question systems of oppression and to define themselves.[125] Even as well-intentioned educators want to challenge norms, they often do not

---

[125] One striking example of the ways language participates in reinforcing heteronormativity is the prevalent use of the words "male" and "female" to describe individuals, which conflates gender with sex while reinforcing a binary understanding of gender identities.

dare speak a language they do not master, resulting in the self-conscious evasion of certain issues, the erasure of queer identities, and the perpetuation of the hidden curriculum of heteronormativity. The feelings of guilt and embarrassment displayed by many participants regarding their inability to use this language properly, from saying acronyms without hesitation to using the right pronouns to describe someone, may be attributed to the possibility that we might betray ourselves through our language, bringing to the open a part of our identity that we would rather keep hidden as it contradicts our sense of self as open-minded and inclusive educators. Such feelings demonstrate the power language exercises over individual's identity formation and reaffirms the need for educators to learn and speak the "language of the oppressed" as a first transformative step toward coming to terms with this cognitive dissonance at the personal level, and most importantly toward subverting oppressive discourses that participate in the reproduction of heteronormativity at the institutional and structural levels.

However, mastering this language is not sufficient. Several participants noted academics' ability to master the language of diversity and inclusion, and yet their reluctance to engage in a thorough questioning of their own participation in the systems of oppression they name. Thus, fluency in discourses of privilege and oppression does not necessary translates into an awareness of personal investment in heteronormativity, but instead can promote a liberal discourse of tolerance and inclusion that focuses on the assimilation into the mainstream of marginalized identities, without questioning the foundations upon which mainstream society lies. As mentioned before, this liberal understanding of multiculturalism results in the tendency for many educators across the US to include underrepresented groups in their teaching material, focusing their efforts on teaching for and about the Other, without inviting students to reflect on their own identities and on the ways they have been socialized throughout their lives to perpetuate specific norms. This educational discourse of assimilation and "normalization" of identities which have

historically been cast as abnormal, participates in the exclusion of other identities which are deemed less respectable, such as those held by queer people of color and queer people with disabilities, but also more generally people who do not fit white middle-class definitions of respectability, for instance, unmarried mothers or sex workers. Encouraging self-examination and the ways heteronormativity contributes to protecting the privilege of a few is one avenue to counter this liberal incorporation of discourses on diversity.

A direct consequence of the exclusion from educational discourses on integration and assimilation of those people who remain on the margins is the creation of a normative vision of queerness that is equated with whiteness and economic privilege, and which paradoxically may consolidate the heteronormative biases of liberal-minded teacher educators who focus their critical work on issues surrounding race and poverty, and perceive queerness as the narcissistic privilege of white people. Ironically, this perception of queerness contributes to erasing one step further people of color and poor people, even as these teacher educators attempt to work against such invisibilization. Thus, as Queer Indigenous and Queer of Color critiques underline, understanding the historical roots of heteronormativity as not simply the offspring of heteropatriarchy but also as tied to settler colonialism, capitalism and white supremacy is key to analyzing how race and ethnicity are intertwined with gender and sexuality. This becomes most apparent when homonormativity emerges in discourses promoting a vision of formerly non-normative gender and sexualities that is supportive of neoliberal and imperialist endeavors, whereby LGBTQ people are portrayed as happy consumers and patriots. Such a critical understanding of heteronormativity must be the goal to achieve in teacher education programs if future educators are to change their practices meaningfully. This starts with an examination of their own position within this complex system. However, as most participants in this research

pointed out, teacher educators themselves do not possess the language or do not feel

knowledgeable enough to tackle these questions with pre-service teachers.

b)   *Challenging heteronormativity in the corporate university*

Looking into the training teacher educators receive about systems of oppression such as

heteronormativity is important, since their ability to master both the language and the concepts

challenging heteronormativity raises the possibility for teacher educators to unveil, if not

interrupt, the mechanisms these norms rely upon, at a time when future K-12 teachers probably

already reflect on the socialization processes that lead to their teacher identity. All participants

noted at one point in the study that their involvement in this research impacted their awareness

of, or their practices related to LGBTQ issues, a fact that is consistent with data showing that

faculty members who participate in diversity-related activities are more likely to incorporate

diversity-related content in their practices,[126] and which echoes similar research on in-service

teachers' access to professional development about LGBTQ questions.[127] Yet, as noted before,

most teacher educators come into teacher education without formal preparation and rely almost

exclusively on their previous professional experience in education, if they had any, which they

adapt to their new profession in higher education.[128] Thus, to a large extent, teacher educators are

themselves the product of the education system that they have gone through both as K-12

students, pre-service teachers, and teachers, which explains why teacher preparation as a

profession has not evolved much over time.[129] Not surprisingly, then, the identity development

of teacher educators results from socialization and professionalization processes that are steeped

---

[126] Mayhew, Matthew J., and Heidi E. Grunwald. "Factors Contributing to Faculty Incorporation of Diversity-Related Course Content." *The Journal of Higher Education* 77, no. 1 (2006): 148-68.

[127] Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. *From Teasing to Torment.*

[128] Goodwin, A. Lin, Laura Smith, Mariana Souto-Manning, Ranita Cheruvu, Mei Ying Tan, Rebecca Reed, and Lauren Taveras. "What Should Teacher Educators Know and Be Able to Do? Perspectives from Practicing Teacher Educators." *Journal of Teacher Education 65, no. 4* (2014): 284-302

[129] *Ibid*, p.296.

in heteronormative expectations and policing. Such processes are likely to remain uninterrupted, unless the identities and personal experiences of teacher educators result in heightened awareness of these norms, and stronger desire to disrupt them. Yet, not only do the demographics of teacher educators suggest that most of them belong to dominant groups who may not have experienced systemic discrimination, participants who shared that their social locations had provided them with the awareness of the need to tackle these questions in their practices also explained that their ability to do so was sometimes limited. This raises the question of when and how teacher educators are provided with the opportunity to deconstruct the hidden curriculum of heteronormativity in education, and to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to disrupt these norms in their practices.

Several participants in the research often noted that their workload meant they lacked the time necessary to educate themselves on issues that did not directly relate to their research interest or to the discipline they taught. This time constraint is heavily tied to the structure of colleges of education and the university system in general, where, increasingly, neoliberal expectations of cost-efficiency, whereby investment in resources must produce benefits, dictate academic policies and educational orientations. The current hiring practices and lack of formal preparation of teacher educators enables universities to save time and money. Indeed, former K-12 educators are viewed as already skilled workers due to their experience in K-12 settings, and as many of them are hired in non-tenure-track positions, they also represent a cheaper labor force. Their often unprotected status as instructors also means that they are more susceptible to exploitation and to being fired, should their productivity level be deemed disappointing in light of the numerous assessment tools set in place to measure faculty efficiency as it relates to student success and to student/consumer satisfaction. Thus, as noted in the previous chapter, bringing up controversial issues in class might result in low student evaluation of teaching, in particular for

faculty members belonging to underrepresented groups who are more likely in the first place to receive negative student evaluation. In this context, student evaluation of teaching demonstrates how white supremacy and neoliberalism both work together to ensure heteronormativity remains unchallenged. Tenure-track teacher educators, for their part, are also subject to productivity requirements as they are expected to produce publications on a steady rhythm to obtain tenure, thus encouraging research as a means of promotion rather than as a thorough inquiry into educational issues. Research is necessary to transform a field of study, and data suggests that teacher educators need to use this avenue to examine their practices more broadly,[130] yet it is crucial for faculty to have the time to develop meaningful research, not simply to meet quotas. One participant in this study, for instance, quoted an administrator from the college of education who deplored that teacher educators did not "produce" enough in terms of research, thus underlining the constant pressure for faculty to demonstrate their productivity. It is important to note that this neoliberal discourse is not specific to the field of education but permeates the university system, including at the graduate level where Master's students are immersed in this culture of productivity at the onset of their programs, and are encouraged to think of their research projects as future publications or opportunities to present at conferences that might enhance their résumés. Thus, the university system's priority on efficiency and productivity seems antagonistic to the idea of offering time-consuming formal teacher educator preparation that would encourage faculty members to question dominant paradigms such as heteronormativity, in particular as scrutinizing this normative system would inevitably lead to a larger examination of other regimes of power that it both relies upon and supports, such as neoliberalism, white supremacy or settler colonialism.

---

[130] *Ibid.*

Under these conditions, although several participants regretted an absence of training, it is also probable that formal professional development activities might be perceived as adding to teacher educators' workload, especially if participation in these activities are not valued at the program's level through the allocation of time and resources to organize them and to adjust teacher educators' teaching and administrative duties so they can attend them. Similarly, collaboration among teacher educators, which several participants felt might act as professional development, is hampered by institutional structures and priorities. Online classes and curricular standardization are examples of such obstacles at the institutional level that were cited by some participants. While online courses allow some departments to survive economically as they make up for cuts in public funding, they also participate in the disintegration of any teamwork and reduce the chance of potential collaboration for resistance that might otherwise take place when faculty meet on a regular basis. Likewise, standardized curricula limit faculty's ability to introduce critical content that might lead to a transformation of their practices and of their program at large. As faculty are increasingly deprived of the time and space to think collaboratively they lack the resources necessary to engage in a reflective process that would enable a deeper questioning of structural discrimination and a thorough transformation of individual and institutional practices in teacher education programs.

C.   Conclusion

1.   Reflection on the interpretation of the data

There are limitations to this research of course, many of them tied to my identity as a straight cisgender woman and to my position as a graduate student who conducted ethnographic research for the time. This positionality certainly impacted the design of the study, my

interaction with participants, as well as the analysis of the findings and their interpretation. Furthermore, the results of this research are based on the experiences of eight teacher educators and eighteen pre-service teachers who all volunteered to be participants, and who might not be representative of other students and educators in their programs, as their interest in this work and willingness to spend precious time completing research-related activities are probably already a sign of greater awareness of and/or positive professional dispositions toward questions of gender and sexuality in education. Finally, this qualitative research was conducted in a specific context, both spatial and temporal, which means that these findings cannot be generalized, but are meant to provide in-depth knowledge of the reasons why, in this context, these participants generally felt hesitant or unable to include questions related to non-normative gender and sexual identities in their practices.

2. Recommendations

Despite such limitations, however, member checking confirmed that participants perceived personal, interpersonal, and institutional obstacles to challenging heteronormativity in their practices. I hope that the following recommendations might provide avenues for reflection about ways to remove such hurdles.

a) *Providing opportunities for self-examination and collaboration among faculty*

First, providing opportunities for self-examination is key if teacher educators are to develop an awareness of the multiple ways they, as individuals, have been shaped by hegemonic gender and sexual norms that they also perpetuate through their personal and professional interactions. Such reflexivity might be prompted by interactions and collaboration among teacher educators whose identities, experiences, and knowledge varied greatly in this study. It is thus necessary for teacher education programs to provide time and space for collaboration to take

place and trust to develop, as this might allow silences to be broken, and difficult conversations to take place at faculty level, before they are expected to take place in the classroom. This is especially true for instructors who might be convinced of the need to change their practices but are unsure of how to do it, and whether they can rely on institutional and collegial support. Several participants were particularly impressed by the experience described by one of the guest speakers they heard during the research, and who explained that her department's chair had supported efforts to bring these questions into the conversation by dedicating time to speak about LGBTQ-related issues in teacher education at the beginning of each monthly department meeting over a period of 18 months. Although a department meeting might not be the best environment for individual introspection, bringing up the topic in this official context might help break the prevailing silence and work as a first signal that these questions are relevant to teacher education programs. As conversations emerge among faculty members during these meetings and hopefully continue beyond, the various experiences and identities of teacher educators can contribute to informing new perspectives both at the individual and departmental levels. For instance, a few teacher educators expressed their interest in "lesson study", a collaborative approach described in a reading they were invited to complete during this study.[131] This practice, which involves "planning, teaching, observing, and critiquing lessons with a group of colleague,"[132] may be particularly rich if it involved educators whose interests focus on different diversity issues, as it would allow for a joint reflection on the ways these issues intersect in education. Thus, this approach underlines the way self-reflection can be prompted by

---

[131] Murray, Olivia. *Queer Inclusion in Teacher Education,* p.167.
See Chapters 7 and 8, pp.155-205, for a comprehensive list of activities and materials that can be used both for faculty development and teacher training.
[132] *Ibid,* p.167.

collaboration, which works as a form of integrated professional development and can impact the culture of the teacher education program as a whole.

b) *Professional development*

It is equally important for teacher education programs to ensure that faculty members have the time and resources they need to attend local formal professional development activities that focus on challenging systems of oppression in education, and which include an examination of dominant norms that affect mainstream perception of non-normative genders and sexualities. Indeed, opportunities to develop knowledge and skills to create an inclusive curriculum specific to their disciplines and to lead difficult conversations are necessary, provided they are accompanied by an examination of the way the hidden curriculum of heteronormativity is inscribed in a larger web of structural discriminations. Thus, teacher education programs would benefit from narrow collaboration with other programs in their institution, especially those focusing on equity and diversity, and which offer professional development opportunities that encourage an examination of systems of privilege and oppression, and of the role educators play in reproducing those. Because such trainings are time-consuming, in order to avoid adding to teacher educators' already busy schedule, such professional development might replace, at least partly, service requirements for faculty to serve on committees.

c) *Official Policies*

Institutional efforts to deconstruct heteronormativity should also translate into policies and official stances at the programs' level that clearly state their support of LGBTQ students and faculty, regardless of the broader political context and policies that might promote discrimination against queer identities. As mentioned before, providing space during official department meetings to talk about gender and sexuality is one avenue for colleges of education to express

their support officially. Ensuring that a program's conceptual framework includes gender identity, gender expression, and sexual identity in its definition of diversity is also key to signal to prospective students and faculty alike that the program acknowledges and embraces such diversity. Similarly, requiring that diversity statements appear on the program's syllabi would set clear expectations both for faculty members and pre-service teachers. However, such policies must not be empty promises, and need to be accompanied by measures that reflect colleges of education's commitment to diversity and equity. For instance, teacher education programs may examine their recruitment material to look for hidden messages that might deter underrepresented students from applying to the program, while encouraging mainstream students to do so. Similarly, programs may look into ways their facilities perpetuate gender norms, and can ensure, for instance, that gender neutral bathrooms are available in their building. As mentioned before, it is also crucial that faculty members be educated about these questions, as diversity statements on a program's website or on a syllabus does not ensure that instructors are always equipped to honor these commitments.

d)   *Collaboration with K-12 communities and other teacher education programs*

Furthermore, as participants noted, actors in the K-12 setting also impacted the ways some teacher educators perceived these questions. Thus, collaboration between K-12 settings and teacher education programs is key to facilitating the transformation of the dispositions and practices of pre-service teachers but also of in-service teachers, and teacher educators, as well as the broader communities they involve. For instance, ensuring that pre-service teachers will be mentored by in-service teachers who will model a self-reflexive approach to inclusion might be beneficial for both pre-service teachers and teacher educators who will not have to adapt their practices to gratify more conservative cooperative teachers. Inviting in-service teachers actively

engaged in challenging heteronormativity in schools to share their experiences in a panel with pre-service teachers and teacher educators alike is one avenue to start collaborating on these issues, as is inviting LGBTQ families to share their own experience of heteronormative school settings.

Similarly, teacher education programs might find or develop opportunities at the community level to promote anti-oppressive education, using what Tina Gutierez-Schmich and Julia Heffernan call "public pedagogy,"[133] where pre-service teachers both educate and learn from community members. For instance, asking pre-service teachers to get involved with Genders and Sexualities Alliances (GSA) in local schools and to support the organization of alternative proms in their community can provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to learn from LGBTQ students. On the other hand, asking pre-service teachers to participate in a fundraising event that would benefit queer youth can allow them to educate community members in the process.[134]

Such collaborative practices might be extended to other teacher education programs in nearby universities. Indeed, ending the rivalry between programs that compete for students or placement opportunities, following neoliberal logics that cast universities as competitive businesses "poaching" on each other's territories, as one participant put it, would enhance their ability to exchange on practices that promote change at the institutional level. Colleges of Education in a given state might organize small scale conferences at the local level, inviting faculty to focus their presentations on diversity and intersectionality in teacher education

---

[133] Gutierez-Schmich, Tina, Heffernan, Julia. "Public Pedagogy" In *Critical concepts in queer studies and education: An international guide for the twenty-first century*. Edited by Rodriguez, N., Martino, Wayne, Ingrey, Jennifer C., & Brockenbrough, Edward. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. pp.239-248

[134] See Gutierez-Schmich, Tina, and Heffernan, Julia's "Public Pedagogy" for a thorough description of the progressive nature of assignments given to their students for this practice to be meaningful and effective.

programs, and encouraging them to share research and practices related to gender and sexuality in various disciplines.

3.   Future research

Further qualitative research involving interviews and classroom observation of teacher educators' practices regarding diversity and inclusion would provide rich information about the topics they feel comfortable including in their teaching but also about the goals they hope to achieve, such as preparing pre-service teachers to be inclusive or to reflect upon and challenge systems of oppression like heteronormativity as they play out it education. Research conducted with a focus on specific disciplines, such as math, science, or agriculture, might also provide useful information on strategies that can be developed by teacher educators to challenge heteronormativity effectively in disciplines that are often perceived as value neutral. Such research would probably also benefit from a close analysis of the material used by educators and the ways it may perpetuate unstated norms.

Moreover, it would be valuable to look into the relation between teacher educators' practices and the direct and indirect support teacher education programs offer faculty, in terms of access to resources allocated to professional development, the nature and content of the professional development available, opportunities for collaboration at the college level that are weaved into their existing workload, and official department policy regarding the inclusion of gender identity, gender expression and sexuality in definitions of diversity. Furthermore, research on the collaborative practices between school communities and teacher education programs might yield useful information about the influence they may exert on each other in terms of maintaining or challenging heteronormative practices.

Research on these issues would greatly benefit students and educators alike, both in K-12 and higher education settings, if it was conducted by experienced teacher educators who have the time and skills to inquire into practices that affect their profession. Collaboration with researchers from other disciplines, such as, but not limited to, Ethnic Studies or Women's Studies, would also enhance such research, as I hope this project has demonstrated.

Bibliography

Bibliography

Adams, Maurianne., Bell, Lee Anne, and Griffin, Pat. Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice : A Sourcebook. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997.

Adams, Maurianne. Readings for Diversity and Social Justice. Third ed. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2013.

Ainsworth, Claire. "Sex Redefined." *Nature* 518, no. 7539 (2015): 288.

Allen, Louisa. "'The 5 cm rule': biopower, sexuality and schooling" in *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, Vol. 30, No. 4, December 2009, pp 443-456.

Allen, Louisa. "Queer pedagogy and the limits of thought: teaching sexualities at university" in *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34:4, 2015, pp 763-775

Alvarez McHatton, Patricia, Harold Keller, Barbara Shircliffe, Carlos Zalaquett, and Stevenson, Michael R. "Examining Efforts to Infuse Diversity Within One College of Education." *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 2, no. 3 (2009): 127-35.

Asher, Nina. "Made in the (Multicultural) U.S.A.: Unpacking Tensions of Race, Culture, Gender, and Sexuality in Education.(Author Abstract)(Report)." *Educational Researcher*, 2007, Educational Researcher, Annual, 2007.

Athanases, S., & Larrabee, T. "Toward a consistent stance in teaching for equity: Learning to advocate for lesbian- and gay-identified youth". *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 19(2), 2003. 237–261.

Aud, Susan, Fox, Mary Ann and KewalRamani, Angelina. "Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups". US department of Education/IES/National Center for Education Statistics, 2010. Retrieved from http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/AIR-NCESracial_stats__trends1_0.pdf

Blackburn, Mollie V. *Acting Out! Combating Homophobia through Teacher Activism.* Teachers College Press, 2009

Bostwick, Wendy B., Meyer, Ilan, Aranda, Frances, Russell, Stephen, Hughes, Tonda, Birkett, Michelle, Mustanski, Brian "Mental Health and Suicidality Among Racially/Ethnically Diverse Sexual Minority Youths" *Am J Public Health.* 2014 Jun; 104(6): 1129–1136

Britzman, Deborah, P. "Is there a queer pedagogy? Or, stop reading straight." *Educational Theory*, 45(2), (1995) 151-165

Bryan, Jennifer. *From the Dress-Up Corner to the Senior Prom: Navigating Gender and Sexuality Diversity in PreK-12 Schools*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

Burdge, H.; Licona, A. C.; Hyemingway, Z. T. *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, 2014

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. NY: Routledge, 1990

Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. NY: Routledge, 2004

Butler-Wall, Annika; Cosier, Kim; Harper, Rachel L. S. *Rethinking Sexism Gender and Sexuality*. Rethinking School Publications, 2016.

Cameron, M. and Baker, R. *Research on Initial Teach education in New Zealand, 1993-2004: Literature Review and annotated bibliography*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 2004.

Carlson, Dennis "Who Am I ? Gay Identity and a Democratic Politics of the Self." in Pinar, William. *Queer Theory in Education*. Studies in Curriculum Theory. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1998, 107-119

Carpenter, Vicki M. and Lee, Debora. "Teacher education and the hidden curriculum of heteronormativity" in *Curriculum Matters*, 2010, Vol.6, pp.99-119.

Case, Kim A. and Meier, S. Colton. "Developing Allies to Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Youth: Training for Counselors and Educators" in *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 11:62–82, 2014.

Chang, Yin-Kun. "Through Queers' Eyes: Critical Educational Ethnography in Queer Studies"in *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies,* Volume 27, Issue 2, April 2005, pp 171-208.

Cianciotto, Jason and Cahill, Sean. *LGBT Youth in America's School.* University of Michigan Press, 2012.

Cohen, Cathy J. "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3, no. 4 (1997): 437.

Combahee River Collective, Author. *The Combahee River Collective Statement : Black Feminist Organizing in the Seventies and Eighties*. 1st ed. Freedom Organizing Series ; v. 1. Albany, NY: Kitchen Table : Women of Color Press, 1986.

Connell, R.W. 1996. "Teaching the Boys: New Research on Masculinity, and Gender Strategies for Schools." *Teachers College Record* 98, no. 2: 206–35.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8.

Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. SAGE, 2013.

D'Augelli, Anthony R., and Patterson, Charlotte J. *Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identities over the Lifespan Psychological Perspectives*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Davey, Ronnie. *The Professional Identity of Teacher Educators : Career on the Cusp?* Teacher Quality and School Development Series. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2013.

DePalma, Renée. "Choosing to lose our gender expertise: queering sex/gender in school settings" in *Sex Education*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2013, pp.1–15.

Douglas, Barbara Jean A. "Faculty Trainings" in Rodriguez, N., Martino, Wayne, Ingrey, Jennifer C., & Brockenbrough, Edward. *Critical concepts in queer studies and education : An international guide for the twenty-first century* (Queer studies and education). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. pp.87-94

Driskill, Qwo-Li. *Queer Indigenous Studies : Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. *Sex/Gender : Biology in a Social World*. Hoboken : Francis: Taylor & Amp, 2012.

Ferguson, Roderick. *Aberrations in Black*: *Toward a Queer of Color Critique*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.

Ferguson, Roderick A. *The Reorder of Things The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*. Difference Incorporated. Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Ford, Theron N., and Linda Quinn. "First year teacher education candidates: what are their perceptions about multicultural education?" *Multicultural Education*, vol. 17, no. 4, 2010

Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality Volume 1: An introduction*. London: Vintage Books, 1976/1990.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Random House, 1975/1990.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum, 2000.

Freitag, M. "Safety in unity: One school's story of identity and community" in *The Handbook of Gender and Sexualities in Education.* Peter Lang: New York. 2014.

Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network. "GLSEN Partners on Efforts for LGBT-Inclusive Teacher Prep. New Partnership to Broaden Inclusion of LGBT Content in Teacher Preparation", 2014.

Giroux, Henry A. *On Critical Pedagogy*. Critical Pedagogy Today Series ; 01. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011.

Giroux, Henry A., and Anthony N. Penna. "Social Education in the Classroom: The Dynamics of the Hidden Curriculum." *Theory & Research in Social Education* 7, no. 1 (1979): 21-42.

GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network). "GLSEN Partners on Efforts for LGBT-Inclusive Teacher Prep. New Partnership to Broaden Inclusion of LGBT Content in Teacher Preparation", 2014. Retrieved from http://www.glsen.org/article/glsen-partners-efforts-lgbt-inclusive-teacher-prep

Goodwin, A. Lin, Laura Smith, Mariana Souto-Manning, Ranita Cheruvu, Mei Ying Tan, Rebecca Reed, and Lauren Taveras. "What Should Teacher Educators Know and Be Able to Do? Perspectives From Practicing Teacher Educators." *Journal of Teacher Education* 65, no. 4 (2014): 284-302

Gorski, Paul C.; Davis, Shannon, N.; Reiter, Abigail. "An Examination of the (In)visibility of Sexual Orientation, Heterosexism, Homophobia, and Other LGBTQ Concerns in U.S. Multicultural Teacher Education Coursework" *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 10:224–248, 2013.

Gorski, Paul C. "Cognitive Dissonance as a Strategy in Social Justice Teaching.(Promising Practices)." *Multicultural Education* 17, no. 1 (2009): 54-57.

Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teachers.* New York: GLSEN, 2016

Gutierez-Schmich, Tina, Heffernan, Julia. "Public Pedagogy" in Rodriguez, N., Martino, Wayne, Ingrey, Jennifer C., & Brockenbrough, Edward. *Critical concepts in queer studies and education : An international guide for the twenty-first century.* (Queer studies and education). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. pp.239-248

Haas, Ann P., Philip L. Rodgers, and Jody L. Herman. "Suicide attempts among transgender and gender non-conforming adults." *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law,* 2014

Harding, Sandra, and Kathryn Norberg. "New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies: An Introduction." *Signs* 30, no. 4 (2005): 2009-015.

Harding, Sandra G. *Feminism and Methodology : Social Science Issues*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press ; Open University Press, 1987.

Hill Collins, Patricia. *Black Feminist Thought : Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Rev. 10th Anniversary ed. Perspectives on Gender. New York: Routledge, 2000.

hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress : Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Horn, Stacey S. "Visibility Matters: Policy Work as Activism in Teacher Education.(Report)." *Issues in Teacher Education* 19, no. 2 (2010): 65-80.

Irvine, A., *"We've Had Three of Them": Addressing the Invisibility of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Gender Non-Conforming Youths in the Juvenile Justice System.* Columbia Journal of Gender and Law. (19) 3, 676-677 (2010).

Jennings, Todd. "Teaching transgressive representations of LGBTQ people in educator preparation: Is conformity required for inclusion?" *The Educational Forum*, *79*(4), 2015. Pp.451-458.

Jennings, Todd. "Is the mere mention enough? Representation across five different venues of educator preparation." In D. Carlson & E. Meyer (Eds.), *Gender and sexualities in Education: A reader.* New York: Peter Lang, 2014. pp. 400-413

Jennings, Todd & Sherwin, Gary. "Sexual orientation topics in elementary teacher preparation programs in the USA." *Teaching Education*, 19:4, 2008. Pp.261-278

Jennings, Todd. "Addressing diversity in US teacher preparation programs: A survey of elementary and secondary programs' priorities and challenges from across the United States of America". *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*(8), 2007. 1258-1271.

Kalmbach, Phillips; Donna, Legard; Larson, Mindy. "Preservice teachers respond to And Tango Makes Three: deconstructing disciplinary power and the heteronormative in teacher education" in *Gender and Education* Vol. 24, No. 2, March 2012, pp 159–175.

Kissen, Rita M.. *Getting Ready for Benjamin: Preparing Teachers for Sexual Diversity in the Classroom.* Rowan and Littlefield, 2002.

Kumashiro, Kevin K. *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality: Queer Students of Color and Anti-oppressive Education*. Curriculum, Cultures, and (homo)sexualities Series. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001

Kumashiro, K. *Troubling education: Queer Activism and Anti-Oppressive Pedagogy.* New York, Routledge, 2002.

Lehr, Jane L. "Beyond Nature." In Pinar, William, and Rodriguez, Nelson M. *Queering Straight Teachers : Discourse and Identity in Education*. Complicated Conversation Queering Straight Teachers. Place of Publication Not Identified: Peter Lang, 2007.

Leonardo, Zeus. "The Color of Supremacy: Beyond the Discourse of 'white Privilege'." Educational Philosophy and Theory 36, no. 2 (2004): 137-52.

Luehmann, April Lynn. "Identity Development as a Lens to Science Teacher Preparation." *Science Education* 91, no. 5 (2007): 822-39.

Luhmann, Susanne "Queering/Querying Pedagogy? Or, Pedagogy is a Pretty Queer Thing?" in Pinar, William. *Queer Theory in Education*. Studies in Curriculum Theory. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1998, 141-155

Maccoby, E. E. "Gender and group process: a developmental perspective". In M. Gauvain, & M. Cole (Eds.), *Readings on the development of children* (*4th ed.*),pp. 187–191, New York: Worth, 2005.

Macintosh, Lori. "Does Anyone Have a Band-Aid? Anti-Homophobia Discourses and Pedagogical Impossibilities." *Educational Studies* 41, no. 1 (2007): 33-43 p.40

Mann, Susan Archer. *Doing Feminist Theory: From Modernity to Postmodernity*. 1st ed. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Mayhew, Matthew J., and Heidi E. Grunwald. "Factors Contributing to Faculty Incorporation of Diversity-Related Course Content." *The Journal of Higher Education* 77, no. 1 (2006): 148-68.

Maxwell, Joseph A. *Qualitative research Design*. SAGE, 2013.

Moraga, Cherríe., and Anzaldúa, Gloria. *This Bridge Called My Back : Writings by Radical Women of Color*. 2nd ed. New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, 1983.

Morgensen, Scott Lauria. *Spaces between Us Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications : Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Cultural Studies of the Americas ; v. 2. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Murray, Olivia Jo. "'Outing' Queer issues in teacher preparation programs. How Pre-Service Teachers Experience Sexual and Gender Diversity in Their Field Placements." Doctoral Dissertation, Portland State University, 2011.

Murray, Olivia. *Queer Inclusion in Teacher Education: Bridging Theory, Research and Practice*. Routledge 2015.

NCATE. *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions*. National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008

Oregon Department of Education. *Guidance to School Districts: Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment for Transgender Students*. Issued: May 5, 2016

Payne, Elizabethe C., and Melissa J. Smith. "Safety, Celebration, and Risk: Educator Responses to LGBTQ Professional Development." *Teaching Education* 23, no. 3 (2012): 265-85.

Pascoe, C. J., and Pascoe, C. J. *Dude, You're a Fag : Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

Petrovic, John E., and Jerry Rosiek. "Disrupting the Heteronormative Subjectivities of Christian Pre-Service Teachers: A Deweyan Prolegomenon." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 36, no. 2 (2003): 161-69.

Pinar, W. F. *Queer theory in education*. Mahwah, NJ:Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998.

Pincus, Fred L. "Discrimination Comes in Many Forms: Individual, Institutional, and Structural.(Multiculturalism and Diversity in Higher Education)." *American Behavioral Scientist* 40, no. 2 (1996): 186-194.

Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages : Homonationalism in Queer times*. Next Wave. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Renn, Kristen A. "LGBT and Queer Research in Higher Education: The State and Status of the Field." *Educational Researcher* 39, no. 2 (2010): 132-41.

Robinson,Kerry H. and Ferfolja, Tania. "Playing It Up, Playing It Down, Playing It Safe: Queering Teacher Education." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 24, no. 4 (2008): 846-58.

Sears, James,T. *Gay Lesbian and Transgender issue in education: program, policies and practices.* Routledge, 2005

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Shelton, Stephanie Anne, and Meghan E. Barnes. ""Racism Just Isn't an Issue Anymore": Preservice Teachers' Resistances to the Intersections of Sexuality and Race." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 55 (2016): 165.

Sherwin, Gary & Jennings, Todd. "Feared, Forgotten, or Forbidden: Sexual orientation topics in secondary teacher preparation programs in the USA. *Teaching Education, 17*(3), 2006. 207-223.

Skelton, Alan. "Studying hidden curricula: Developing a perspective in the light of postmodern insights" in *Curriculum Studies*, 5(2), 1997,177-193.

Snapp, Shannon D.; Burdge, Hilary; Licona, Adela C.; Moody, Raymond L. and Russell, Stephen "Students' Perspectives on LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum" in *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 48:2, 249-265, 2015.

Sosu, Edward and Gray, Donald. "Investigating Change in Epistemic Beliefs: An Evaluation of the Impact of Student Teachers' Beliefs on Instructional Preference and Teaching Competence." *International Journal of Educational Research* 53 (2012): 80-92.

Spade, Dean. *Normal Life : Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*. Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 2011.

Taylor, Monica. *Gender, Feminism and Queer Theory in the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices.* Sense Publishers, 2014.

TESOL. "Qualitative Research: (Critical) Ethnography Guidelines". Retrieved from: https://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/journals/tesol-quarterly/tesol-quarterly-research-guidelines/qualitative-research-%28critical%29-ethnography-guidelines#sthash.ObNAC6O5.dpuf

Touraille, Priscille, and Gibson, Justin W. "On the Critiques of the Concept of Sex: An Interview with Anne Fausto-Sterling." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 27, no. 1 (2016): 189-205.

Tuck, Eve, Yang, Wayne K.. "Decolonization is not a metaphor" in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. Vol. 1, No.1,2012, pp.1-40.

US Department of Education "Achievement Gap Narrows as High School Graduation Rates for Minority Students Improve Faster than Rest of Nation", 2015. Retrieved from http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/achievement-gap-narrows-high-school-graduation-rates-minority-students-improve-faster-rest-nation

Vavrus, Michael. "Sexuality, Schooling, and Teacher Identity Formation: A Critical Pedagogy for Teacher Education." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 25, no. 3 (2009): 383-90.

Wickens, Corrine M. & Sandlin, Jennifer A. "Homophobia and heterosexism in a college of education: a culture of fear, a culture of silence". *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23:6, 2010.pp. 651-670

Wimberly, George. *LGBTQ Issues in Education Advancing a Research Agenda.* American Educational Research Association, 2016.

Woolley, Susan, W. **"**Boys Over Here, Girls Over There": A Critical Literacy of Binary Gender in Schools" *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly (2015) 2(3): 376-394;*

Wyatt, Tammy J.; Oswalt, Sara B.; White, Christopher and Peterson, Fred L. "Are tomorrow's teacher ready to deal with diverse students? Teacher candidates' attitude toward gay males and lesbians." *Teacher education quarterly*, Spring 2008.

Zeichner, Ken. "Becoming a Teacher Educator: A Personal Perspective." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 21, no. 2 (2005): 117-24.

Appendices

Appendix A

Recruitment Email for Teacher Educators

Dear Dr. X.

My name is Amélie Ollivier, I am a first-year graduate student in the Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department at Oregon State U under the direction of Dr. Nana Osei-Kofi. I am also a certified high school teacher from France where I taught English as a foreign language for 8 years before moving to Oregon in 2012.

I would like to know if you would be interested in participating in my Master's research project which focuses on the experience of teacher educators regarding questions of gender and sexuality in the classroom. You are receiving this email because Dr. Y suggested that the content of your class and/or your teaching schedule might be relevant for this project.

This is a year-long project (from Spring 2016 to Spring 2017) which will involve a time commitment of around 2 hours per month on average. In order to qualify as a participant, you must be teaching students enrolled in teacher education classes in the Fall term of 2016 and/or Winter term of 2017.

I am well aware that you already have a very busy schedule so I will make sure to be respectful of your time and your many other commitments and responsibilities.

If you are interested in participating in this project, if you know another teacher educator who might be interested or if you have any question, please contact me at: olliviea@oregonstate.edu I would also be more than happy to meet with you in person in order to tell you more about this project.

Thank you very much for your time!
Amélie

Appendix B

Recruitment Email for Pre-Service Teachers

Dear pre-service teacher,

You are invited to participate in a short survey about gender and sexuality in teacher education programs for a study entitled "Gender, Sexuality and Teacher Education" conducted for a Master's thesis. Please follow the link provided in order to access the questionnaire and the explanation of research.

Another part of this study entails class observation during which I will take notes about the content of and interactions in the class. Please let me know if you would rather I did not take notes of your participation in class by contacting me via email at: olliviea@oregonstate.edu. Please note that your decision to take part or not take part in this study will not affect your grades, your relationship with your professors, or standing in the University.

If you have any question or comment regarding this study, please contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Osei-Kofi, at: nana.osei-kofi@oregonstate.edu, or the graduate student researcher, Amélie Ollivier, at: olliviea@oregonstate.edu

Sincerely,
Amélie Ollivier

Appendix C

Participant Consent

Verbal Consent Card for Teacher Educators

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to better understand your experience as a teacher educator regarding questions of gender and sexuality in the classroom, in order to make K-12 classrooms more inclusive.

Activities: This study involves:
- three one-on-one interviews of approximately one hour each
- attending (optional) one to three presentations on-campus provided by guest-speakers whose experiences are relevant to questions pertaining to education and gender and sexuality
- reading (optional) material about gender and sexuality in teacher education
- classroom observations during which we attend your class as you teach pre-service teachers
- sharing pedagogical material, such as your syllabus or other relevant material
- forwarding an email to your students with a link to a short questionnaire

Recording: interviews will be recorded on a tape recorder to facilitate data collection, unless you do not want them to.

Time: The research will start in the Spring term of 2016 until the Spring term of 2017. Each interview and presentation by guest-speakers will last around an hour. Class observations should not require any time commitment from you, other than your usual teaching time. On average, you might expect no more than 2 hours a month of active participation.

Confidentiality. There is a chance we could accidentally disclose information that identifies you. Confidentiality will be maintained in the final report through the use of pseudonyms. We may identify the university in our publications.

Voluntariness. Participation in this study is voluntary; there is no penalty for choosing not to participate or for leaving the study at any time; you are free to skip any questions or activities; your decision to take part or not take part in this study will not affect your employment or benefits.

Contact information. If you have any question or comment regarding this study, please contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Osei-Kofi, at: nana.osei-kofi@oregonstate.edu, or the graduate student researcher, Amélie Ollivier, at: olliviea@oregonstate.edu

Explanation of Study and Consent for Pre-Service Teachers
Online Survey

The purpose of this short questionnaire is to better understand your experience and expectations as a pre-service teacher regarding questions of gender and sexuality in the teacher education program at [this university]. It is part of a study regarding questions of gender and sexuality in teacher education programs.

There is a chance that we could accidently disclose information that will identify you. Information you provide in this survey will remain confidential to the extent permitted by the technology. The security and confidentiality of information collected from you online cannot be guaranteed. Information collected online can be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses. Additionally, we will not record your names or include any identifying information in our publications. Your decision to participate or not to participate will in no way influence your grades, relationship with your professor or your standing at [this university]. The data you provide will be analyzed and published in the graduate student researcher's Master's thesis.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this study, please contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Osei-Kofi, at: nana.osei-kofi@oregonstate.edu, or the graduate student researcher, Amélie Ollivier, at: olliviea@oregonstate.edu

If you have questions about your rights or welfare as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office, at (541) 737-8008 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu

❑ I understand the purpose of the questionnaire and agree for my answers to be used in this study.

Appendix D

Reading Suggestions for Teacher Educators

Books

Blackburn, Mollie V. 2010. *Acting out!: combating homophobia through teacher activism*. New York: Teachers College Press

Bloomfield, Veronica E., and Marni E. Fisher. 2016. *LGBTQ voices in education: changing the culture of schooling*.

Bryan, Jennifer. 2012. *From the dress-up corner to the senior prom: navigating gender and sexuality diversity in preK-12 schools*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Butler-Wall, Annika, Kim Cosier, and Rachel L. S. Harper. 2016. *Rethinking sexism, gender, and sexuality*.

Kissen, Rita M. 2002. *Getting ready for Benjamin: preparing teachers for sexual diversity in the classroom*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield.

Kumashiro, Kevin K. 2001. *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality : Queer Students of Color and Anti-oppressive Education*. Curriculum, Cultures, and (homo)sexualities. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Meyer, Elizabeth J., and Dennis Carlson. 2014. *Gender and sexualities in education: a reader*.

Murray, Olivia Jo. 2015. *Queer inclusion in teacher education: bridging theory, research, and practice*.

Pascoe, C. J. 2012. *Dude, you're a fag: masculinity and sexuality in high school*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press.

Sears, James T. 2005. *Gay, lesbian, and transgender issues in education: programs, policies, and practices*. New York: Harrington Park Press.

Taylor, Monica, and Lesley Coia. 2014. *Gender, feminism, and queer theory in the self-study of teacher education practices*. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1973908.

Wimberly, George L. 2015. *LGBTQ issues in education: advancing a research agenda*. AERA

Articles

Adair, Cassius. "Bathrooms and Beyond. Expanding a Pedagogy of Access in Trans/Disability Studies" *TSQ 2015* Volume 2, Number 3: 464-468

Ferfolja, Tania. "Schooling cultures: institutionalizing heteronormativity and heterosexism" in *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 11:2, (2007) 147-162

Jennings, Todd. "'Out' gay and lesbian faculty and the inclusion of sexual orientation topics in teacher preparation programmes in the USA", *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14:3, (2010): 269-287 http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603110802504531

Jennings, Todd. "Teaching Transgressive Representations of LGBTQ People in Educator Preparation: Is Conformity Required for Inclusion?" *The Educational Forum* 79, no. 4 (2015): 451-58.

Lehr, Jane L. "Beyond Nature: Critically Engaging Science to Queer Straight Teachers" in *Queering Straight Teachers : Discourse and Identity in Education*. Rodriguez, Nelson M., and Pinar, William F. Complicated Conversation ; v. 22. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.

Mccready, Lance T. "Conclusion to the Special Issue: Queer of Color Analysis: Interruptions and Pedagogic Possibilities." *Curriculum Inquiry* 43, no. 4 (2013): 512-22.

Miller, Ryan A. ""Sometimes You Feel Invisible": Performing Queer/Disabled in the University Classroom." *The Educational Forum* 79, no. 4 (2015): 377-93.

Osler, Jonathan. "Math Skills & Social Justice Topics Chart." http://www.radicalmath.org/main.php?id=SocialJusticeMath#write

Rands Kathleen. "Mathematical Inqu[ee]ry: Beyond 'Add-Queers-and-Stir' Elementary Mathematics Education." *Sex Education* 9, no. 2 (2009): 181-91.

Romesburg, Don. "There's No T in FAIR?: Implementing a Trans-Inclusive K–12 History Law". *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2015) 2(3): 488-494

Schmidt, Sandra J. "Civil Rights Continued: How History Positions Young People to Contemplate Sexuality (In)Justice." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 47, no. 3 (2014): 353-69.

Skelton, Wallace J. "Not Exceptional or Punished: A Review of Five Picture Books That Celebrate Gender Diversity" *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2015) 2(3): 495-499

Tindell, Shalyse, Lisa Young, Eric O'Rear, and Pamala Morris. "Teaching Assistant Perspectives on a Diversity and Social Justice Education Course for Collegiate Agriculture Students." *NACTA Journal* 60, no. 2 (2016): 158-166.

Touraille, Priscille, and Gibson, Justin W. "On the Critiques of the Concept of Sex: An Interview with Anne Fausto-Sterling." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 27, no. 1 (2016): 189-205.

Warren, Chastity K., Alston, Antoine J., Powers, Larry. "An Analysis Of Inclusive Pedagogical Practices Within North Carolina Secondary Agricultural Education Programming" in *Online Journal for Workforce Education and Development,* Volume VII, Issue 1 – Spring 2014

White, Christopher S., Oswalt, Sara B., Wyatt, Tammy J., and Peterson, Fred L. "Out on the Playing Field: Providing Quality Physical Education and Recreational Opportunities for Lesbian,

Gay, and Bisexual Youth.(Author Abstract)(Report)." *Physical Educator* 67, no. 1 (2010): 46-56.

Woolley, Susan W. ""Boys Over Here, Girls Over There" A Critical Literacy of Binary Gender in Schools" *TSQ 2015* Volume 2, Number 3: 376-394.

GLSEN publications (http://www.glsen.org/)

✍ 2016 *"From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited" A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teachers*

✍ 2016 *"From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited" A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teachers- Executive Summary*

✍ 2013 *School Climate in Oregon*

✍ 2009 *Shared Differences: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students of Color in Our Nation's Schools*

✵ 2015-2016 *Back-to-School Guide for Creating LGBTQ-Inclusive Environments*

✵ 2013 *Developing LGBT-Inclusive Classroom Resources*

✵ 2012 *Some Considerations When Working with LGBT Students of Color*

✵ 2008 *ThinkB4YouSpeak: Educator's Guide*

✵ *Kit Espacio Seguro: Guía para Ser un/a Aliado/a de Estudiantes LGBT*

✵ *Póster y Stickers Espacio Seguro*

✵ *The Safe Space Kit: Guide to Being an Ally to LGBT Students*

✵ *Safe Space Poster and Stickers*

Appendix E

Online Survey/Questionnaire for Pre-Service Teachers

1- Do you think that questions around gender and sexuality are issues that pre-service K-12 teachers need to be trained on? Please explain.

2- As a K-12 educator, will you include age-appropriate material and facilitate age-appropriate discussions regarding diverse gender identities and sexual orientations? Please explain.

3- As a K-12 educator, what would your reaction be, if any, upon overhearing a student make a homophobic or transphobic comment? Please explain.

4- Do you feel that you have received sufficient training from your teacher education program at [this university] to prepare you to address questions related to gender and sexuality in the K-12 classroom? Please explain.

5- Do you think that the College of Education at [this university] provides a safe and supportive learning environment for pre-service teachers who identify as LGBTQ? Please explain.

6- Do you have friends or family who identify as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Asexual, Transgender, Two-Spirit, Intersex, or Queer?
❑ None   ❑ One ❑ More than one   ❑ I don't know   ❑ I am not sure

7- Have you taken any course on multicultural issues or diversity in education? If you have please indicate the topics you remember being addressed in this class.

8- What specific input about issues of gender and sexuality in teacher training programs would you like to share, if any?

9- Thank you for completing the following information about:
You race and/or ethnicity:
Your age:
Your gender identity:
Your sexual orientation:

This is the end of this questionnaire
Thank you for your help!