

PUBLIC PEDAGOGY AND CONFLICT PEDAGOGY: SITES OF POSSIBILITY  
FOR ANTI-OPPRESSIVE TEACHER EDUCATION

by

TINA GUTIEREZ-SCHMICH

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Student: Tina Gutierrez-Schmich

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This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of Education Studies by:

Jerry Rosiek	Chairperson
Mia Tuan	Core Member
Joanna Goode	Core Member
Erik Girvan	Institutional Representative

and

Scott L. Pratt	Dean of the Graduate School
----------------	-----------------------------

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

Degree awarded June 2016

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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Tina Gutierrez-Schmich

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Title: Public Pedagogy and Conflict Pedagogy: Sites of Possibility for Anti-Oppressive Teacher Education

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students, students of color, and students with disabilities are failing school and being pushed out at much higher rates than majority population students while also experiencing high rates of bullying, harassment, and physical violence in school. This study explores efforts to reduce the violent experiences and academic disparities for these students through teacher practice at the classroom level. It examines public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy as curricular strategies in a preservice teacher education course over 5 years. The course aims to develop and support an advocate/activist teacher identity, a teacher identity that is not neutral and can challenge and disrupt the ideas and practices that have become normalized in our schools.

This research draws on three theoretical frameworks to inform the design and analysis of this study on teacher identity: poststructuralism, feminist pragmatism, and queer theory. These theories provide a conceptual vocabulary for critically examining both multicultural and anti-oppressive teacher education curricula. Specifically, this work looks at the way public and conflict pedagogy can be used to achieve anti-oppressive curricular ends through the potential impact on preservice teacher identity.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Tina Gutierrez-Schmich

### GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene  
Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA

### DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy, Education Studies, 2016, University of Oregon  
Master of Science, Conflict and Dispute Resolution, 2016, University of Oregon  
Master of Public Administration, Planning, Public Policy, and Management,  
2005, University of Oregon  
Bachelor of Arts, Educational Studies, 2002, University of Oregon

### AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Conflict and Dispute Resolution  
Gender and Sexuality Studies  
Curriculum Studies

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Equity Director, Bethel School District, 2014–present  
Instructor, University of Oregon, 2012–2016  
Conflict and Dispute Resolution Specialist, University of Oregon, 2007–2014  
Education Consultant, Head Start of Lane County, 1998–2011

### GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

University of Oregon, Martin Luther King Jr. Award, 2011  
University of Oregon, College of Education, Janette Gunther Drew Scholarship,  
2014

University of Oregon, College of Education, Lucinda Jane Criswell Scholarship,  
2013

University of Oregon, College of Education, Silvy Kraus Presidential  
Fellowship, 2012, 2013

University of Oregon, College of Education, Rose Gross Scholarship, 2011, 2013

University of Oregon, College of Education, Daniels Family Scholarship, 2010,  
2011, 2012

University of Oregon, College of Education, Clare Wilkins Chamberlin  
Memorial Scholarship, 2010

University of Oregon, John R. Moore Scholarship, 2012

University of Oregon, College of Education Diversity Award, 2014

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students, students of color, and students with disabilities are failing school and being pushed out at much higher rates than majority population students while also experiencing high rates of bullying, harassment, and physical violence in school (Kena et al., 2014; Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer, & Boesen, 2014). There are deep systemic issues in the U.S. education system that create and sustain these violent experiences and academic disparities.

This dissertation is offered as an exploration of efforts to reduce the violent experiences and academic disparities for Students through teacher practice at the classroom level. I examine public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy within preservice teacher education courses aimed at dispelling the illusion of an apolitical teacher identity or teaching practices and supporting an advocate/activist teacher identity.

Schools are not neutral spaces and neither are teachers, despite the pervasive national articulation of an apolitical teacher identity (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2008; Smith & Payne, 2014). Within education there has been a tight hold on the concept of a teacher who offers an unbiased curriculum through impartial practices. Just as student identity, history, and culture are often presumed to be irrelevant in their educational experiences, teacher identity, history, and culture are also often assumed irrelevant.

This idea of an apolitical teacher identity is responsible for many current practices that silence, erase, and damage Students. It is time to engage curricular and pedagogical strategies that are often unexamined in teacher practices, while recognizing that any strategy will be partial and problematic. Approaches that engage preservice teachers in

critical experiences and opportunities to explore their personal and professional identity, curriculum, and pedagogical strategies before they have their own classrooms offer some possibility of impacting teacher practice and Student outcomes. Many teacher education programs are exposing preservice teachers to critical dialogue and/or techniques that allow them to develop a critical reflection on their social identities, prejudices, biases, and the implications for their teaching practice, yet the experience and outcomes for Students continues to be troubling. Petrovic and Rosiek (2007, p. 226) stated that “It is not enough for teacher educators to turn out teachers with a critical conception of heteronormativity; they must also be able to envision ways, both small and large, to act on that critical consciousness.”

The pedagogical and curricular strategies explored in a preservice teacher course aim to develop and support an advocate/activist teacher identity, a teacher identity that is not neutral and can challenge and disrupt the ideas and practices that have become normalized in our schools. To create more positive outcomes for Students, our classrooms and schools need to reconsider the traditional pedagogical assumptions of the role of teachers (Lather, 1991). We need to have teachers who “will work to expose problems in the status quo and help us imagine and create more socially just alternatives” (Kumashiro, 2015, p. 53).

A claim could be made that developing and supporting an advocate/activist teacher identity is a move from one normative stance to another, and I agree. I argue that an apolitical teacher identity is itself a normative and limiting frame for thinking about teaching, one that closes off possibilities of change for Students. An advocate/activist teacher identity opens up the possibility of action and sites of resistance to support

change for Students. Further assertions can be made regarding the ethical considerations in making space for advocacy and activism in teaching rather than neutrality. The assertion can be made that not all the possibilities opened up by endorsing a view of teachers as activists and advocates of particular forms of justice are desirable. There can be harmful excesses that result from the best of intentions. Such assertions, however, presume that the level of harm caused by the status quo of schooling is acceptable. This study rejects that assumption, a rejection supported by a vast amount of literature (Clark & Flores, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Kosciw et al., 2014). I contend that critical educators need to explore new pedagogical and curricular options, while being attentive to the possibility of ethical oversteps, if we are ever to create different and better outcomes for Students. As Franzak (2002) observed,

We live in a world of negotiated identity, one where we continually construct and revise our vision of us. Those of us who create “teacher” as part of our identity must negotiate the particular implications of our professional identity in relation to students, peers, the general public, or intimates, and ourselves.  
(p. 258)

Significant research has examined the influence and impact of teacher behavior and practices on Student outcomes (Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997) because teachers are ideally situated to impact Student experiences and academic outcomes (Freire, 1970; Gilpin & Liston, 2014; hooks, 1994). This research indicates that beliefs drive teachers’ actions in the classroom and that to understand and reform classroom practices, teacher educators need to first help preservice and in-service teachers recognize, reflect on, and adapt their beliefs to those that are aligned with researched-based best practices (Hsieh,

2015; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). Although I agree that teachers are significant agents of amelioration even in the face of overwhelming structural oppression, I remain troubled that focusing on teacher identity and practice in this project may contribute to the invisibility of the larger systemic problems. Unfortunately, I believe there is no safe place from which to advocate for change. All starting points are at some level compromised in this way. If I were to emphasize an analysis of the macro-structural nature of educational inequality, I would risk minimizing the capacity, and therefore responsibility, of educators to engage in ameliorative action. I need to start somewhere and therefore choose to focus on the agency of teachers to make a difference, acknowledging that there are structural limits on that agency.

The first challenge I encounter in writing about these systemic problems is navigating what language to use. The language used to talk about Students is itself a part of the system that targets them for brutality and neglect while holding them hostage as victims. Contemporary education literature often refers to Students with these noted identities as marginalized students, vulnerable students, or at-risk students—all labels attempting to illustrate where these Students are located in their schools in comparison to dominant identity students. Although these terms have been useful in drawing attention to the systemic barriers and damaging experiences of these youth, they have also contributed to the reproduction of the oppression. These terms serve to maintain the idea that our youth who identify as White, heterosexual, and able bodied are “students” while youth who identify as LGBTQ, youth of color, or youth with disabilities are the “other” students. These terms become labels that live on the bodies of these youth and are

actively keeping them as outsiders. I use the term *Students* (with a capital “S”) to identify LGBTQ youth, youth of color, and youth with disabilities.

Our labeling of Students holds them in opposition to dominant identity youth and maintains those dominant identities at the center of discourse, policy, and practice. When I use the terms *marginalized student*, *vulnerable student*, or *at-risk student*, I feel implicated in the ongoing systematic efforts that create limitations, restrictions, and barriers for these youth. Identities are partial and socially constructed (Butler, 1990; Namaste, 1994; Zembylas, 2010), so when youth are categorized by a singular category it misses their strengths and complexity. They are someone’s child, grandchild, friend, and neighbor. They are architects, writers, musicians, explorers, and dreamers. A quality education that includes all youth requires, among other things, that all students’ histories are visible, their lived experiences are valued, and their voices are heard (hooks, 1994). Marginalized Students are youth with complex and intersecting identities, and it does not feel appropriate to locate them at the margins. Intentional efforts need to be in place to keep them at the core of our discourse, policy, and practice.

I struggle to address these tensions as I write about LGBTQ youth, youth of color, and youth with disabilities. I want to use this text to hold these youth at the center while actively addressing the deep systematic issues that create a need for a new vocabulary enabling conversation about what is uniquely happening in their educational experience. Simply referring to these youth as “students” presents the risk of the reader forgetting which students are being described. Our normative frames will automatically continue to place students with dominant identities at the center without a clear signifier to challenge our habitual perspective.

Thus, by use of the term *Students* to identify LGBTQ youth, youth of color, and youth with disabilities, I remove the labels that sit on the bodies of these youth, and shift the labels to the systems that work against them. It is the educational structures, policies, and practices that are marginalizing, that create vulnerabilities, and that put youth at risk. The capital “S” for Student is a symbolic reminder for the reader of which students are centered in this text and the systems they must live in as they move through their schools.

I am drawn to address this topic in my dissertation because I am one of these Students. I am also an observer, watching and listening to other Students. I traverse the border between insider and outsider, participant and observer, and yet am always present and never separate or neutral. My position and experience deepens rather than compromises the insights I have to offer. Lather (1991) wrote that our “ways of knowing are culture-bound and perspectival” (p. 2), that the values, beliefs, and identities of the researcher permeate their research. I must situate myself in relationship to this work because without positionality I have no ability to articulate my ideas and experiences. My relationship to this work is both as a teacher and a Student. As I work to support teacher candidates as they becoming advocate/activist teachers, I am simultaneously laboring to also become an advocate/activist teacher/scholar. Gloria Anzaldúa (2002) wrote about *Nepantla*, a transformational space of questioning and conflict.

As you make your way through life, *Nepantla* itself becomes the place you live in most of the time—home. *Nepantla* is the site of transformation, a place where different perspectives come in to conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures. *Nepantla* is the zone between changes where you

struggle to find equilibrium between the outer expression of change and your inner relationship to it. (p. 549)

Anzuldúa (2002) recognized the difficulty of this space and yet remained hopeful. I strive to research and write from a Nepantla space and develop myself as a Nepantleras (Anzuldúa, 2002): “people who move within and among multiple, and often conflicting, worlds” (Keating, 2006). Graduate student, parent, teacher, school administrator, mediator, equity advocate, queer, and Latina are some of the socially constructed and contextual labels I utilize to articulate my identities and social positions. Personally, professionally, and academically, I live in both marginalized and privileged spaces where I navigate the intersections of complicated identities that are always in motion. Mine is not a unique experience but one that is shared by the Students living at the heart of this work. It is this connection that brings meaning and substance to this academic endeavor for me and perhaps, I hope, for others.

There are many different angles from where I could address this dissertation topic, and many before me have analyzed the systemic inequality in public schools. To illustrate, Figure 1 shows a glass sculpture by David Huchthausen called *Triad*. The photos are of the same art piece from two different angles. The description of Huchthausen’s work at the museum includes this statement from him:

I have always attempted to use the full 360-degree circumference of the sculpture, drawing viewers in, and forcing them to move around the object to observe its constantly shifting imagery. The spheres have no top or bottom, front or back, they can be rotated into infinite number of positions creating a new set of spatial relations from every angle. (Huchathausen, 2015)





*Figure 1.* David Huchathausen's *Triad*, Chihuly Museum, 2015.

Huchathausen's sculpture offers a visual representation of my experience as a teacher and researcher in this project. I have been moving around this project for 6 years, and I certainly have not considered all of the perspectives and angles possible. With the plethora of possibilities, this dissertation examines two specific curriculum strategies in an anti-oppressive teacher education course aimed at supporting an advocate/activist teacher identity.

Plenty of studies share the premise that informs my research, namely that the history of public education in the United States makes clear that the schooling project was never meant for Students (Gilpin & Liston, 2014). Educational policy and decision making power has most frequently rested in the hands of prosperous White male leaders born in the United States who tended to assume the correctness of their own culture and policies, thus leaving many people out of the loop of opportunity and prosperity. In fact, this exclusion has at times been a necessary precondition for the prosperity of others and perpetuating the social and political structures (Gilpin & Liston, 2014).

Some scholars have approached this condition as a totalizing structural issue, others advocate for the incremental reform of current educational policies, and still others claim curriculum change can be a means of systemic educational change. After

considering policy and curricular approaches to improve Student school experiences, the core of this research considers a form of pedagogical intervention, specifically this use of public and conflict pedagogy at the classroom level. Given my assumption that the education system is, by design, structured in a way that conspires against the needs of Students, it may seem counterintuitive to examine classroom level interventions. Instituting change in a failing system (Kumashiro, 2015) is significantly difficult yet remains important and necessary work and cannot be denied or ignored because there are Students living with violence and silencing in schools today. There is an educational, moral, and political imperative to be persistent in identification and implementation of any policy or practice that disrupts the hegemonic discourse and any policy or practice that is harmful to all youth and particularly violent to Students.

This research starts in the context of a preservice teacher course entitled “Equal Opportunity: Education as Homophobia.” This course is one of five equal opportunity courses in a teacher education department. In many teacher education programs, the courses would be considered multicultural courses, and these courses have intentionally been titled to capture the systemic oppression that persists in schools and to center on where the teaching and learning is focused.

This course sits within and outside the historical and primary site of preservice teacher preparation. The first concept central to this project is that multicultural studies education takes place both within and far beyond the classroom. I use the concept of public pedagogy in an attempt to capture the complicated interplay between individuals, space, knowledge, and time outside the classroom. This concept is also used to hold the

explicit multiple directional teaching and learning between preservice teachers and their public engagements.

The second central concept is that personal, social, and cultural conflict is a part of our human experience, including those in educational contexts. I offer that conflict is neither good nor bad, but it is our own beliefs, values, and actions that turn conflict into a competitive battle, a constructive challenge, or something entirely new. Personal, social, and cultural conflict creates sites of tension, resistance, and transformation that create possibilities for us to examine our identity, beliefs, values, and practices. I utilize critical conflict pedagogy to highlight how sites of conflict in preservice teacher education can be utilized as vital sites of learning, teaching, and change.

Others (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Smith & Payne, 2014) have documented that the teacher preparation issues identified in this project are not unique. Teacher education programs struggle to sufficiently prepare teachers to create and sustain practices that reduce the opportunity gap for Students. Therefore, it becomes very important to document current efforts that explore and implement curricular and pedagogical strategies in a preservice teacher program that may better prepare teachers to both teach Students and to support an advocate/activist teacher orientation that is fundamental in addressing the hegemonic discourse and practice in public schooling.

Teacher education programs must provide courses on methods and content knowledge, but they must also provide attention to teachers' own beliefs, perspectives, emotions, bodies, and identities, and the ways they contribute to shaping their practice. (Jenlink, 2014, p. 38)

This project is partial and problematic. Imagining and developing a manageable scope of research for this dissertation has required a narrowing of focus, reduction of scope, and to some extent a disconnection from some relevant and substantial fields of research.

Having explicitly acknowledged these limitations, I may now state the focus of this dissertation without fear that I am implicitly erasing or minimizing other angles of analysis. The research question this dissertation takes up is “How do public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy in anti-oppressive curriculum impact preservice teacher identity?”

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation explores an anti-oppressive curriculum in teacher education, specifically two curricular and pedagogical strategies: public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy. The project is focused on dispelling the illusion of an apolitical teacher identity in a preservice teacher program while supporting advocate/activist teacher identity and practice. This chapter examines the academic literature that provides the theoretical framework for this research (see Figure 2).

The primary subject in this research is the identity of preservice teachers, thus the literature review begins with a review of the theoretical analysis of teacher identity. The preservice teacher identity is explored in the context of an anti-oppressive teacher education course that finds its roots in the multicultural education scholarship and in relationship to public and conflict pedagogy as curricular and pedagogical strategies used in the course. The public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy literature is reviewed in relationship to teacher education.

#### **Teacher Identity**

Teacher education programs frequently focus on the techniques of teaching of subject matter content required for licensure and often do little to prepare preservice teachers for the critical role that teachers play as student advocates and social change agents (Gilpin & Liston, 2014). The operative concept of professional identity for teachers is an apolitical one, where any political commitments are extraneous additions to these core competencies and the very conception of teachers as professionals. My effort in this dissertation to promote political components of teacher work presumes that

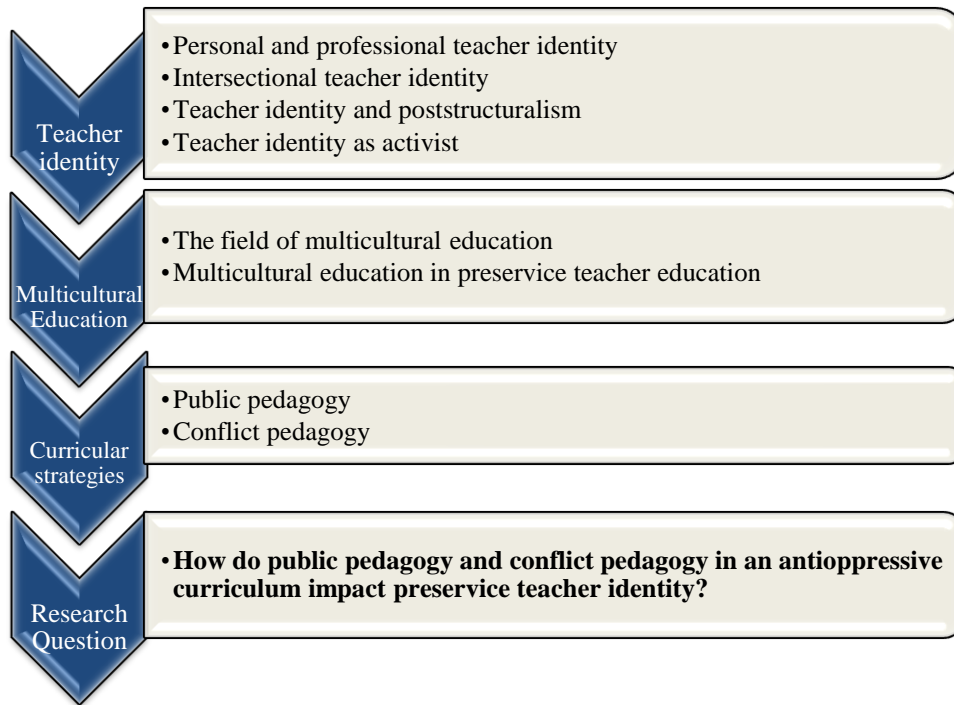


Figure 2. A conceptual map of the literature review.

conceptions of teacher professionalism can be critically examined and recognizes that teacher education programs are one significant context in which teacher professional identity is developed. In this regard, this dissertation is part of a long running debate in the teacher education literature. As Clandinin, Downey, and Huber (2009) wrote:

There are ongoing, frequently highly contested debates about what we are doing in pre-service and continuing teacher education. Some would see teacher education as the education of compassionate caring teachers, others would see teacher education as developing subject matter expertise; others would see teacher education as developing teacher identities; still others would see teacher education as developing transformative intellectuals. (p. 150)

I offer that teacher education is engaged in all of these efforts either explicitly or implicitly, as these endeavors are inseparable in the ongoing development of teachers. Further I argue that we need to shift away from any notion of preservice teacher education as a singular project; rather we need to recognize that educating teachers is a complex political project.

Putting such a view to work in practice is not difficult to imagine as teachers are well situated to be an agents of change just as they are situated to be instruments facilitating the status quo. The difference lies, ultimately, in how teachers see themselves and their work. Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014) wrote that “identity is embedded in culture and culture embedded in identity. Human beings and their social work are inseparable” (p. 36). Who we understand ourselves to be determines how we experience and understand the world.

I have been concerned with how our identities predispose us to see or not see; listen to or not listen to; read or not read; cite or not cite; concern ourselves or not concern ourselves with specific Other peoples, issues, and societal dynamics. (Moya, 2011, p. 79)

Teachers, like their teacher education programs, explicitly or implicitly advance personal and political agendas and therefore must evaluate and reevaluate their own identities and the impact their identities have on curriculum, teaching, and student experiences. “Teacher identity, what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning as self as teacher is critical to teacher education—it is the basis for meaning making and decision making” (Bullough, 1997, p. 21).

Teacher identity has been widely researched and guided by a variety of methods, goals, and definitions. In order to highlight the location of this project within the body of scholarship I am using four overarching research themes: personal and/or professional teacher identity, intersections of teacher identity, teacher identity with a poststructural lens, and teacher identity as activist.

**Personal and/or professional teacher identity scholarship.** The most common approach in this widely varied research on teacher identity has been to examine different aspects of teacher identity, particularly personal teacher identity and professional teacher identity. How do teacher identities develop (Antonek, McCormick, & Donato, 1997; Dillabough, 1999; Goodson and Cole, 1994; Sugrue, 1997; Volkmann & Anderson, 1998)? What are the characteristics of teacher identity (Beijaard, 1995; Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Mitchell, 1997; Siraj-Blatchford, 1993)? How do personal and professional teacher identities impact each other (Alsup, 2006; Anspal, Eisenschmidt, & Lofstrom, 2012; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Kitchen, 2005; Palmer & Christison, 2007)? What are the tensions between teacher identity and context (Coldron & Smith, 1999)? This body of research has informed the discourse about teachers and practices in teacher education programs. Working with and from these ideas of teacher identity, scholars have complicated our thinking about teachers and their identities.

**Intersectional teacher identity scholarship.** Departing from the conceptions of teacher personal and professional identities as separate and complex identities, the research of Clandinin and Connelly (1996, 2000) offers a view of teacher identity that recognizes the intricate and tangled web of influences across personal and professional



identities. Their work utilizes narrative research that highlights how the practices of teaching and teacher identity are constructed as teachers live out and tell their stories. Clandinin and Connelly (1996, 1999, 2003) and other scholars (Alsup, 2003; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Ben-Peretz, Mendelson, & Kron, 2003; Chang & Rosiek, 2003; Korthage & Vasalos, 2005; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Sconiers & Rosiek, 2000) have emphasized the complicated process of becoming a teacher and how the personal and professional identities of teachers develop across time and context and are influenced by each other.

This field of research lays out the multifaceted process one might experience while learning about teaching and what it means to be a teacher. I propose that the scholarship must further highlight the notion of identity. The field of research on intersectional identities (Hames-Garcia, 2011; Moraga, 1983) has much to offer in advancing our knowledge of identity and specifically teacher identity (Jenlink, 2014; Kumashiro, 2004; Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007).

Scholars agree that race, class, gender, ethnicity, nation, age, and sexuality are integral to an individual's position in the social world (Andersen & Collins, 2006; Blige, 2010; Hames-Garcia, 2011). The social world for most of us in the United States includes many years engaged in schooling; in this dissertation I am focusing specifically on preservice teachers as students and on their future students. Research has provided a plethora of data indicating that Students, teachers, and families with marginalized identities are the focus of oppression within their schooling experience. Students and families with multiple marginalized identities live on the margins of the margins (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Sadker, Sadker, & Zittleman, 1994; Sensoy & DiAngelo,

2012; Vaccaro, August, & Kennedy, 2012). These experiences must be considered as we think about teachers and their identities.

Exploring the intersectionality of identities provides the opportunity to examine the varied experiences and perspectives preservice teachers will have as they move through the process of becoming teachers (Anzaldúa, 2002; Hames-Garcia, 2011). I believe this lens can support our efforts to think differently and improve our teacher education practices. I begin with the assumption that preparing teachers and schools to teach children with diverse identities—that is, creating supportive school policies and climate—is absolutely critical. This assumption rests on knowing that we all have race, sexual orientation, ethnic heritage, gender, class status, physical ability, and many more salient identities. Yet, society places dramatically different values on these categories and identifiers in particular cultural, institutional, and historical contexts. Therefore, one of the most pressing issues in the field of education today is how we can think about and construct an educational experience for preservice teachers in higher education and their future students in schools in which all students and teachers with their complex identities can access a quality education and can flourish.

Poststructuralist theory is particularly well suited for this work. Poststructuralism can help identify practices that allow us to problematize taken-for-granted forms of teacher identity and to imagine new possibilities and emphasizes the relationships and dependences among these identities.

**Teacher identity and poststructuralism scholarship.** A poststructuralist lens on teacher identity deconstructs any notion of traditional dichotomies and provides a more complex idea of teacher identity. Poststructuralism is concerned with how identities are

constructed and hidden, proposing that identities need to be denaturalized so we can see the ways they are socially produced and the possibilities for something different.

Identities are discursively constructed realities and are not naturally occurring objects but are historically and culturally contingent arrangements. Teacher identity is not seen as a stable construct but rather as a dynamic process of discourses, experiences, and emotions.

Michalinos Zembylas (2010), speaking of teacher identities, observed that each new configuration of discourse, experience and emotion provides a new context to consider identity.

We are not autonomous creators of ourselves or our social world. We all belong to a network of complex social relations. The relationships determine which identities appear where and in what capacity. Our identities are constructed through sociopolitical arrangements. Identities do not exist outside of these contexts. Our identities are the effect of specific social and cultural logic. (Namaste, 1994, p. 221)

This tradition demands that to understand the terms of identity (language), they must be deconstructed in order to recognize the production of the appearance of a singular (socially accepted) meaning. Therefore, poststructuralism would offer that in addition to identities being discursively constructed, the meaning/definitions of individual identities would not be constant but would change depending on the social context (Zembylas, 2010). “The reconceptualization of identity as an effect, that is as produced or generated, opens up possibilities of ‘agency’ that are insidiously foreclosed by positions that take identity categories as foundational or fixed” (Butler, 1999 p. 187).

This theoretical approach creates more possibilities for how we can think about teacher identity and what a more complicated notion of teacher identity creates in our teacher education programs. This exploration of complex teacher identities can help articulate the “multiple and conflicting dimensions of truth” that teachers must navigate if they are to become agents of change (Gilpin & Liston, 2014, p. 21).

**Teacher identity as activist scholarship.** The dominant norms and definitions of a teacher identity in education and society significantly limit a teacher’s capacity for action (Sirna & Tinning, 2014). Utilizing poststructuralism as a tool to explore teacher identity moves us away from normative conceptions and creates the possibility to consider teacher identity as a descriptive feature of experience (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1971). If our conception of teacher identity lives within experience, then the possibilities for who teachers are, what they can do, and what action they engage in seems ripe with potential.

The potential explored in this dissertation is the possibility of challenging the illusion of an apolitical teacher identity and supporting an activist/advocate teacher identity in efforts to create positive change for Students through teacher practice in the classroom. The research examining teachers as activists is the body of research that informs my research.

Kumashiro (2015) posed the question, “what would it mean to define teachers as activists?” Although he does not privilege any particular type of activism, Kumashiro’s preference is activism that challenges what has become normalized. Montano, Lopez-Torres, Delissovoy, Pacheco, and Stillman (2002) also used the term *teacher activist* to describe teacher activists who are involved in transformative social movements in their

school communities and beyond (p. 287). McLaren and Baltodano (2000) offered that teacher activists are engaged in a political battle to reclaim the public schools, where they engage in dialogue and social action “around the issues of what kind of society we are forming, what kind of schools we want, and what kind of teacher our current struggle for social justice demands” (p. 56).

### **Anti-oppressive Education**

Anti-oppressive education is a broad term that encompasses approaches to education that challenge different forms of oppression. This approach has grown out of the field of multicultural education, therefore I briefly note the deep contributions from the field of multicultural education and then highlight the anti-oppressive framework utilized through the Education as Homophobia course.

The field of multicultural education is both critical and contentious. Trying to define the terms *multiculturalism* or *multicultural education* will draw a multitude of responses (Castagno, 2009). There are many who are suspicious of multicultural education (Banks, 1996), thinking it promotes divisiveness and polarization rather than unity, while others believe that multicultural education reinforces the status quo because it fails to challenge the current social structure that oppresses the poor, people of color, women, and people with different sexual orientations. Yet another perspective is that multiculturalism as an attempt to shift power from one group to another and can further generalize and essentializes identities. Sferi-Younis (1993) captures a deeper purpose of multicultural education in his definition: “The most important purpose of multicultural teaching is to help students develop a new quality of mind, a different way of conceiving reality, a higher order thinking, a multicultural vision” (p. 64).

The efforts to critique and improve curriculum in order for students to achieve this deeper purpose must also address implementation. Nieto, Bode, Kang, and Raible (2008) concurred: “the political and transformative theories of multicultural education have often been neglected when translated into practice. As a result, even though multicultural education has made an important contribution to schools and communities, few long-term institutional changes have taken root” (p.178).

Rosenfelt (1997) definition of multicultural education demonstrates a shift from a more traditional view of multiculturalism to more of an anti-oppressive approach.

Perhaps it is best to think of multiculturalism not so much as an end point or goal but as a

process in which we always try to be mindful of the multiplicity of knowledges; a multiplicity derived from differences among those who do the knowing, differences in where and when and for whom the knowing is done, differences in how the knowing is acquired and conveyed. (Rosenfelt 1997, p. 36)

This definition points to implementation by identifying multicultural education as a process. The definition also captures the complexity and interrelated nature of knowledge, identity, time, context, relationships, power, and systems.

In 1970 Freire offered his term *conscientization*, which captures the idea of developing a critical consciousness and questioning society. Freire’s hope was that we learn to see through the “accepted” truths that lead to acceptance of unfairness and oppression while becoming empowered to vision, define, and work toward a more

humane society. Grant, Elsbree, and Fondrie (2004) and Rosenfelt (1997) have offered two multicultural models that also include Freire's framework of critical consciousness.

Rosenfelt's (1997) emphasis on process and multiplicity, and Freire's (1970) critical consciousness are both central in the field of anti-oppressive education. There are multiple approaches to anti-oppressive education just as there are many theories of oppression and practices to challenge oppression, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. The field of anti-oppressive education draws on these theories creating links between feminist, critical, multicultural, queer, postcolonial, and other movement toward social justice. The field of anti-oppressive education constantly problematizes its own perspectives and practices by seeking new insights. Kevin Kumashiro (2016) provides a framework for anti-oppressive education.

Anti-oppressive education is premised on the notion that many traditional and commonsense ways of engaging in "education" actually contribute to oppression in schools and society. Furthermore, anti-oppressive education is premised on the notion that many commonsense ways of "reforming education" actually mask the oppressions that need to be challenged. What results is a deep commitment to changing how we think about and engage in many aspects of education, from curriculum and pedagogy, to school culture and activities, to institutional structure and policies. Perhaps more importantly, what results is a deep commitment to exploring perspectives on education that do not conform to what has become "common sense" in the field of education. Anti-oppressive education expects to be different, perhaps uncomfortable, and even controversial. (Definition of anti-oppressive education, para.4)

**Anti-oppressive education in preservice teacher education.** There are several anti-oppressive approaches designed for and implemented in higher education such as those suggested by Kumashiro (2002), Gorski (2008), and Castagno (2009).

Kumashiro (2002) introduced four theories and practices of anti-oppressive education: Education for the Other, Education about the Other, Education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and Education that changes students and society. Gorski (2008) presented five approaches to multicultural education: Teaching the Other, Teaching with tolerance and cultural sensitivity, Teaching with multicultural competence, Teaching in sociopolitical context, and Teaching as resistance and counter-hegemonic. Castagno (2009) offered six approaches to multicultural education in higher education: Education for assimilation, Education for amalgamation, Education for pluralism, Education for cross-cultural competence, Education for critical awareness, and Education for social action.

Kumashiro (2002) presented what I believe to be our greatest challenge and opportunity in engagement with anti-oppressive education—that every approach to anti-oppressive education makes some changes possible while closing off others. He stated,

In order to address the multiplicity and situatedness of oppression, and the complexities of teaching and learning, educators also need to make more use of insights from poststructuralism, feminist and queer reading of psychoanalysis, and other theories that remain marginalized or unexplored in the field of educational research. (p. 23)

Kumashiro (2002) reminded us that oppression plays out differently in different situations, which means we must keep exploring and look beyond the methods and



theories we already know. We may not need more knowledge, but we need knowledge that disrupts what we think we know. Whatever framework we utilize, there is always someone missing; therefore, multicultural education must be a means and not an end.

This research is an answer to Kumashiro's (2002) call to explore and look beyond the methods and theories we know, to identify sources of knowledge and experience that are absent from the traditional literature in hopes that we may provide strategies to address implementation concerns. This research focuses on the possibilities of conflict pedagogy and public pedagogy as a potential implementation model for anti-oppressive, education for preservice teachers. My framework is not complete. All frameworks need consistent interrogation. It is not an approach that offers an end but rather an approach that is consistently examining the margins and being rearticulated. The absences and silences within this project are as important as what has been included. A genuine commitment to an inclusive vision and action is both necessary and destined to bring us up against the limitations of our own enculturation, even as we work to exceed them (Rosenfelt, 1997).

I explore a model of multicultural, anti-oppressive, and social justice education and pedagogy that engages intersectionality of approaches and goals. This model attempts to disrupt the normative ideas of where and how teacher education happens and the defined role of the teacher. The approaches and goals are not exclusive, can occur at the same time, and can intersect and create new possibilities. Kumashiro (2002) wrote about a curriculum of partiality:

Given the problems with traditional practices of inclusion, and given the impossibility of fully including all differences and voices, some researchers

have suggested a different way to think about inclusion and curricular change. The emphasis, here, is less on what each voice teaches, and more on what the collection of voices teaches indirectly. (p. 58)

The approach explored here does not create a truer story but a different one.

### **Public Pedagogy**

The multicultural and social justice model offered by Sleeter and Grant (2008) and the anti-oppressive education to change model of Kumashiro (2002) are focused on social action. Social action can take many forms, primarily through community engagement and collaboration. This research offers public pedagogy as the construct to implement and explore social action in anti-oppressive education. Both hooks (2003) and Freire (1970) identified the importance of public pedagogy and visioning the world as a classroom.

Rather than embodying the conventional false assumption that the university setting is not the “real world” and teaching accordingly, the democratic educator breaks through the false construction of the corporate university as set apart from real life and seeks to re-envision schooling as always a part of our real world experience, and our real life. (hooks, 2003, p. 41)

Dewey (1916) believed there was a difference between education and schooling. He said that education should be “the reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience” (p. 76). Schools were just one space where this reconstruction might occur. Multicultural teaching calls for a partnership, a collaborative alliance, between all parties involved and the larger community (Sferi-Younis, 1993). Community

is more than our face-to-face relationships with each other as human beings. In education, the community connects us with the larger world, and great teaching is about knowing, feeling, and sensing that community and then drawing your students into it (Palmer & Christison, 2007). Public pedagogy is where human action meets ideas and practice, and it recenters the language and learning that exist outside the walls of the traditional classroom and provides different possibilities in the larger community.

Public pedagogy is not a settled concept and has been seen as transdisciplinary and highly political (Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010). Public pedagogy is the term Giroux (1994, 1999, 2000, 2004a, 2004b) wrote extensively about to describe the relationship between cultural studies and education, and the concept is used to talk about education that occurs outside of formal schooling systems. Public pedagogy has been given many definitions and meanings by those who have used it in a variety of contexts (Sandlin et al., 2010).

Acknowledging and appreciating this lack of agreement and variety of context, I use this construct because it offers a framework and conceptualization of preservice teacher engagement not available in more familiar and common-sensical constructs of what counts as teaching and learning. It is also critical to simultaneously problematize the use of this construct. Savage (2010) highlighted that we must determine “which public and whose public” we are referring to in public pedagogy. The concept of *public* can be a totalizing construct if we do not emphasize the disparate social realities. “Access to forms of knowledge is no doubt uneven and bound up in complex power relations and a structure, which means young people’s access to pedagogical flows are conditional and contingent upon myriad contextual factors” (Savage, 2010, p. 106).

It is important to recognize the power of spaces and that individuals have different possibilities of access to spaces, places, and engagements. There is no singular public; there are many and distinct publics. Savage (2010) also believes that as his understandings of how educative engagements work for students has increased, his idea of public pedagogy has become more nuanced. Therefore, he believes that public pedagogy needs to be understood and articulated in more specific forms of pedagogy if it is to be useful in research. “Pedagogies are not simply oppressive or emancipator, but rather dynamic, dialectical, political, and bound up with power chaotic ways” (p. 113).

The concept of public pedagogy has been used in the field of adult education where it was seen as a means to improve critical pedagogical practices. Barker (2004) claims this work in adult education marked the beginning of the academic discipline of cultural studies and was done primarily through the use of popular culture. The idea that popular culture has a strong influence on people’s worldviews has continued as a form of public pedagogy within the field of adult education researchers (Guy, 2004; Tisdell, 2008; Wright, 2007a, 2007b). Over time a more critical lens on public pedagogy created a broadening of research to include sites beyond popular culture. Other scholars (Dykstra & Law, 1994; Finger, 1989; Foley, 1999; Holst, 2002; Kilgore, 1999; Sandlin & Walther, 2009) have used public pedagogy as a frame to examine historical and contemporary social movements as sites of critical learning and education (Greene, 1982; Sandlin et al., 2010).

This education project sits within and outside the historical and primary site of preservice teacher preparation. Central to this project is the notion that anti-oppressive education takes place both within and far beyond the classroom. I use public pedagogy in

an attempt to capture the complicated interplay between individuals, space, knowledge, and time outside of the classroom. Public pedagogy is also used to try and capture the explicit multiple directional teaching, learning, unlearning, resistance, and conflict between preservice teachers and their public engagements. “Experience is the ongoing transaction of organism and environment; in other words, both subject and object are constituted in the process” (Haddock-Seigfried, 1996, p. 6).

I offer that public pedagogy is a creative and fluid strategy in preservice teacher education that has the potential to disrupt preservice teacher s’ ideas of Students and move these teachers to a deeper understanding of systemic oppression and the experiences of Students in the public school system. As important, this approach could provide preservice teachers with the knowledge and skills to envision themselves as activist teachers in their school and communities. Nathalia Jaramillo (2010) wrote:

Public pedagogy is designed to draw our attention to relations of power, domination, exploitation, and transgression that take place in the public sphere, of which schools are but one locality. This, however, speaks to the element of critique inherent in public pedagogy; the spaces and spheres that reside outside of the traditional school setting that impact student identities and knowledge production: what they know, how they know, and how knowledge impacts their sense of self and relation to others. (p. 506)

Through course activities (e.g. youth summit and soliciting donations), personal engagements (e.g. wearing pride lanyards), and community events (e.g. BBQueer and Pink Prom), preservice teachers encounter people and situations in the public arena. For example, preservice teachers educate the public about Pink Prom and why LGBTQ

students have a separate prom when they request donations. Through these encounters the public acts as a text that educates preservice teachers about the course topic. In this example of requesting donations, the reciprocal teaching occurs as the public reacts, questions, or explains their experiences, opinions, and beliefs about LGBTQ students and Pink Prom to the preservice teachers. Preservice teachers then call on this learning, unlearning, resistance, or conflict when designing future engagements and actions to educate and advocate for youth and in opposition to homophobia and patriarchy in education. New engagements result in new learning, unlearning, resistance, and conflict, which in turn result in additional redesigns for future public engagements. This is the pedagogical cycle that takes up alternative texts and engagements in this critical pedagogy learning project.

### **Conflict Pedagogy**

In the multicultural literature, conflict either is not addressed or is presumed to be something to be avoided rather than embraced and utilized as opportunity. Conflict is a consistent and significant experience within anti-oppressive contexts and occurs on many levels. Conflict is typically experienced by instructors and students as negative, and a variety of strategies are employed to avoid and eliminate conflict.

More often than not, students are afraid to talk for fear they will alienate teachers and other students. They are usually terrified of disagreeing if they think it will lead to conflict. Even though none of us would ever imagine that we could have a romantic relationship with someone where there is never any conflict, students and sometimes teachers, especially in the diverse classroom, tend to see the presence of conflict as threatening to the continuance of critical

exchange and as an indication that community is not possible where there are differences of thought and opinion. (hooks, 2010, p. 162)

Instructional attempts are utilized to circumvent or minimize animosity, accusation, and retaliation. Less often, instructors may facilitate conversations toward some type of common agreements. These tactics often contradict and compromise key goals being promoted simultaneously, such as having genuine group dialogues, courageous conversations about equity and inclusion issues, and critical analyses of social injustices. Further, the needs/desires of Students to examine personal feelings and the effects of marginalization, voicelessness, and other forms of oppression and to engage in potential recovery and renewal are slighted if not totally ignored. Navigating these tensions while also attending to the complex and comprehensive range of anti-oppressive concerns continues to be a challenging political and pedagogical dilemma for instructors.

Conflict is present whenever we engage in a critical project such as teaching and specifically how to teach Students. The conflicts are not merely arguments about simple needs or interests but are often ideological and political conflicts with histories of racism, ethnicism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and all other forms of systemic oppression. This dissertation explores how conflict pedagogy can be a tool for engaging preservice teachers in their preparation for working with Students. The implementation of conflict pedagogy means intentionally using and creating sites of conflict as critical locations for teaching and learning.

Utilizing conflict pedagogy in practice requires a theoretical framework. How will conflict be defined? How will conflict in general and conflict in schools be taught? As teachers, leaders, facilitators, and trainers, how will we question our own bias,

understanding, and response to conflict? The field of conflict studies is connected to a variety of theories and approaches such as peace studies, democratic or citizenship education, law education, conflict management education, and conflict pedagogy. A brief outline of conflict management education and conflict pedagogy will provide a context of where this research sits in the body of research literature and where I push out the theory of conflict pedagogy to a Nepantla pedagogy (Anzaldúa, 1987) that further complicates the theories of conflict and how it is employed in this project.

In the field of conflict management there has been an emphasis on a conflict positive approach based on the pragmatics of managing and resolving conflict. This approach to conflict management is rooted in social psychology and research on intragroup dynamics, specifically group cohesion and norms. Scholars such as Deutsch (1991), Johnson and Johnson (1987), Fisher and Ury (1983), Tjosvold (1991), and Follett (1995) provide examples of the win-win approach to conflict, which has been the dominant approach. Responses to conflict and strategies for changing conflictual behavior have primarily relied on psychological models of behavior modification, social role modeling, reality therapy, and cognitivism (Fisher, 2000, p. 4).

Giroux (1994) challenged these educational theories generally for their peace and consensus functionalist hegemony. He wrote, “Rather than celebrating objectivity and consensus, teachers must place the notions of critique and conflict at the center of their pedagogical models. Within such a perspective, great possibilities exist for developing an understanding of the role of power” (p. 62). My use of conflict pedagogy in this research aligns more closely with Giroux’s argument, not because I believe that this approach is right or better but rather because it aligns more closely with the goals of this project.



Conflict resolution theories and strategies that aim to calm the climate are often not helpful for bringing social change; it may be the heat or discomfort in the conflict that facilitates change in big social conflicts or “-isms”.

Sociology offers a approach to conflict that is different from that of conflict management education. The interest is focused on developing an understanding of conflict itself and critically evaluating conceptualizations of conflict. Conflict theory is used to explain society in terms of the discordance between social groups. How does conflict start? How does conflict vary? What are the effects of conflict? Since its origin, conflict theory has manifested in many different forms that have been shaped by the times and the thinkers behind them.

Social conflict theory originated and developed in the 19th century. In their 1848 seminal work *The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1969) argued that the history of human society is primarily a history of subversive and open struggle between economic classes. Weber (1958) pushed beyond the claims of Marx and Engels and believed that conflict was not only about the economy but that it was the combination of the economy and state that created conflict.

In the 20th century, due in large part to the work of American sociologist Charles Wright Mills (1916–1962), the focus of conflict theory shifted to disparate arenas such as class, race, and religion to the umbrella notion of power. Where power is located, who uses it, and who does not are thus fundamental to conflict theory. In this way of thinking about things, power is not necessarily bad but is a primary factor that guides society and social relations.

Lewis Coser (1968) wrote about the work of Georg Simmel (1858–1918) and brought it into mainstream sociology. Coser and Simmel both considered conflict to be a natural and necessary part of society and thought about the functional consequences of conflict.

Social conflict may be defined as a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals. ... Intergroup as well as intra-group conflicts are perennial features of social life. (Coser, 1968, p. 232)

Dahrendorf (1959) combined work from Marx and Engels and Weber to offer another understanding of conflict in society. He took Marx's idea of dialectical change and polarized social positions with the notions of power and authority from Weber and proposed that power is the primary feature of societal conflict. Whereas Coser (1968) explored any internal and external conflict, Dahrendorf's (1959) primary interest was internal class conflict.

Collins (1994) argued that symbolic goods and emotional solidarity are the main weapons used in conflict. He believed that "for conflict to become overt, people must become mobilized through the material resources for organizing, and they must be emotionally motivated and sustained, feel moral justification, and be symbolically focused and united" (p. 59). He was concerned that conflict would be seen as an issue between individuals, ignoring the power positions in social conflict. Collins also advocated that we must look deeper for the structural background of inequalities and organizational structures of conflict.

The sociological conflict theory and research (Anzaldúa, 2002; hooks, 1994; Moraga, 1983) operates on a different level of analysis than does the literature of conflict resolution and management. How is conflict knowledge created and articulated and how does it serve some and not others? How is conflict engaged with our identities? I am not concerned about conflict as positive or negative or as a concept or phenomenon; rather, the question of conflict pedagogy is how we can know and truly understand conflict before we begin to consider what, if anything, we can do with it. Living in the intersection of my own identities, my knowledge and understanding of conflict resolution management theory and social conflict theory seem incomplete. These current theories of conflict are primarily situated within a history of a White male context and do not deeply consider a more intersectional and transformative theory of conflict. I utilize the concept of *Nepantla* (Anzaldúa, 1987) to think about conflict not only as a site of tension or disagreement but as transformation that considers who we are, where we are, what we know, what we do not know.

Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) created the concept of *Nepantla* through *autohistoria/teoría*, a scholarly and literacy structure as a way to write and create social theory using autobiography embedded in historical events.

*Nepantla* is the site of transformation. The place where different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures. *Nepantla* is the zone between changes where you struggle to find equilibrium between the outer expression of change and your inner relationship to it. Living between cultures results in “seeing” culture, first

from the perspective of one culture, then from the perspective of another.

Seeing from two or more perspectives simultaneously renders those cultures transparent. (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 548–549)

My goal is utilizing conflict pedagogy in this teacher education course is to “produce social knowledge that is helpful in the struggle for a more equitable world” (Lather, 1986, p. 67) and to intentionally utilize the conflict, which lives between differing perspectives, ideas, beliefs, and identities, as an avenue to deeply explore those differences and possibly produce new perspectives, ideas, beliefs, and identities.

The 3 case studies and cross case analysis (Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8) provide preservice teacher responses to planned and emergent conflict through the course content and activities. Some examples of conflict utilized as curriculum include: Personal conflict when the preservice teachers wore a pride lanyard, conflict through public pedagogy assignments such as soliciting donations and organizing a youth summit. The example of donation requests referenced earlier can produce discomfort, tension, or other forms of conflict if the public reacts to the preservice teacher with disapproval, anger, or even silence. The preservice teacher has the opportunity to utilize their own discomfort, tension, or conflict from that engagement to inform a deeper understanding of their beliefs, values, and assumptions. This active engagement and reflection on conflict can inform future engagements and learning.

The conceptualization of conflict remains problematic within a poststructural deconstructive framework and provides the openness needed for a complex concept and social phenomenon. This construction of conflict supports my efforts to intentionally use and create sites of conflict as critical locations for teaching and learning.

## Summary

This chapter offered a brief review of the scholarship in the field of teacher identity, anti-oppressive education, public pedagogy, and conflict pedagogy. The fields of teacher identity and multicultural education have large bodies of research that provide a foundation this study. However, there are gaps in the multicultural education literature regarding specific strategies for implementing an anti-oppressive curriculum. The teacher identity scholarship shows a similar gap between theory and practice. The literature is lacking scholarship that explores specific strategies to support the development of an advocate/activist teacher identity and practice. This dissertation, with its focus on how teacher identities may be impacted and/or changed through intentional curricular strategies, can speak to the gap in implementation literature. This work attempts to build a bridge between theory and practice in preservice teacher education.

Public pedagogy has a recent and quickly growing body of literature. It is an unresolved and transdisciplinary concept that has been used to describe the education that happens outside the traditional school setting. I believe that my research fits well and adds to this body of scholarship.

Conflict pedagogy, like teacher identity and multicultural education, has a history of scholarship. The conceptualization of conflict in this study is a more intersectional and transformative theory than offered in other research. Engaging transformational conflict from the perspective of women of color (Anzaldúa, 2002; hooks, 1994) offers a new perspective in conflict scholarship to be considered and examined further.

The body of literature provides the theoretical location for this dissertation. I examine how public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy in an anti-oppressive curriculum impact preservice teacher identity.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODS

In this research I use three theoretical frameworks to inform the design and analysis of this study on teacher identity—poststructuralism, feminist pragmatism, and queer theory (see Figure 3). These theories provide a conceptual vocabulary for critically examining anti-oppressive teacher education curricula. Specifically, this work looks at the way public and conflict pedagogy can be used to achieve anti-oppressive curricular ends through the potential impact on preservice teacher identity.

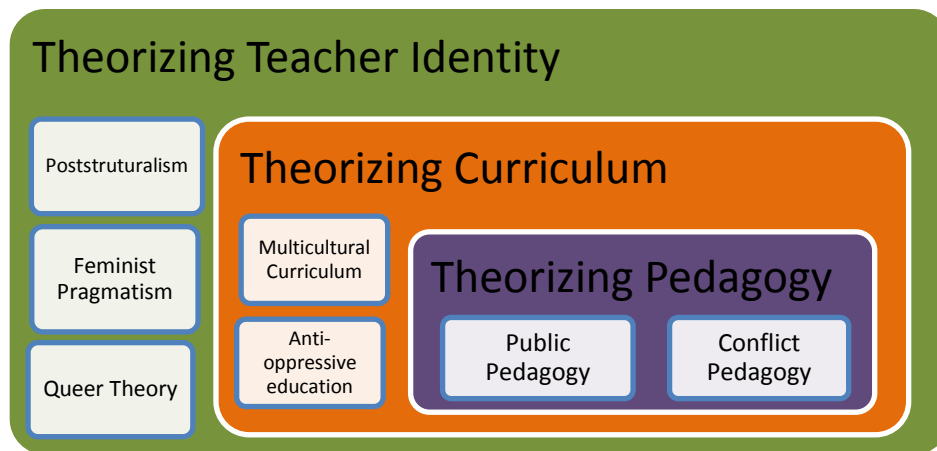


Figure 3. Theoretical framework.

#### Teacher Identity

**Poststructuralism.** This study is built on a rejection of essentialist conceptions of teacher and student identity. Poststructuralism presupposes that the categories of identity are discursive constructions and that any idea of truth we hold about identity is a transitional, fluid, social, and cultural construct. There can be no claims made about the objects of this study that pretend to rise above the influence of historically and culturally situated discourses. Knowledge claims, in a poststructuralist study, are always therefore

situated in the historically and culturally discursive context that makes them possible (Butler, 1990). Knowledge is distinguished from opinion and belief by the degree to which claims provide both supporting evidence and a reflexive transparency about their discursive foundations.

Poststructuralism is organized around two basic assumptions. First, human thought, culture, and knowledge operate like language—we edit, emphasize, and to some degree create the nature of objects through selective emphases. Second, language has an arbitrary relationship to the objects to which it refers.

These two assumptions create a framework for multiple discourses and discursively constructed realities to point out how our present conceptions of reality, human nature, knowledge, and social ideals are not naturally occurring objects but are historically and culturally contingent arrangements. Poststructuralism does not support the idea of defined and embedded norms or their creation of binary oppositions such as gender, sexuality, or race. Poststructuralism rejects the idea that a social hierarchy contains dominant relationships that have any essential quality within them. Instead, it exposes the relationship of dependence between them. The tradition demands that to understand these terms (language) they must be deconstructed to reveal the production of the appearance of a singular (socially accepted) meaning. In fact, one of the significant aspects of poststructuralism is the power to resist and work against accepted “truths.”

The arbitrary relationship between language and the object to which it refers means that no language is innocent and all language must be critically examined. What are the assumptions behind what is said and what is the importance of what is not said? Poststructuralism is a study of how norms are produced, including norms regarding what



counts as knowledge. This tradition recognizes that even through its own attempts to study the underlying structures of knowledge it becomes prone to a plethora of misinterpretations and biases. The study of any object requires a study of not only the object itself but also the structures and systems in place to produce the object. Further, poststructuralism is interested in where change occurs to examine the borders and limits, accepting that knowledge can change as structures and systems change.

In this project, poststructuralism offers a framework to critically explore the discourse utilized by preservice teachers regarding their identity and experiences of learning. Poststructuralism forces the project to deconstruct the narratives offered, resisting and working against accepted truths and oppositions, while creating options for multiple perspectives. Poststructuralism also requires the project to move beyond language and to examine the structures and systems surrounding the experiences of learning and teaching offered to preservice teachers.

**Feminist pragmatism.** The critical feature of experience in this dissertation finds its theoretical roots in feminist pragmatism. It ties the research to the importance of the relationship between theory and praxis that also considers the intersections of identity. What do we make of our experiences? Pragmatism offers that what we know, or define as knowing, comes from experience. Haddock-Seigfried (1996) identified the tensions between lived experience and theoretical appropriations that challenge and enrich each other as opposed to tensions that distort or unfairly deny the validity of the other—knowing and experience are in constant relationship with each other.

This pragmatist analysis can help determine the crucial difference between “merely acknowledging other perspectives and coming to terms with the consequences of

such recognition” (Haddock-Siegfried, 1996, p. 10). This confrontation of a particular perspective opens the possibility for preservice teachers to have new insights into experiences of Students. Feminist pragmatism would propose in this research that when a preservice teacher is able to see and value the perspective of a Student, the teacher is presented with their own perspective from a different lens. This new view could offer possibilities for both teacher and Student. “Knowledge is instrumental, not in the sense of merely linking means to predetermined ends, but in the sense of a tool used, along with other tools, for organizing experience satisfactorily” (Haddock-Seigfried, 1996, p. 7).

**Queer theory.** Finally, this project engages queer theory to further its exploration of teacher identity in relation to Students and education curriculum. Queer theory seeks to destabilize identity politics in pursuit of eliminating normative understanding of human nature and is an approach of resistance that is suspicious of what becomes normalized—such as teacher identity and multicultural curriculum. This theory emphasizes multiple identities and multiplicity in general while exploring heteronormative structures. Queer methodologies also support this project as it questions how to gather data from fluid unstable (perpetually becoming) subjects. It requires utilizing anti-normative frames throughout this project when considering preservice teachers, teacher education, multicultural curriculum, pedagogical strategies, data collection, and data analysis.

Two examples of anti-normative frames in this research are the use of pronouns and initials in the analysis section. I intentionally use a variety of pronouns for students to disrupt the reader’s assumptions of gender and to symbolize the idea of fluid and unstable subjects. I also use initials to identify preservice teachers rather than names to disrupt the process of gendering each preservice teacher and their narrative. “Queer approaches are

deeply engaged in questioning the existence and ‘knowability’ of the social, particularly in various social normative claims” (Browne & Nash, 2010, p. 14).

These ontological and epistemic assumptions have methodological implications that need to be conceptually explained as they have been operationalized in this study. Reflexivity functions as a methodological regulative ideal in poststructuralist sociological research, much like procedural objectivity operates as a regulative ideal in postpositivist research. Just as perfect objectivity is not practically possible, neither is perfect reflexivity possible. A researcher cannot perfectly locate her inquiry process and knowledge claims within all the social and historical conditions that make the inquiry and claims possible. Methodological decisions, therefore, are aimed at creating the best approximations to this ideal.

There is a logical progression in the research process whereby a researcher, in taking up an ontologically theoretical position on the “social” then takes up a set of epistemologies that drive the choices regarding methodologies and methods. Nevertheless, ontological, epistemological, methodological and methods related considerations necessarily intersect, overlap and are engaged in mutual and contingent constitution. (Browne & Nash, 2010, p. 9)

**Summary.** Poststructuralism, feminist pragmatism and queer theory provide a conceptual vocabulary and framework for critically examining how teacher identity may be impacted through curricular strategies in anti-oppressive curriculum. These constructs identify the assumptions that guide this work and direct me to examine and question preservice teacher discourse, looking for multiple perspectives and always considering the structures and systems that impact the lives of preservice teachers.

Ontologically, I considered the lived realities of preservice teachers as storied experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Rosiek & Atkinson, 2007). I used those stories to analyze the identity discourse of these teachers as they experienced the “Education as Homophobia” course. Epistemologically, I engaged in this study not to determine one fixed truth but to explore and begin a conversation about the curriculum, pedagogy, and preservice teacher experience.

### **Methodologies**

This project draws on case study methodology to consider the impacts of public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy in the construction of preservice teacher identity and practice. There is no common definition of case study research. Yin (1994) offered the most detailed definition, which is often referenced by other case study scholars (George & Bennett, 2005; Gerring, 2007; Merriam, 1998) and will be used for the purpose of this project.

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (Yin, 1994, p. 13)

The choice to focus on qualitative case studies was made precisely because it enables a researcher to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon, in this case, public and conflict pedagogy. “The distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena ... case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 1994, p. 3).

A case study method allows a complex examination of how the intersections of preservice teacher identities are experienced through public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy throughout the equal opportunity courses over a 4-year time frame. I utilize observations, interviews, student writing, and materials to explore the multiple, fluid, and often simultaneous ways that individuals respond to these specific curricular and pedagogical strategies. How do these strategies engage with preservice teacher identities and the ways these teachers identify and disidentify with other groups, and how do particular identities become salient at specific moments?

Case study methods can offer examination of complex social phenomena and the ability to observe, document, and assess complex causal relationships. This method can demonstrate that many factors contribute to an event or phenomenon (George & Bennett, 2005; McTavish & Loether, 2002; Merriam, 1998).

The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers’ experiences. (Merriam, 1998, p. 41)

A case study project allows the researcher to get close to subjects through observation in natural settings and provides opportunities for personal involvement by the researcher. Having access to participants can help provide insight and meaning that people give to the reality around them (McTavish & Loether, 2002) and can reveal the engagement of personalities on the issues and context (Merriam, 1998). “We try hard to understand how the actors, the people being studied, see things” (Stake, 1995, p. 12). Case study research can expose the fluid characteristics of people as they engage within particular contexts and settings. The unit of analysis in the case study will be engagements, those moments when the preservice teacher and pedagogical strategies of public and conflict pedagogy are at play together. These engagements are moments of connection and meaning making.

### **Participants and Research Setting**

The participants in this project were undergraduate students participating in a preservice education course: “Equal Opportunity—Education as Homophobia.” This course is offered spring term of each year, and this study includes preservice data from 2011 to 2015. The participants self-select this course from a menu of five anti-oppression/equal opportunity courses offered in the education department. To complete the undergraduate education program, all students must take two of the five equal opportunity courses.

The course demographics (see Table 1) identified the percentage of preservice teachers from this course that, at the time of this writing, are in a licensing program or hold a licensed teaching position. The data indicate that although the Education as

Homophobia course is a non-licensure undergraduate course, a significant percentage of the students from the course move into licensure programs and into teaching positions.

The research settings include the classroom during the scheduled class times, community settings related to public activities such as a hotel location for a high school dance, a local brewery for a fundraising event, middle schools and high schools for student meetings, and various classrooms on campus for meetings, interviews, and preparing for events.

Table 1

*Course Demographics*

Year	<i>n</i>	Program			Teacher	
		EDF	Graduate	CTED	<i>n</i>	%
2011	16	10	4	1	12	75
2012	13	11	1	1	9	69
2013	32	26	4	2	20	62
2014	26	23	3	0	20	76
2015	29	25	2	2	13	44
Total	116	95	14	6	74	63

*Note:* EDF = Education Foundation undergraduate program; Graduate = master’s and doctoral students; CTED = master’s degree in Curriculum and Teacher Education.

**Data and Data Collection Process**

**Interviews.** Data for this research include one-on-one interviews with preservice teachers, written reflections assigned during the course, artifacts created for the course, and community events.

In April 2011 an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted to conduct interviews for this research (see Appendix B). The interviews were approved, and the Human Subjects protocol was exempt because the IRB determined that the written reflections and artifacts were part of an approved course.

The recruitment process included my verbal announcement to all students enrolled and participating in the course during one of the scheduled class times. Students were given my contact information, e-mail, and phone number to contact me if they were interested in participating. All students who chose to participate were interviewed. No student who volunteered was excluded.

Consent forms were given to each participant prior to the beginning of each interview (see Appendix B). After the consent form was given to each participant, I went over the entire consent form verbally with each participant. I also reminded the participants that they could decline and stop the interview at any time.

Students who volunteered to participate in the interview project were asked to participate in at least one face-to-face interview and would have the opportunity to participate in a second interview if they chose. Each interview was planned for approximately 45 min but was as short as 30 min and as long as 60 min. The time of each interview fluctuated depending on the time the student had available for the interview. The method of data recording was a hand-held tape recorder. When a student was not comfortable with the tape recorder, I offered to record through written notes. I was responsible for transcribing the recordings or written notes and removing any identifiable information. The interviews took place at a designated time and location that was identified by the student and was convenient for the student.

Audio tapes were used for interviews unless the participant objected, in which case written notes were used. Once the interview was completed, the audio tape or written notes were transcribed, and all identifying information was removed. No actual names were used in this dissertation; all participants were given pseudonyms. All audio



tapes and written notes were kept locked in a file cabinet until the transcription was complete. When the transcription was completed, the tapes were destroyed and the written notes were shredded. The interviews were conducted during 2011, 2012, and 2013 while my role in the course was as a participant observer/researcher. The instructor did not have access to the interview information until all identifying information from participants had been removed. The data were provided to the instructor in a summarized report form after the course had been completed and grades had been posted. At no time was any identifying information shared with the instructor.

During 2014 and 2015 my role shifted to include more teaching in the course, so I did not conduct interviews during the last 2 years to maintain separation between the interview process and instructor role.

**Weekly reading reflections and field journals.** Students in the courses were assigned weekly reading reflections, which provided regular opportunities to write about their understanding of the weekly reading, to comment on whether and/or how the readings connected their personal or professional experiences, and to propose questions for class discussions.

Students were also assigned weekly field journals. This writing assignment was an avenue for students to write about any topic, conversation, event, etc. outside the classroom but related to the course. The instructor provided a writing prompt each week and students could utilize the writing prompt or choose their own topic. Throughout the 3 case studies (Chapters 5, 6, and 7) if the preservice teachers are responding to a specific prompt, the prompt is noted.

Both of these writing assignments were either posted electronically or turned in as a paper copy. All of the writing assignments are utilized as data with identifying information removed.

**Materials and artifacts.** Students were placed in work groups that had assignments for several community events. The groups produced a variety of materials such as signs, posters, games, and images that I utilized as data, and some images are included in Appendix A. The students also created some individual artifacts for the course and many of those artifacts have been collected through photographs to utilize as data.

**Observation.** Throughout the years of this course, my role has changed. During the first 3 years my engagement was primarily as nonparticipant observer and participant observer, whereas during the last 2 years I was teaching sections of the course. As a nonparticipant observer I was visibly present in the classroom and during activities but was not speaking or participating in the activities or discussions. As a participant observer I was visibly present within the course context and was speaking or participating in the activities or discussions.

The data collected were used to create individual case studies as well as a broader analysis that examines multiple student narratives and perspectives. The data, in addition to my observations, support a deeper analysis of how students experienced the course and what impacts, if any, the curricular strategies produced.

### **Techniques for Analyzing, Interpreting, and Processing Data**

The data for this research were collected from preservice teachers. Their experiences, ideas, and feelings are captured through their voices, writings, and

curriculum materials. My intent was to explore each student's unique experiences in the course and to offer in this research a macro narrative of student experiences over 5 years of the course.

The process for analyzing, interpreting, and processing data accessed poststructural and queer theory, which requires attention to the historical and culturally discursive context in which the experiences were created and analyzed. Simultaneously it was necessary to remember that the participants and the construct of their identities, as well as my own, are fluid, unstable, and perpetually becoming—thus resisting any notion of certainty. The analysis and interpretation of the data are particular, located, and situated, which highlights the fact that there is no singular way to interpret these preservice teacher experiences.

There are many ways to document the discourses that shape both individual experience and patterns of engagement. For the purposes of this study, I organized data collection and analysis in an effort to identify moments, events, or actions experienced by preservice teachers that make visible or explicit the engagements with public and conflict pedagogical strategies. Specifically, these moments, events, or actions were analyzed through teacher interviews and writings for the insight they could provide into how public and conflict pedagogy functions in the development of teacher identity.

A qualitative process of data analysis was initiated by coding each paragraph of the student interview, reading response, and field journal by topic. In reading the interviews and writings, the coding process illuminated the ways in which preservice teachers described their experiences, ideas, questions, and concerns throughout the course. Data were analyzed through a process of coding and comparison, and themes

were identified as they related to the research question. The recurring themes were organized into broader categories of identity, public pedagogy, and conflict.

The role of the researcher in selecting what themes to highlight over others was constantly examined and justified as a part of a larger normative project. Also, the themes identified were not essentialized as natural features of preservice teacher identities but were regarded as the product of a larger macro-social discursive process that provided teachers with the language that in part constitutes their identity (Brown & Nash, 2010). It is, in fact, this language and the discourses of which it is a part that is the ultimate unit of analysis for this study. The case studies of individual teachers experiences are the lens through which I am attempting to examine those identities. The stories are told with preservice teachers revealing their identities through their writings rather than by me offering that information up front.

Specific student narratives and quotes across the 2011–2015 courses were selected to illustrate the identified themes and illuminate the multiple ways in which preservice teachers perceived their experience and identities. The 3 case studies selected were chosen because each case represented the themes that emerged across 5 years of student data. Other case studies also represented some of the core themes and could have been utilized but they did not provide the representation of student identities that were significant across the 5 years.

**Summary.** The research data were produced by preservice teachers as they shared their experiences, ideas, and feelings through interviews, writing, and curriculum materials. I viewed the data from students as stories that emerged through the context of their histories and sociocultural positions as they interacted with written and public text. I

examined each student's stories over the 2011–2015 courses and sought to identify consistent themes to create a macro-narrative of how preservice teachers articulated their identities through the course.

There are many methods to document the discourses that shape both individual preservice teacher experience and patterns of engagement across the courses. For the purposes of this study, I analyzed the preservice teacher stories in an effort to identify moments, events, or actions experienced by the students that make visible or explicit the engagements with public and conflict pedagogical strategies and how those strategies function in the development of teacher identity.

The process of choosing and not choosing which student narratives to highlight was challenging, particularly within a project that aims to recenter marginalized identities. My goal, however challenging, was not to represent each student voice but to present narratives representative of the overall themes prevalent across the students in five cohorts. The analysis, therefore, situates students' experiences in their biographies but is not primarily intended to be a commentary on their specific biography. Instead, the data have been parsed in a manner that seeks to highlight how student biographical narratives are generally activated and transformed by the encounter with public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy. The general patterns of interaction are represented through multiple narratives and experiences rather than any single or unified experience. The analysis proceeded through references to both similarities of experience and the uniqueness of experience. The narratives I have included give emphasis to preservice teacher identity and the possibilities of supporting an advocate/activist identity.

## **Limitations of Proposed Methods**

The proposed methods can be identified as strengths and limitations simultaneously. The data and analysis in this research is not designed to offer a definitive ending or prescription for supporting the development of activist teachers in efforts to improve outcomes for Students, rather it is designed to create openings and possibilities for addressing a complex issue. This approach may be perceived as a limitation to those who look for research to provide clear conclusions and endings.

My role as the researcher could also be viewed as a limitation if objectivity were held as a goal in research. Poststructuralist feminist research denies the possibility of any purely objective observation; it demands intentional subjectivity from the researcher (McLaren, 2002). According to these theories, I can never unify my fragmented identity, nor can I fully determine which part of me is informing my interpretation of a given experience. Additionally, poststructuralist theories highlight how processes of knowledge production are never fully transparent and, through the process of representation, offer power to some at a cost to others. As such, every act of research representation needs to be simultaneously subjected to methodological, ethical, and ideological scrutiny. Given the contemporary developments in the philosophy of science and social science (Collins, 1999; Derrida & Ewald, 1995; Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1998; Lather, 2001) these three approaches cannot be considered in isolation.

## CHAPTER IV

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

#### **History**

In 2009, doctoral student Julia Heffernan was asked to design curriculum and instruction for a new Education Foundations senior seminar entitled “Equality of Opportunity: Education as Homophobia.” The Equality of Opportunity seminar series was established as a feature of a new Education Foundations undergraduate degree program.

This new undergraduate degree program featuring the Equality of Opportunity seminar series was brought about as the result of a series of systemic pressures on the teacher education program at this university. The final catalyst for the program redesign and subsequent Equality of Opportunity seminar series was a sustained period of student and community protests in 2005 that were directed at the College of Education and the teacher education program specifically. At that time members of the local school districts as well local politicians, community activists and university students pressured the College of Education to redesign teacher education in order to prepare teachers to work with culturally diverse students. Following this period of unrest the faculty in the Department of Education Studies, lead by Dr. Jerry Rosiek, developed a new undergraduate program of study with critical and sociocultural theories of education at the center. A signature of this new degree was the senior seminar series through which students would be required to select two oppressive ideologies to explore in depth.

The theory behind the development of this seminar series was twofold. The faculty wanted to provide students with an Education Studies degree that allowed for both choice and sustained advanced culture studies in establishing the program’s

multicultural academic requirement. Students seeking a degree within this program would be allowed to select a total of two advanced seminar courses from six different oppressive discourses in relation to public education: homophobia, patriarchy, racism, poverty, colonization and genocide, and ecological exploitation. The ability to select the specific oppressive discourse provided students the choice to address intellectual resistance to a mandatory multicultural requirement. The deeper dive into a specific oppressive cultural discourse would allow for more extensive study than a contemporary multicultural education survey program allows for in an introductory survey of a multitude of identity discourses and identities. And finally, extensive studies of two discourses would provide the opportunity for students to analyze how systems of social inequality and oppression are structured and reproduced across difference.

### **Naming Heteronormativity in Teacher Education**

The development of an Education Studies course curriculum with a focus on heteronormativity in 2009 was unprecedented. At that time the literature associated with gender identity and sexual orientation issues in schools fell strictly into the realm of educational psychology with a focus on deviance and pathology. To the extent that preservice education programs were addressing this issue at all, the literature was one that reproduced LGBTQ youth as isolated and autonomous abnormal beings within schools. However, there was no literature available on schools themselves and education systems as heteronormative spaces actively reproducing the gender identity and sexual orientation silences and violence that were statistically being counted off on the bodies of these children.



Heffernan was selected to develop this curriculum because her own groundbreaking research on schools as spaces of pervasive silence and violence toward gender creative and sexual orientation minority youth aligned with the curricular objectives of the course (Heffernan, 2010). To address the lack of a fundamental curriculum for the course she began designing the course with a field component that would produce textual material for the students. There was in fact a pragmatic need for public engagement to produce a text that could both highlight and engage in a communitywide dialogue on education as homophobia to provide students in the course relevant materials on the topic.

### **Naming an Activist Teacher Identity in Teacher Education**

A central question in theorizing a new curriculum design for an equal opportunity course was how to develop an activist teaching praxis that could help future teachers experience groups who are Othered as individual humans. The Equality of Opportunity seminar series was intended to shift from a celebratory multicultural teacher education identifying difference to one that also traced the normalizing production of difference. The curriculum would need to expose the role of the teacher in this heteronormative reproduction in order to expose these preservice students with agency to disrupt this pervasive violence. Students would need to consider an activist agency and how they would develop their own pluralistic curriculum seeking to sustain difference rather than violently assimilating children into a dominant cultural model.

### **Naming and Sustaining Crisis as Curriculum**

In considering how to expose future teachers to the violent oppression enacted upon queer youth, the materials would also have to address the undercurrent of despair, if

not disbelief, that sympathetic preservice teachers frequently registered in face of the magnitude of inequitable structures and practices within our society. To shift the conversation from one of individual pathology to one of systemic oppression would require a disruption of common sense thinking about the causes of violence toward queer youth. Kumashiro's (2004) theory of social justice calls this learning through "crisis," where he defines the crisis as the educational space in which when "we learn that our ways of making sense of the world are not only inaccurate, but also complicit with different forms of oppression, feelings of discomfort can intensify" (p. 30). The homophobia course would need to address the crisis in order to move past denial and despair to arrive at some form of pragmatic educational activism. This type of change would require a different discourse with students. Therefore, the theoretical framework for the course would come from a pairing of Kumashiro's (2004) four alternative discourses to challenge oppression and the elements of an Out-sider praxis offered by Birden (2005). By 2012, I had begun co-teaching the course with Heffernan, and we expanded the framework by queering the field experience through public pedagogy (Greene, 1982; Sandlin et al., 2010) and then using conflict pedagogy as the fourth leg of the curriculum framework (Abraham, 2014; Anzaldúa, 2002).

### **A Curriculum of Anti-oppression Teacher Activism**

Kumashiro (2004) proposed that discourses preparing teachers to challenge oppression could move beyond teachers as practitioners, researchers, and professionals. Although these more traditional discourses have a place in teacher education, historically they have not centered teacher education to challenge oppression. Kumashiro noted that "no practice is always anti-oppressive" (p. 3), but as this course and curriculum

highlights, there is a responsibility for teacher education programs to “explore the anti-oppressive changes made possible by alternative discourses on teaching” (p. 3). The alternative discourses provided by Kumashiro (2004) and utilized for this curriculum include preparing teachers for crisis, uncertainty, healing, and ultimately activism.

- Crisis refers to the “emotional discomfort and disorientation that calls on students to make some change” (Kumashiro, 2004, p. 30). Not all crises in learning will lead preservice teachers to an anti-oppressive stance, but the types of crisis students experience and opportunities to move through the crisis are critical.
- Uncertainty is to be expected as a teacher. As teachers we never know what students are going to learn. “The ways that students have already learned to make sense of and feel about themselves and their world influences what and how they learn the things taught at school” (Kumashiro, 2004, p. 39).
- A healing discourse within teacher education provides an avenue to address what knowledge we become attached to and the meaning we make of this knowledge. “People suffer because they attribute meaning and substance and value to knowledge, signs, and representations of reality rather than to reality itself” (Kumashiro, 2004, p. 47). A discourse on healing asks us to trouble and complicate knowledge and our relationship to knowledge, teaching, and learning.
- An activism discourse examines the process of changing what has been normalized. “How do we become uncomfortable and dissatisfied by the norms of society?” (Kumashiro, 2004, p. 53). Activism requires engaging outside what is traditional and comfortable and continually asking how our practices contribute to oppression.

## **A Curriculum of Outsider Praxis**

In theorizing the curricular goals for this course there was a hope that through the curriculum, the students would see the role of teacher as one of a pragmatic educational activist. The curriculum would require what Birden (2005) calls the educational praxis of the Out-sider, in which the teacher is called to identify with the Out LGBTQ Student and make “an educational commitment to generous dialogue across difference and to the abatement of heterosexism and anti-lesbian and gay prejudice, representing a retreat from compulsory heterosexuality” (p. 25).

The question remained how to design a curriculum that might offer an outsider experience or identity to preservice teachers who did not identify as LGBTQ. There needed to be a means to carry students beyond a sympathetic experience of injustice toward the Other. A curriculum design was needed through which students could potentially experience the oppression of heteronormativity within a school context so we could return to the learning space to discuss, debrief, and strategize future moments of oppression.

The outreach curriculum was initially theorized as a series of community education projects. Students in the course were to invite and engage the larger community into a conversation about LGBTQ issues in public education. This conversation would culminate in a community forum called a TeachOUT.

## **Queering Field Experience and the Curriculum of Public Pedagogy**

Relying upon the predictable homophobia in society to offer students the necessary living text on heteronormativity in schools in relation to gender identity and sexual orientation, the preservice education students were required to engage in multiple

field projects outside of the traditional classroom setting. Assignments specifically required them to engage in and reflect upon this *outside* text. In addition, the students were asked to focus their learning about gender and sexual orientation on the *outsiders* in the classroom, LGBTQ youth. Students were then ultimately asked to engage in a series of public projects in which they would “OUT” themselves as educators who identified as LGBTQ youth advocates. All three layers of educator *outing* disrupted both the students and the local community’s traditional conceptions of teacher education and of teaching.

In 1965 prodemocracy and antiwar academics and educators staged teach-ins to address critical social issues through teaching and learning. These teach-ins were held in public spaces and offered as seminars and community discussions to break the silence on social justice topics. At teach-ins information was shared with the general public in an effort to educate toward social change. In reflecting upon this social justice education model Heffernan decided to call the newly emerging queer field experience curriculum and pedagogy model for Education as Homophobia a TeachOUT.

The theory in 2009 was that this project would simultaneously teach out into public spaces as the students engaged in conversation and in action in the community, and the public would teach the students about heteronormativity and homophobia through words, actions, observations, and silences. As ongoing curricular activities, the students in the course were encouraged to move into the public sphere to observe, inquire, engage, and share all that they were learning in the course about the effects of gender and sexual orientation inequality on schooling and on youth.

2010 was the first year UOTeachOUT, which hosted an annual forum on gender identity and sexual orientation issues in education. A small class of preservice education

students as well as myself as a doctoral participant observer all worked together through the course to create a forum of public panels and a film screening series in that first year. As a new doctoral student in the department I joined this course as a participant observer in this first year of curriculum design and instruction.

The events of the 2010 course were well received by K-12 educators and the community at large. As an emerging scholar with an interest in the field of queer curriculum studies I was intrigued by observations I made of student identity development through the course reflection assignments and conversations I had with the students.

### **Development and Incorporation of Conflict Pedagogy into the Curriculum**

Following the first year of this course I began a pilot study during year 2 on student experiences with the course to explore deeper into their experience with the curriculum, class engagements, and their identity development. For the pilot study I conducted one-on-one interviews with most of the students in the classroom, and I interviewed several students twice. After analyzing the data from these interviews, conflict was a significant theme in the student experiences. With my own background and interest in conflict and conflict resolution, I proposed and implemented a conflict pedagogy curriculum to be paired with the public pedagogy activities.

The goal of public pedagogy in this course was to create spaces of learning inside and outside the traditional classroom. Public pedagogy is where human action meets ideas and practice and it also re-centers the language and learning that exist outside the walls of the traditional classroom and provides different possibilities in the larger community. Public pedagogy is utilized to re-imagine how to approach teacher education

that supports critical knowledge and skills in a meaningful context with clear social and political goals to disrupt dominant educational paradigms.

The goal of conflict pedagogy in this course was to develop a curriculum of dissonance and disruption. To intentionally utilize conflict that exists between differing perspectives, ideas, beliefs and identities, to deeply explore how those differences may produce new perspectives, ideas, beliefs, and identities.

Ultimately, the goal of the Education as Homophobia course, and the use of conflict and public pedagogy, is to encourage and support the development of advocate/activist teachers in order to improve the academic and social experiences of Students.

### **Equal Opportunity: Education as Homophobia Curricular Goals**

Eight curricular goals were established based on Kumashiro's (2004) four alternative discourses.

#### **Crisis.**

1. Establish a shared knowledge base on power, privilege, and oppression in relation to education.
2. Establish a historical and contemporary understanding of the social implications of heteronormativity.
3. Examine the myriad experiences of oppression resulting from educational heteronormativity.

#### **Uncertainty.**

4. Identify and highlight the hidden lessons and encourage students to critically examine how they make meaning of these lessons.

**Healing.**

5. Encourage students to examine current issues of homophobia in their schools, families, and social networks, consider how they make meaning of these experiences, and then consider and plan how they might implement change.
6. Address the first crisis of social justice education through pragmatic exercises in interrupting heteronormativity.

**Activism.**

7. Orchestrate opportunities for heteronormative experiences outside the classroom, offering preservice teachers the opportunity to experience and identify with the Out-sider.
8. Address the experience of Out-sider status within a pedagogy of social justice education by offering pragmatic exercises for counter hegemonic teaching from within an oppressive system.

**Course Content**

The course on homophobia made use of materials that could represent a diverse range of queer identities and experiences in relation to a series of themes within the framework of child development, schooling, and family experiences. While traditional sociological materials, statistics, and reports were used to frame the larger patterns of inequality, the vast majority of curriculum materials were individual narratives, personal experiences of queer people within the educational context. Both the macro-analytic materials and the micro-level narratives were organized to highlight the themes for this course.



These themes were organized to build student knowledge of homophobia in a way that would offer time for learning discomforting facts about structural inequality across society in general and specifically within schools systems (see Table 2). In reflecting upon Kumashiro’s (2004) notion of the crisis, uncertainty, healing, and activism and Birden’s (2005) Out-sider praxis, the themes for this curriculum were designed to offer a progressive knowledge basis about structural and violent inequality of heteronormativity interspersed with narratives of hope, stories of possibility, and media examples of new outcomes that can be seen as working to establish more equitable classrooms and communities.

Table 2

*Organizing Themes*

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Understanding discourse theory: Words matter
Homophobia in relation to heteronormativity
Gender identity in relation to biologic sex
Sexual orientation
Queer student experiences
Children of queer parent experiences
Queer parent experiences
Queer teacher experiences
Schools as sites for structural homophobia
Sports and embodiment and homophobia
Intersectional oppression: Race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity
Intersectional oppression: Religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity
Homophobia and interpersonal violence
Heteronormativity and institutional silence
Queer positive curriculum presently in school

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The specific instructional content for the course has been dramatically revised each year with the emergence of this field in both academic and popular media. In 2009 when the course was first being designed there was a cottage industry of queer productions available to share the stories of queer lives. Mainstream media, authors, and narratives were few and far between. The same can be said about the teacher education and other scholarly texts available in 2009.

Tables 3 and 4 offer the media and textual content from the 2010 course. Each ensuing year the readings and the media studies materials have been revised to keep pace with the ever evolving social construction of gender identity and sexual orientation in our society and in our public education system.

Table 3

*Media and Content*

Media format	Content title	Course themes
Short documentary films	<i>I'm Not a Boy</i> Media Matters	Gender identity and heteronormativity
	<i>Homecoming</i> Media Matters	School as a primary site for homophobia
	<i>All God's Children, De Colores, Straight from the Heart</i> Unlearning Homophobia Series	Intersection of race, religion and heteronormativity
Autobiographical audio files	<i>Beat It</i> This American Life	Sports and homophobia
	<i>I Like Guys</i> This American Life	School as a primary site for homophobia
	<i>Tom Girls</i> This American Life	Gender identity and heteronormativity
Full-length documentary films	<i>Training Rules</i>	Sports and homophobia
	<i>It's Still Elementary</i>	Curriculum to interrupt heteronormativity
	<i>Out in the Silence</i>	School as a primary site for homophobia
	<i>Raising Cain</i> PBS	School as a primary site for heteronormativity

Full-length educational films	<i>It's Elementary</i>	Curriculum to interrupt heteronormativity
	<i>That's a Family</i>	Curriculum to interrupt heteronormativity
	<i>Straightlaced: How Gender's Got Us All Tied Up</i>	Curriculum to interrupt heteronormativity
Video clips from MSM (main stream media)	<i>The F Word</i> Southpark Episode 12, Season 13	Discourse theory language and Othering
	<i>What Would You Do?</i> ABC (May 19, 2010), gay family refused restaurant service	Heteronormativity and social violence, "bullying"
	<i>Bullycide</i> In the Life	Heteronormativity and school violence, "bullying"
Poetry slam video clips	<i>To All the Beautiful Femmes</i> by Ivan Coyote	Gender identity and heteronormativity
	<i>Slip of the Tongue</i> Media Matters	Intersection of race with heteronormativity
Biographical/ autobiographical text	<i>Unleashing the Unpopular</i>	Voices of the Other
	<i>Queer 13: Lesbian and Gay Writers Recall Seventh Grade</i>	Voices of the Other
	<i>One Teacher in Ten</i>	Voices of the Other
	<i>I Was Afraid He Would Label Me Gay If I Stood Up for Gays: The Experience of Lesbian and Gay Elementary Education Credential Candidates at a Rural State University</i>	Voices of the Other
Role play activities	<i>Confessions of a Closeted Queer Teacher</i> Public reading	Giving voice and embodying the Other
	Theatre of the Oppressed	Interrupting heteronormativity
	Classroom simulations	Interrupting heteronormativity

### **Developing TeachOUT as Public and Conflict Pedagogy**

The UOTeachOUT field projects are the series of public and conflict pedagogy events established each year to provide students with public engagements to learn about the social text of homophobia in education. UOTeachOUT was created for the course and has been a central text on homophobia for the course since 2010. The yearly

Table 4

*2014 TeachOUT Public Pedagogy Scaffold Assignments*

Student public pedagogy focus	Assignment	Public co-participants
Publically marked as queer	Daily wearing of a gay pride nametag lanyard	Campus
	Sitting in public spaces with books with visibly queer topics	Campus
Entering queer youth spaces	Guest at a local high school gay-straight alliance meeting	20 youth
	Join same high school gay-straight alliance as university partner	20 youth
Engaging in queer education dialogues	Publically solicit a donation for a fundraiser for queer youth	Businesses
	Join school district planning committee for an alternative prom	40 educators
	Design materials and activities for a series of advocacy events	Open audience
Engaging in queer youth advocacy	Host the TeachOUT citywide fundraiser: BBQueer	200 guests
	Host a high school assembly: “Beyond Bullying: Anti-Oppression”	500 students
	Host university public event: “An Evening with Ivan Coyote”	300 students
Engaging in queer youth education	Co-host regional LGBTQ inclusive high school prom	200 students
	Host TeachOUT–GSA Youth Leadership Summit	220 students
Engaging in teacher education regarding heteronormativity	Host Northwest National Women’s Studies Association Conference	300 educators

UOTeachOUT public pedagogy projects are a series of educational events designed to address different audiences. Therefore, the public pedagogy experiences involve working with all of the following communities (see Table 5).

Each year students in the teacher education course EDST 455: Homophobia in Education develop a series of anti-bullying, safe school educational events for

UOTeachOUT. All of the students in this teacher education class are involved in educational projects for six local school districts. Various education materials are used as resources (see Table 6).

Table 5

*UOTeachOUT Stakeholders*

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LGBTQ youth in Grades 6–12

General population of youth in Grades 6–12

Current K-12 public school educators

Preservice teachers and student teachers

Higher education administration and scholars

General public

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Table 6

*Macro-social Texts for Education and Homophobia*

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Johnson, A. G. (2001). *Privilege, power, and difference*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield

Killoran, I., & Jiménez, K. P. (2007). *“Unleashing the unpopular”*: Talking about sexual orientation and gender diversity in education. Washington, DC: Association for Childhood Education International.

Kumashiro, K. (2002). *Troubling education: Queer activism and anti-oppressive pedagogy*. New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.

Lipkin, A. (2004). *Beyond Diversity Day: A Q&A on gay and lesbian issues in schools*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Pascoe, C. J. (2005). Dude, you’re a fag: Adolescent masculinity and the fag discourse. *Sexualities*, 8(3), 329–346.

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The core events for UOTeachOUT are organized by students in public pedagogy teams. Each team of five students is responsible for the educational framework and

coordination of one of the events (see Table 7). Along with leading the work for a single event, all of the students are required to attend all of the events as participants. Finally the students are required to present two culminating reports about the experience: a team presentation based on the work of their public pedagogy team and a personal position paper based on their personal philosophy of teaching and teacher activism at the end of the course.

Table 7

*UOTeachOUT Annual Events*

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Community fundraising: Donation requests

Community fundraiser and community building event: BBQueer

Youth Leadership Summit

Regional high school LGBT inclusive prom: Pink Prom

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**Youth leadership summit.** The UOTeachOUT Youth Leadership Summit is a preservice teacher education project in partnership with four local school districts. For the past 4 years, Education Studies students in the UOTeachOUT course Education as Homophobia have hosted a youth leadership summit for students and advisers of Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) student organizations and social justice clubs at all four local school districts. The youth leadership summit focuses on offering these students leadership training, enrichment activities, access to role models, and an opportunity to network across the school districts. Beginning in the first week of April, preservice teachers from the course begin weekly visits to the high school GSA clubs across eight high schools in four school districts, leading up to the Youth Summit in May. The preservice students in the course are also involved in holding a large fundraising event to

financially support the local Pink Prom. This work is done in close collaboration with administrators, teachers, counselors, and GSA advisors across all four school districts. We have been building relationships with school district staff over the last 4 years, and the TeachOUT has become a well-respected and well-supported event for students. In May 2015 the Youth Summit hosted 240 middle and high school students along with 40 advisors, counselors, and teachers. This event also provides a leadership workshop for the adults that attend with the students. In 2015, Welcoming Schools provided these resources.

Each year a new focus is set by the UOTeachOUT committee and then students and community partners develop and implement the seminar series.

- **UOTeachOUT 2010.** A series of four film screenings and panels offered for the university community as well as the larger community. The films highlighted LGBTQ issues in high school and college.
- **UOTeachOUT 2011.** A focus on supporting LGBTQ teachers, faculty, and staff in education settings. In the second year, TeachOUT added a leadership summit that included faculty and administrators from secondary and higher education as well as representation from advocacy organizations.
- **UOTeachOUT 2012.** The theme was LGBTQ families within education settings. In this third year, along with the leadership summit students from the university worked directly with minority high school youth in collaboration with local school districts.

- **UOTeachOUT 2013.** A focus on intersections of oppression in education settings. A leadership summit, evening workshops, and school district collaborations with university students and high school students.
- **UOTeachOUT 2014.** The class partnered with the university Women’s Center and hosted the UOTeachOUT 2014 as the National Women’s Studies Association’s Northwest regional conference. Gender identity and access to education was the central topic.
- **UOTeachOUT 2015.** “Ally is a Verb!” In 2015 the class hosted and participated in seven outreach events. The culminating educational activity was a youth summit with 240 LGBTQ youth and allies from the four local school districts. The culminating enrichment activity was an LGBTQ inclusive “Pink Prom” for as many or more regional high school youth.



## CHAPTER V

### JORDAN

This chapter introduces Jordan, a preservice teacher in the 2013 Education as Homophobia course. Jordan was a nontraditional student who identified as a White heterosexual man. This narrative is not a composite of students but the experiences of one student. Although the story is one voice, it is representative of other students who participated in the course. Jordan's reflections demonstrate unlearning and learning that is historical and personal. His story taps occasionally into his teacher identity, yet he frequently notes teaching as his future identity. Jordan's narrative speaks to the experience of other primarily White men who had never considered the experiences and impacts of heteronormativity and homophobia on their identity development until moving through this course.

On the first day of class in spring 2013, Jordan sat in the back of the classroom and did not speak in the larger group or in small group discussions with peers. I was aware of his silence, not as a problem but rather as an observation in the process of getting to know students and paying attention to their engagement or lack of engagement with content and pedagogy. Jordan had his arms folded across his chest for most of class while turned to the side, away from the table. His expression seemed serious with a furrowed brow and a consistent gaze on instructors and peers. I found myself trying to interpret Jordan's experience on this first day. I did not know whether he was uncomfortable, angry, engaged, disinterested, or something else entirely.

Jordan considered himself an outsider, in that his views on the gay community were different from those of the people around him. He would not claim to be an ally,

yet he emphasized his connection and commitment to gay friends and military colleagues.

### **Week 1 Field Journal: I Am Not An Ally**

The instructor prompt for the field journal was, “What are your initial thoughts, feelings, or concerns about taking this course?”

*I am really aware that this class will be very hard for me. My point of view on the gay community is different than almost anyone I have talked to. I guess I would not be considered an ally to the gay community, but at the same time I'm not an enemy. A person who is gay has a sexual preference for someone of the same sex and that act (sex) is something that I don't agree with. I have done a lot of self-reflection on this dislike and I consider it the same level of dislike for a person who smokes. I guess I should say that I have several close gay friends (even one who hit on me once). I absolutely love them as people and support them on several issues and when I served in the military I would lay down my life for them.*

Jordan separated the act of sex from the person, which seems similar to the articulation of some Christian churches to “hate the sin and not the sinner.” Jordan’s primary definition for someone who identifies as gay is the act of sex. This is a narrow overgeneralization and does not signal an awareness of the complexities of those who hold gay identities. Jordan’s definition of gay with a focus on sex was not articulated or reinforced in the course.

Rather than exploring one’s sexual behavior, the course deconstructs the categories of gender identity, gender expression, sexual attraction, and biological sex to

disrupt stereotypes and consider a more complicated and fluid framework of those socially constructed identities. Further, the course utilized a micro and macro approach for course content. Individual stories and voices of youth that identify as LGBTQ are offered not as an end but as a beginning to explore family, community, school, state, and national policy and laws to deconstruct the complicated systems of oppression in the U.S. education system and the impacts on children, families, and communities.

Jordon made a link between sex and education while using his personal experiences in school as a homeless youth as an analogy for teaching about sex. He did not believe that teachers can have an understanding of student experiences even when they are educated on the topic.

Jordon's first journal continued:

*I had this conversation with my friend who is in a gay marriage (he lives in England) when he asked me to go to a gay parade in London. When I told him I would not go to the gay pride parade he asked why I was not a gay ally. Well, I explained that I don't have pride for a sexual act that I disagree with, and it is not my business what others or I do in the bedroom.*

*I am a teacher and a coach and have taught kids and adults of all ages and my idea of the curriculum is similar to the Senator Stay Campfield don't say gay bill. I would like to make the don't say gay bill into a don't talk about sex bill. Teachers are not prepared to teach about sex no matter how many classes they take on the subject. When I was young I was homeless and had to go to school. I had teachers try and tell me they know what I was going through and they had no idea. As a person who was homeless I can't tell a*

*student that I know how or what they are going through if they are homeless. This is how I see teaching about sex. Even if you are “straight” or “gay” you can’t tell a student what is right and wrong or even explain the emotions that go along with sex.*

Jordan’s writing on week 1 about the experiences his son had in school and his own gender expression and being labeled gay situate him close to the core themes of the course, though he could not have known this so early in the term.

*I have a son who is seven years old and has already been told he is a “fag” and “gay” at school. This is because he is not a typical “male”. He loves dolls, my little pony and other signs like clothing and he shows his emotions. If my son later in life has sex with another male and is gay I have no problem with that. I will think that the act is wrong but I will support him 100%. The problem I have is teachers are already labeling him as “gay” and have had conversations with us about his differences. Let my son just like what he likes and stop tracking and labeling. My whole life I was considered gay by almost everyone I knew. My first degree was in perfumery and fashion design and people said I had a “gay lisp”, all my friends were girls. I shopped with them and would be their protectors in clubs. I find it almost funny now that most of my friends were shocked that I was not gay when I had a girlfriend and got married. You see I slept in the same bed and talked for hours with these girls not having sex so they assume I was gay.*

*I guess my attitude is: “so what if you are gay”! Saying that I’m sure looks bad and many people would think I’m bigoted, but I truly don’t care*

*about your sex life. So what I don't like when straight couples show public displays of affection does not mean I hate straight people? I hate smoking, but that simple act does not make me hate smokers.*

Jordon's personal experience seems to have honed his understanding of how boys are supposed to perform gender at school and fueled his frustration with teachers and others labeling particular male gender expression as gay. His school experiences and the desire for his son to be authentic at school underscores the oppressive homophobic discourse and practice in schools and the critical need for this topic in preservice teacher programs.

Jordan's lack of support for gay marriage reinforced his declaration of not being a gay ally.

*I also voted against gay marriage because I think the concept of "gay marriage" is ridiculous in so much as I think traditional marriage is. I think the government should not be in the marriage business at all.... Why not create a new legal document that allows any consenting adult to have a contract with another consenting adult that allows for the same 1100 benefits that the current marriage license garnishes? A mother and daughter could then get into a contract together and have rights if they adopted or bought a house together or wanted to see medical information if either gets hurt. Leave the concept of "marriage" to families and religious groups.*

His writing also offered a political perspective that recognized privileges attached to marriage and a consideration of the roles, responsibilities, and relationships between church and state, and the reference to a mother and daughter relationship provided a more

nanced idea of how the benefits or lack of benefits attached to marriage impact relationships. I interpreted these statements as evidence that Jordan had been considering these issues prior to this course.

The first public pedagogy assignment in the course invited students to begin wearing a rainbow-colored lanyard throughout their day and to be attentive to their own responses, public responses, and engagements with the public. Jordan's writing identified several points of conflict for him during this first week in the course, and he performed resistance in his refusal to wear the rainbow lanyard.

*What I'm trying to explain is that I will not wear my gay pride lanyard for the fact that I don't have pride in people who have gay sex. I have pride in gay people who have many other values I like and I don't like people trying to be defined by their sex life. Who you are attracted to also has no value to me as a friend or teacher are we really worried about that level of "education"? You don't need to teach me who I'm attracted to, I know, you don't need to teach me what I should think is right and wrong when it comes to courtship my brain knows already.*

Jordan's first writing sample offered an insight into some of the experiences and beliefs he brought into this course. Through his and his son's school experiences, Jordan has captured one of the many ways that gender oppression is engaged by teachers and schools. Although he does not seem to understand the content or purpose of the course, he has already located himself in relation to many of the issues the course takes up.

In week 2 of the course, Jordan submitted a response to the assigned readings. He did not appreciate the readings and was trying to find himself in the text.

## **Week 2 Reading Reflection: My Identity Development**

*The second chapter goes through the stages of homosexual identity development. I wish they would have considered the stages of development for heterosexual people. I would find it more interesting to see the differences in both heterosexual and homosexual identity development because as a heterosexual male I can see all three of the stages in my life as well.*

Jordan recognized himself in the homosexual identity development model, which seems to peak his curiosity. His desire to explore different models of development could provide more clarity regarding his own development. I believe Jordan was hoping that if his life were reflected in the homosexual identity development model, there would be more similarities in a heterosexual development model. Through his experiences and identity, Jordan continued to find his own way into the course material.

By week 3 in the course, Jordan's writing seemed to have shifted from a strong positionality of not being an ally and not seeing a need for this topic in education to a stance of curiosity and questioning of both personal and community behaviors.

## **Week 2 Field Journal: A Developing Awareness**

*I made two field observations this week that I feel I need to share. My senses are heightened because I am in this class I noticed two issues of discrimination. The first one happened when observing a coaching session by another coach and one of the male soccer players called the other players a "wuss". I thought to myself how if I was coaching and heard that what I would say and I don't really know other than saying "don't say that." The second observation came at my first co-ed practice with my u10 teams and*

*before the boys came over the girls on my team was an “ex” of one of the boys (10 years old—scary). Anyway, the comment happened about half way through our scrimmage when one of my girls said that the boy has to get by her girlfriend first. The boy responded “ewww lesbian”. I was put back by that comment and I wish I was experienced enough to figure out how to comment in a way that would help the situation several thoughts went through my mind “what if she really is a lesbian?” I can’t say don’t say that ... I also thought that adding ewww to the comment was what made it bad and I should have said something about that, unfortunately the time to intervene left. At that end of practice I said that we each need to respect each other and that I heard a few negative comments that need to stop.*

Jordan noted his heightened awareness through two different sports engagements. The first engagement was his observation of a soccer coach and the player’s language, and the second was his own coaching and player language. In both scenarios he observed negative gendered and sexualized language as problematic. He demonstrated a new awareness, and in his own scenario he was willing to try and address the player’s behavior with a general reminder of respect for each other. Jordan identified his lack of experience in responding to the behavior but wanted to have better skills to respond. This meta-awareness is critical in his ability to review, reevaluate, and make decisions about his experiences and respond to those experiences.

Jordan’s graphic description of how he was harassed and assaulted in school frames his response to the statistics in the course reading—he was not surprised. He sees himself separate from the LGBT statistics because he identifies as heterosexual, although



the harassment and violence he experienced was due to his perceived sexual orientation and gender expression.

### **Week 3 Reading Response: Intersecting Oppressions**

*I did not find the GLSEN [2009] results shocking at all. What I find interesting is that this survey was completed with just LGBT students. This information would be much more powerful if it showed all students. What this report is missing is how many students who consider themselves straight get bullied, beat up and killed. The report's conclusion is: "The results of the 2007 National School Climate survey show that schools can be unsafe learning environments for LGBT students. Hearing biased or derogatory language at school, especially homophobic and sexist remarks, was a common occurrence." The problem is I can change that LGBT word to any minority or class of person and the information also rings true.*

*When I went to school as a straight student who was homeless I was called gay and a fag, I was also beat up for not having nice clothing and told I was smelly. I was peed on in the locker room by other students after PE class. I was kicked in the butt hard by kids while they yelled how I like it because I was gay. I was also tea bagged several times at recess and people wrote on my homework comments like fag and gay. Almost every day called a "wuss."*

*When I told teachers they did not care or just set it aside as boys will be boys.*

Jordan's desire to see statistics for heterosexual youth supports his desire, as a heterosexual, to be separate from the LGBT statistics. He is not yet able to understand that although he identifies as heterosexual, his experiences of being perceived as gay

means that he too is a part of the LGBT statistics, that homophobia in schools impacts all students, not just those who identify as LGBT. The poverty and homelessness Jordan experienced was clearly significant and painful. These experiences have also been the lens Jordan has used to narrate the harassment he experienced. The course offered another lens for Jordan to examine those experiences, not to negate or let go of his narrative but to provide additional theories and perspectives. This course offered an opportunity to build a more complex understanding of the intersectionality of socially constructed identities and how systemic oppression operates on and across those intersections.

Jordan's writing over 3 weeks indicated he had many teachers who did not interrupt the harassment and violence directed toward him or support him when it occurred. Yet, he is surprised by statistics regarding teacher language and behavior.

*The Harsh Realities report is a carbon copy of the GLSEN report and again only focuses on one "group". The only thing that I found shocking is the amount of teachers that said sexist comments or negative comments about gender. Teachers should know better!*

The course was providing him with information to emphasize the prevalence of harassment and violence towards LGBT youth and youth perceived to be LGBT, as well as how homophobia in schools is perpetuated and supported by teachers. Unfortunately, Jordan's experiences were not unique. His experiences, and those of his son, are reflected in national statistics.

In his first journal entry Jordan claimed he did not understand why a class on homophobia is necessary or why we would talk about "sex" in schools, but he did believe

that teachers should have the awareness, knowledge and skills to support students. Over time, he had the opportunity to reconcile his desire for teachers to have the skills to support LGBT students in schools and the importance of a teacher education course that examines the systemic homophobia in schools.

Jordan's writing would indicate that teachers, regardless of their sexual orientation, should never share with students their sexual orientation. He links his standard to other aspects of teacher identity, such as religion.

*In chapter 4, it asks when is a good time for teachers to come out? I would say it is never appropriate to talk about your after school activities. I had teachers who got in trouble for saying they went to a church. I don't think straight teachers or gay teacher should ever discuss their gender preference.*

It seems he is trying to demonstrate that his beliefs are consistent and not specifically biased toward gay teachers. His writing presumes the only way teachers share their sexual orientation with their students is to explicitly share it verbally. This perspective does not consider the myriad of ways that teachers, especially heterosexual teachers, share their personal lives with students that are not explicit but part of the hidden curriculum. In our schools there is an assumption of heterosexuality unless explicitly identified otherwise. Therefore, there is no need for teachers who identify as heterosexual to "come out" or share their sexual preference; their identity is always privileged.

His writing, as in previous journals, missed the complexity of LGBT identities and their lives. It assumes that when a teacher comes out to their students it refers to only sex. Jordan's stance does not consider the importance of LGBT teachers as critical assets

in schools that improve school climate and create safer schools for all students. The presence of LGBT teachers also provides role models for LGBT students and the possible lives available to them (Kosciw et al., 2014).

Although Jordan was missing the complexity of LGBT identities, he recognized those who are identified as homophobic as more than simple stereotypes. He knows that he does not fit the stereotype of homophobia.

### **Week 3 Field Journal: Insider and Outsider**

The instructor prompt for the field journal was, “What are your initial thoughts, feelings, or concerns about soliciting donations?”

*What I dislike is when people who are “homophobic” are listed as closed minded, bullies, racists, right-wing, and cruel. I consider myself homophobic because gay scares me in the part that I can’t understand, the thoughts that a gay person has. I don’t hate gay people. I don’t understand them and that is scary and makes conversations hard but conversations I’m willing to have.*

Jordan’s writing notes many conflicts with his identities. He identified as heterosexual but recognized that he has lived with homophobic harassment and violence. He identified as homophobic but sees himself as open and scared rather than hateful or cruel.

Jordan was having an insider-outsider experience. He was a member of the course and wanted to get donations for the Pink Prom and support the larger project with his peers. He is also part of a different community culture, a community that he suspects will not support the Prom or LGBT youth—or him if he claims to be an ally.

*What my worry is when I go and ask for donations for the pink prom is that some people (and businesses) will not be willing to provide items for a “gay prom” and I can see kids in the class complaining and being anti-business and say a lot of negative things about that company. I don’t think people realize how hard it is for some people to support LGBT groups and not get alienated from their current groups. Some of us have been associated with our current culture groups for our whole lives and we can’t throw all that away.*

As Jordan wrestled with his own conflicting identities, he was simultaneously grappling with his community relationships.

*If I was to support the LGBT group openly with my scouting group and they said I was gay and could no longer be part of the scouting group that would be very hard for me and my family. I AM AWARE that the position the scouting group is taking is wrong and discriminatory but making a choice between the two groups, scouting have given more to me over my life then the LGBT community and I have to make that choice.*

He did not recognize how his experience resembled that of some who identify as LGBT; LGBT individuals also painfully hide their identities in an effort to stay in relationships with their families and communities. Jordan has a growing understanding that he could be an ally but that it could create a loss, and he is willing to hide his identity to stay in his relationship with his scouting community.

#### **Week 4 Reading Response: Building Bridges**

*I enjoyed reading chapter 5 because it had information on GSA’s that were not around when I went to school in the early 90’s. I really like the idea of*

*GSA because the name is good and it allow for everyone to be involved gay or straight. I feel a lot of LGBT groups are not designed to welcome straight people. As a teacher I would find it hard to be involved in a GSA until I got more training in working with at risk youth. I also would have to make a concerted effort to change my image to the groups that are “anti-gay” and that for me would be a hard change because it may alienate me from my family, groups, and coworkers.*

Jordan began to share possibilities for change as he contemplated what it would take for him to be involved in a GSA.

*While I was reading about the GSA’s I decided that next soccer season I’m going to add rules for homophobic slurs used at practices. I feel that in the past I would be more lenient to words like gay, pussy, and wuss because I would focus on trying to reduce “bad words”. Looking at this reading I can at least do my part to be allied in the sense that I will reduce the bullying but not to have to come out and say I support gay students.*

The previous week when he wrote about his involvement in scouting and supporting LGBT youth, he said he must make a choice between the two. This week’s writing explored what it would take for him to be involved in a GSA and stay in his relationships with his family and community.

His decision to change rules in his soccer practice allowed him to take action to address bullying without risking his relationships. His concern about his relationships with family and community is a consistent tension in his writing. Jordan’s school

experiences of harassment and violence have informed both his fear of being seen as an ally to the LGBT community and his desire to address homophobic bullying.

Jordan's language shifted regarding teachers sharing their identities. Previously he had written, "I don't think teachers should ever discuss their gender preference," and this week he is empathizing with teachers who identify as gay.

*As a male coach who coaches males in high school I thought about how a rumor of being gay could seriously open the doors to false accusations. I have coached girls' soccer for 12 years and as a male I found it important to think about not being alone with a player and I realize I need to be careful with males as well. I can start to see how hard it would be for a gay teacher to come out to students.*

He considered when and how a teacher would share her or his identity and the potential challenges. Jordan indicated that this consideration came out of a fear of rumors or accusations toward the teacher and did not consider the potential benefits to the teacher, students, parents, and staff when a teacher who identifies as LGBT can be out in the school. It also did not consider other gender identities or expressions teachers may claim. Jordan's reflections have been primarily self-focused as he wrestled with his own identity and experience through the lens of this course. This journal entry offered a subtle acknowledgment of the experiences of LGBT teachers.

Unlike most of the preservice teachers in the course, Jordan had experience asking businesses for donations for a variety of programs and thus could compare and contrast his experience asking for donations for the Pink Prom.

## **Week 6 Field Journal, BBQueer: Learning from Student Voices**

*I collect money and items for fundraisers all the time. I have five businesses that I know the owners of and can always count on them for donations from soccer to scouting. It seems that when I went to get donations for the pink prom auction I was not able to get any of them to donate. Now reflecting on this I don't know if my heart was in it as much as the causes I collect for with other groups or that this is common homophobic actions.*

The Pink Prom donation request process was quite different from his previous experiences, and Jordan did not try to make simple excuses for himself or the business he approached. His process of awareness and learning combined with his past experience had him questioning his own behavior and the impacts of homophobia in the business community.

One of the public pedagogy options offered to students in the course was an opportunity to shadow a student who identifies as LGBT. Jordan chose this option and reflected on his experience in his field journal.

*I had the opportunity to shadow a student last week who is a lesbian and I was her coach when she came out to the whole team her freshman year. I have a ton of respect for her and she goes to all the school functions with her girlfriends. I also know her parents really well and I asked them some questions about how they handled the news and what they do differently. I followed her into all her classes and I told her it was for this class and she was excited to have me shadow her.*



*This student is a senior and is a two sport all-state player and she has a ton of friends and I am sure she is not a typical LGBT student, but I have access to her and family to ask questions. I learned so much that a single field observation journal could be an entire book.*

Shadowing this student was a significant engagement for Jordan for several reasons. Jordan knew the student's parents, which provided both a foundational relationship and access to ask questions about the parent/child relationship. This was also a student that Jordan respected due to her athleticism and popularity. After highlighting how much he respects her and how outstanding she is, he is also certain that she is not a "typical" LGBT student. Although Jordan had been working hard to examine his beliefs regarding those who identify as LGBT, this comment reveals that his imagination of who LGBT students are is limited. It is not clear from his writing what he believes about students who identify as LGBT, other than there is a "typical" LGBT student. He had not developed an imagining or experience of LGBT students that captured the diversity and complexity of their identities. LGBT students are still the "other." The student he respects so much must be unique or separate from other LGBT students. He did not share what he learned in this journal, but his experience shadowing the student turned out to be a significant catalyst in his learning, which he described later in the term.

The readings and engagements in the course continued to lead Jordan through his earlier painful experiences and allowed him to re-narrate these experiences with new understandings of how homophobia is systemically employed and supported in our culture.

## **Week 6 Reading Response: Re-narrating Identity**

*I remember that in 4H camp that I went to I was called gay every day and some of it was because I had zero interest in girls and all the cabin “sex talk”. The sad thing about my camp experience is that I did not know how much it hurt me at the time and affected my behavior in the future. I learned about almost all of my sex talk at camp and brought that information back to my town and back to camp the year after so I could “prove” I was not gay because I talked about girls, positions and “bases”. I also blame this behavior as the reason I lost my virginity so early in life to “prove” I was not gay. Looking back at it, wow it’s amazing how disrespectful I was to girls because it was what I thought was correct and the norm.*

Jordan had no access to this information when he was younger, which meant his negative experiences were interpreted by Jordan as him being the problem. I had joined a small group conversation in class when Jordan shared that he had always believed the negative experiences he had in school were because of who he was. He believed there must have been something wrong with him to be regularly harassed and violated. He had begun to re-live his earlier experiences with a new understanding of the layers of homophobia that were being enacted by teachers, peers, the school system, and the larger community.

This opportunity to re-story a school experience was not unique to Jordan. There have been so many students over the last 6 years in this course that have re-storied their years in K-12 schools and could recognize not only homophobia but racism, sexism, and other systems of oppression. Of course not all of the students had experienced the type of

harassment and violence Jordan experienced, but most students knew someone whether a sibling, a cousin, or a friend, that shared a story similar to Jordan's.

In the following writing there is evidence that the course materials and experiences have provided Jordan terminology and definitions to explore new possibilities around his own identity in addition to those who identify other than cis-gendered and heterosexual.

*I wonder what the word "queer" means? Is that bad that as a college student I don't really understand the word? "The range of what queer includes varies. In addition to referring to LGBT-identifying people, it can also encompass pansexual, pomosexual, intersexual, genderqueer, asexual and auto sexual people, and even gender normative heterosexuals whose sexual orientations or activities place them outside the heterosexual-defined mainstream." I find this very interesting and wonder if a person who is heterosexual but acts more like their partner gender you would by definition be queer? Like say a female who wears the pants and the male who listens well and is more sensitive.*

In the beginning of the term, Jordan used the term gay to mean sexual activity. Now we see Jordan exploring the word queer and the varied identities that are frequently placed under this umbrella term. He also questioned his own lack of knowledge and curiosity of his own identity within a new framework of terminology and definitions.

At the beginning of the course Jordan wrote about his friends who identified as gay, the conversations he had with gay friends, and his strong feelings of not being an ally. He had also written several times about the bullying and assaults he experienced

because he was perceived as gay. Even with Jordan's many experiences, he called attention to his lack of experience talking about LGBT issues.

### **Week 8 Reading Response: Acknowledging the Possibility of Change**

*I found the conversation with Angie the most insightful in the reading. The section on the issues in the classroom because she felt it was a little close to home I believe can relate to anyone who talks about this subject. "it was a hard thing for me to do because it was a little bit too close to home." I find this interesting because I find the topic of LGBT to be hard to talk about because I don't have experience with it (this class is changing that). When I talk about poverty I can talk about it because I was homeless for awhile.*

His lived experience of poverty felt more relevant to him than his lived LGBT experiences. He continued to hold his experience of being perceived as gay separate from the experiences of others who are perceived as LGBT and those who identify as LGBT. Although he can talk about issues of poverty with ownership, he minimized his experience of LGBT issues. His current framing of identities as separate from each other also misses the complex intersectionality of his identities.

Jordan summed up his experience in the course by sharing a quote that signified a beginning and possibility of growth.

*If I wanted to sum up my entire experience in this class I think Angie has the perfect response. "I don't know if you can, in one year, change a person's lifetime of thinking. But I think you can plant a seed in a year. I don't think it's enough time for a person to unravel that stuff. There are people who had a head start because they have had to unravel those things in their lives. I don't*

*think that you can expect in one year that those people will necessarily be where some people were when they got in. They're going to leave with something."*

He recognized this course as part of something that is unfinished. Jordan began this course from a place of closure, with statements such as "I am not an ally" and "I am homophobic." He wrote with confidence about who he was and what he believed. This journal is written with curiosity about what he thinks and believes, such as wondering whether businesses were exhibiting homophobia or what the word queer means. The following field journal also demonstrated that he has begun to approach LGBT youth with more openness and curiosity.

The preservice teachers in the course were asked to choose a high school GSA group they would visit several times during the term to spend time with LGBT identifying youth and listen to student ideas about the upcoming youth leadership summit and Pink Prom. These GSA visits were designed to keep LGBT students at the center of teacher learning.

### **Week 8 Field Journal: Experiencing Normalization**

*Children always amaze me on how open they can be. While sitting next to the high school GSA group and listening to the kids talk about their lives and some of the struggles they have had in their lives in relation to sexuality are inspiring. I think as we get older it's harder to talk about issues that these kids can so easily. Now this may sound weird but when I went into the room I was expecting the kids to be different somehow. I expected head strong and confrontational almost, I expected children who were hurt and struggling with*

*school. I was wrong in my prejudice. The conversation about food and music are the same with all kids and that was a breath of fresh air.*

Jordan had stereotypes of these LGBT youth as struggling victims; this view was common among the preservice teachers primarily due to popular media reports about LGBT identifying youth combined with their lack of relationships with LGBT youth. Jordan's visits supported his learning about the complexity of LGBT youth identities. The youth do struggle with oppression and are often victims of bullying and harassment; they are also vibrant youth with the same interests and desires as non-LGBT identifying youth. Jordan appreciated their ability to talk openly about their experiences, respected their knowledge, and enjoyed the opportunity to see them through a relationship rather than as a stereotype or a statistic.

Jordan was not only visiting the high school GSA, he volunteered to go on a field trip with the GSA students to a youth conference. The opportunity to develop a relationship with LGBT students was a significant catalyst in Jordan's learning process.

*I really enjoyed the events of the week. With this week and working with students at the Nike Campus conference and visiting with GSA students at the high school it really has opened my eyes to how easy it can be to have dialogue with the LGBT youth. My fear of not knowing how to approach this topic or how to interact is starting to go away because of this class.*

In the beginning of the term Jordan was adamant he was not an ally for the LGBT community, and in his week 8 journal he wrote that he is proud of his work creating a video highlighting teachers as allies.

## **Week 8 Field Journal: Turning a Corner**

*Our group also made a video that got shown during the “TeachOUT” event. I think it turned out really well considering how little time we had to film and edit the clips. We asked university students what they thought a teacher ally is. We had them write the response on a piece of paper and filmed them on my camera.... The video was shown in our classroom and in front of other groups. All the reviews received were positive and I had pride in the video even though I forgot to put my own face in front of the camera being the camera man and editor. The highlight for this video was the face and comments I heard from the high school students sitting at the table I was at. They want to make a video like this for their school and I am going to help them in a few weeks to make a similar video.*

Not only did he participate, he facilitated the project and has extended his support and skills to the GSA high school students. His greatest satisfaction came from the approval of the students; he wanted them to feel supported and was able to find a way to extend his support through a project.

Throughout the term Jordan had written about the importance of his scouting, athletic, and social communities and his concern about losing support from those communities if he were to be an open ally to the LGBT community.

*It may not seem like a big deal but the act of all the students in our class working for the LGBT community showed me personally that support is there for a person like me who is scared to become an open ally. I don't think I am 100% at that point yet but I am coming around to having the courage to come*

*out as an ally. The fact that so many students in the cohort and high school students support each other tell me that I would not be going alone. I also really like that we helped out a group of students who have such a hard time in school and they saw that future teachers are getting an education like this.*

This writing also points to the level of teacher fear around LGBT issues that research indicates is not unique to Jordan and reinforces the importance of these materials and experiences. He now has witnessed a community of LGBT allies and begun to vision himself as part of this community with models of how he can support LGBT students in schools.

Jordan highlighted how important the out-of-class group projects had been in his learning. The extensive public projects embedded in the course provided ongoing opportunities for this group of preservice teachers to engage with each other with a focus on supporting LGBT youth.

### **Week 9 Reading Response: Acknowledging the Power of Public Pedagogy**

*As I am only able to make personal self-reflection on my experience in this class I am sure many people experience it differently, but I think I will reflect on my experience just in case others have the same problem. For me writing words down in reflections is easier than talking in class. In the chapter Eric Rofes writes “Developing teaching techniques that elicit a broad range of opinions from the students (because many are nervous about being considered homophobic), they often do not express their candid view at the full class level.” I find this comment to be very true, only at the end of class have I started to feel more able to express ideas and opinions and that is because of*



*the many hours outside of class that I have worked with the other peers. I think that the group work outside of class is very important for the work that we do but the simple conversations that we have about daily activities. I had a conversation with a girl in our class who identifies as gay about hanging out with friends and playing soccer and I talked about my wife and kids. That conversation somehow made a difficult conversation about LGBT issues easier to talk about.*

The peer engagements were significant for Jordan, particularly with peers who identified as LGBT. The engagements with LGBT youth and peers created some familiarity for Jordan, and it became more challenging to hold these people as the “Other.”

In his April 8 journal, Jordan wanted to see statistics that highlighted heterosexual youth because he had his own experiences of bullying and harassment but did not identify as gay. Again on April 15, in response to a course reading he wrote, “What this report is missing is how many students who consider themselves straight get bullied, beat up and killed.” In both of these journal entries he was able to recognize his experience was much like the experiences of the LGBT youth he was reading about, but he was not able to see himself as part of those statistics. At the beginning of this journal post he still makes a distinction between the ally or heterosexual student that is bullied because of a perceived gender identity and those who do identify as LGBT. By the end of his journal, as he recounts his pain and thoughts of suicide, he recognized that he would be considered an LGBT statistic.

*As a youth who lived some of my life in poverty, was treated horrible by bullies in school and “acted like a girl” when you read stats about LGBT students it becomes a contest to who has it worse off. I would if possible, like to have a LGBT class that also has a focus on the “ally” or “heterosexual” bullying that goes on in school. I cringe whenever I think of the times when I was contemplating suicide in my youth. Sitting alone thinking about being called gay, beaten, pissed on and ignored by staff and faculty at my school thinking “why do I want to be alive”?... I wonder now if they would have considered me an LGBT statistic if that bullet went off. I am heterosexual but if the kids at my school told the police what they thought of me and my parents told them how I played with dolls and did not define the gender norms they would have put me in the same LGBT stats. I want to be considered LGBT sometimes but the fact is I am not a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender. I was a kid who was treated like I was an LGBT student a way that I don’t want anyone to be treated in the future and is the reason why I joined this class.*

This space has been conflictual for him since the beginning of the course, and in this reflection, he found a bridge between his experiences as a heterosexual youth who was perceived as gay and youth who identify as LGBT. He recognized the experiences were shared.

Jordan’s experiences in school emphasized the impacts of homophobia. Homophobia is being engaged with everyone all the time regardless of one’s perceived or real gender identities. Homophobia demands that we all conform to narrow and socially constructed ideas of gender identity, expression, and sexuality. When we do not conform

there are mental, social, and physical consequences. The potential impact of emphasizing the systemic effects of homophobia working against all of us can be minimizing of the specific, persistent, and severe impacts on individual LGBT youth.

Jordan had been primarily reflecting on his identity as a student in K-12 schools, a university student, and a father. This journal entry identified a shift to his teacher identity.

### **Week 10 Reading Response: Considering Teacher Identity**

*A third factor that influenced teachers was their own life experiences outside of school. This theme includes other personal and professional experiences that teachers spoke about as having an impact on how they perceive and respond to bullying and harassment. I think my history will make me a more effective teacher when being aware of bullying. It is important for future teachers to take classes like this that will make them more aware of the surroundings in their classrooms. I have a heightened awareness of the LGBT community because of this class and I notice bullying and words that can hurt others because of this class.*

Jordan made connections between his own history, this course, and his skills as a future teacher. His learning about LGBT youth in this course has helped him realize his responsibilities as a teacher, and his own experiences of bullying provide him with additional insights that he will use as a teacher. Jordan's experiences, the experiences that were shared with him by LGBT youth and peers, and engagement in the course were all interacting with each other to create this particular learning opportunity for Jordan. In Jordan's writing early in the term he did not see the benefits of the course or why teachers would talk about "sex." He now believes the course was helpful in developing

his own awareness and advocates for teachers to take more courses like this one. This journal also points to Jordan's understanding that the role of a teacher extends beyond academics and includes being an advocate and ally for students.

As the course came to an end, Jordan acknowledged his learning throughout the course. He believed the course was critical to his ability to teach in the future.

### **Week 10 Field Journal: Change of Identity Consciousness**

*When thinking about this class, it has been a journey for me as a learner first and I believe the journey will turn into teaching in the future. The most important part about this class was the space that was created to talk about a topic that I found hard to discuss and a topic that I know needs to be discussed. Homophobia is something different for everyone. I think homophobia is a spectrum.*

His learning and writing began as personal and has moved to professional while neither being separate from the other. The course provided Jordan the time, opportunities, and reflection structure to explore a challenging topic for him personally and professionally.

During the first 3 weeks of the course, Jordan's writing consistently referred to homophobia in education as talking about sex in schools. In this writing he offered the idea of homophobia as a spectrum, clearly a more complex framework than homophobia as sex. I can only infer Jordan's meaning of spectrum because he does not offer an explanation in his writing. In considering his other writing, I suspect spectrum referred to the many ways people can think about, experience, and enact homophobia. This understanding of homophobia is significant not only because of its increased complexity

but also because the focus is the effect of the experience and enactment of homophobia on all of us regardless of real or perceived identity rather than the sexual behavior of those who identify as LGBT.

The roles of teacher and ally are synonymous in the following entry. Jordan's idea of becoming a well-educated teacher included becoming an ally for LGBT students, and this advocate/activist teacher identity is becoming a core of his teacher identity.

*This journey of learning for me is to find a way to become an ally for the LGBT community and that is something that takes a lot of work. You need to care for your students in a way that is 100% of your focus. This focus of care is how you become an ally. You can't fake being an ally. You can't give less than 100% and be an ally. When I took this class I wanted to know everything about LGBT because as a future teacher I think it is important to be a well-educated teacher. I've learned a lot that I will use as a teacher in the future but at the same time I don't feel I scratched the surface on the issue. Each class we have together I learn something new. That is exciting, but at the same time scary. I feel like in a way I relieved the stress that I have had in the past when working with LGBT students and friends. This stress was caused by the "unknown" and the "darkness" in my brain when it came to topics of LGBT. That darkness has been filled with light and more importantly a heightened awareness.*

Jordan also wrote about his new level of knowledge and awareness, a space of conscious incompetence. He has acquired enough knowledge and skill to recognize how

much more there is to learn and believes there is value in pursuing more knowledge and skills on this topic.

Jordan used the familiar metaphor of darkness and light to explain his previous concerns regarding LGBT topics and his current state of awareness. His new-found awareness is a bridge to future possibilities for Jordan as a learner, teacher, father, and community member.

Jordan offered specific examples of his past and current behavior to highlight his efforts toward changing his behavior.

*When I was in the military one of my best assets was the ability to use heightened awareness, I have already changed the way I speak when talking to my athletes. When we watched the video on the basketball coach who threw balls at his kids and yelled homophobic remarks I think about the little things that happen at sports practices that may lead to that behavior. I noticed how many times kids called each other “fags”, “gay” and “wussies”. I had a bad habit of saying “stop playing like girls” which I don’t understand because I coach girls teams and respect them a ton. So why did I say that? I found out it was because it was the way I was taught. So last time I said it I apologized to the players and explained that I made a mistake. That is a first step in becoming an ally.*

His decision to identify his behavior and label it for the players as a mistake underscores that it was important to him. He demonstrated his ability to put theory into action aimed at improving experiences for youth.

He also continued to develop critical thinking skills through his questions and critique of his experiences and behaviors. His self-reflection included questions that were not readily available to him at the beginning of the course. Jordan's responses are more consistently aligned with an understanding of how we all engage in systems of oppression.

The following entry highlighted that Jordan believed becoming a teacher was an ongoing process rather than a definitive arrival. He also saw teaching as more than academics and included a commitment to the social development of his students.

*The second part of my journey is becoming a teacher. I will teach others how to be respectful and caring of all people. One thing I learned was that LGBT is not unique when it comes to bullying from others. As a child in poverty and "girly" I was treated similar to how the LGBT community is treated. This I think could be a way to teach students. This journey has only just begun and its one that I will keep working on.*

Jordan's experiences of bullying have been a consistent theme in his writing throughout the term. In this journal entry he indicated an understanding of both his bullying and the bullying of students perceived as LGBT or identifying as LGBT as part of a larger systemic problem of homophobic violence that is enacted on many students and has significant impacts on all students.

Jordan used his final paper as an opportunity to "come out" and indicated he had been hiding some element of his identity for a long time. His use of the quote by Killoran and Jiménez (2007) also highlighted a nuanced understanding of what coming out means.

## **Week 11 Final Paper: Coming Out—The Other Is Me**

*I'm going to use this paper as my coming out event. I understand that coming out is not a one-time event and something that I should have done a long time ago. I feel that now is the right time and the words of Lisa Ortiz in "Unleashing the Unpopular" comfort me when writing this paper. "Coming out is not a one-time only event. One comes out over and over again. One comes out in different ways and for different reasons" (Killoran et.al, 2007 p. 54). My reason is that I'm old enough and found enough "real" friends that I will have no problem sharing this information with. I also know that Julie Heffernan the person I'm writing this final paper for would stand by me even if she disagreed with some of my point of views.*

Jordan was able to share more of his identity because he found a community of friends, peers, and an instructor that he trusted would support him regardless of his identity.

Until this course, Jordan had not had access to information about gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or the production and impacts of homophobia in schools or across other contexts such as his community of sports and scouting. The minimal negative and stereotypical information he did receive mirrored the learning experiences most students received in their K-12 school experience.

*This ability to share has taken 35 years of my life to feel comfortable to write in words. I think that fact is a sad reflection on my past teachers. I have never before this education program had designed discussions on homosexuality or homophobia. The only discussion I had in my 35 years from a teacher was*



*way back in middle school when I learned about the word when talking about AIDS in the classroom. This seems to be common in schools according to Kissen's book Getting Ready for Benjamin. "In many programs, the only references to homosexuality occur within the one session on AIDS that is part of the compulsory health module" (Kissen, 2002 p. 34). Looking back at this way of learning this first "official" learning of homosexuality is a negative one linking a killer disease with homosexuality, they mentioned that heterosexuals and drug users can also transmit disease but this was my first official learning of homosexuality from a person I looked up to as a teacher.*

Initially, Jordan was frustrated with the course because he did not feel like his experience of being bullied and assaulted was recognized in the research and readings. Jordan is now able to place his experience of bullying and violence in the context of larger systems of oppression in schools. In several of his journal posts he wrote about being bullied because of his gender expression, and he also recognized that bullying and silence occurred based on the economic status of his family.

*In late elementary school... I suffered daily bullying and I would come home daily with ripped clothing, bruises and dirty from the daily beatings I received on the playground. My parents went to the principal with the tales of my trouble in school to be ignored by administration. I will never know the true reason for why I was picked on so bad in that school but I believe it was because of poverty level of my family. "The majority of students—namely, all those who are not White American, male, hegemonically masculine, heterosexual, and middle-class or wealthy—are marginalized and harmed by*

*various forms of oppression in schools” (Kumashiro, 2002, p 37). ... I was treated poorly by students and was ignored by teachers because my family and I were not in a position of privilege.*

Not only was Jordan severely bullied, he was also a perpetrator of homophobia. Throughout the course he had begun to understand how homophobia is enacted and supported, even by those who are also victims. Jordan recognized that homophobic behavior is enacted for many reasons, including protection from personal harm.

*My family moved from that school and I was now in middle school. When I moved to the new school I had the opportunity to change my persona and try and fit into the social norms. The technique I used was “joining the other side” and by that I mean I would make fun of people who were different. I found it interesting that when reading Lisa Ortiz we used the same technique at the same time of our lives. “In junior high, I learned I could be safe from such assaults by being tough myself and by tossing around homophobic phrases like the best of them. I regularly uttered statements like: ‘that is so gay’, ‘he’s such a fag’, and ‘Don’t be a dyke’” (Killoran et.al, 2007 p. 60). The sad thing is teachers would never say anything to me when I used these terms and did not get picked on almost my whole middle school career.*

This final journal post highlighted the pivotal shift for Jordan. Throughout the course Jordan tracked homophobia as individual acts directed at individuals, and in this writing he began to see the discourse of homophobia as a means to achieve social status regardless of the target.

Jordan had been consistently reflecting on his experiences and trying to understand the harassment and violence in a framework of homophobia.

*High school changed everything for me. I had not grown during middle school and was the smallest student in our high school (boys and girls). Again my true self showed its face and the ever vigilant bullies at school picked up on this self. I joined speech and debate, was the only male in 4H, played soccer, showed rabbits and guinea pigs all signs according to the bullies at the time that I was gay. ... I was really fast in sports and was a freshman letterman in all six of the sports I played (Football, Soccer, Track, Cross Country, Baseball and Wrestling) and to this day hold school records in track and soccer. This sport ability did not help me when it came to the bullying that happened to me in high school.*

Jordan excelled in several sports and can specifically name that his size, activities, and friends were all labeled as feminine and did not meet the socially constructed criteria for masculinity. He began to develop an understanding of how homophobic discourse is nested in the larger discourse of masculinity and patriarchy.

*I learned in this course that I must be careful with words used while coaching. My entire career playing sports at almost every level including my Olympic coaching staff would use terms to belittle another group when I was not competing at a high level or having a hard time. Too numerous was the amount of times I heard “stop being a:” “girl”, “pussy”, “gay” or “faggot” when training that I can’t count. “Homophobia is also manifest in athletics and which has a long and profound impact on young people—particularly in*

*toughening masculinity and controlling female autonomy. As in the military, young men are goaded with homophobic jibes to perform acts of strength, courage, and sometimes violence” (Lipkin, 2003 p. 7). This cycle is going to end with me. In the past I have used terms like this and in the future I will not be using these terms for motivation.*

Jordan offered examples from his experiences in athletics and the military as locations where homophobia is enacted and supported with language. Through the course Jordan has developed a more critical awareness of homophobia across contexts and of specific actions he can take that he believes will create change.

Earlier in this journal entry Jordan shared his story of engaging in homophobic behavior in middle school in his effort to fit in. He continued in the following section by sharing a story of sexual behavior from high school, which highlighted the behavior Jordan chose so he would not be a target of harassment and violence.

*At the time I felt I had to prove to the people around me that I was not gay. I had several sexual relationships with girls in high school when I would rather have just watched movies and play together with them. The urge to “fit in” made me regret having sex and losing longtime friends because I wanted to prove to the guys that I was not gay. Thankfully I only got to experience two years of high school. I am quite sure I would not have lived through many more years. In that two year span I contemplated killing myself several times and even had a few failed suicide attempts. Some kids were not so lucky and a friend committed suicide a few years later. His suicide will not go down as a*

*LGBT suicide because he was heterosexual, but the homophobic jokes and bullying are what pushed him over the edge.*

Jordan's behavior may have minimized or even eliminated the violence during this time period, yet it was so damaging to his sense of self that he contemplated and attempted suicide. Jordan's experience, the death of his friend, and a wealth of research underscores the prevalence and impacts of homophobic violence on youth. Jordan is now able to consider these experiences through the framework of systemic homophobia rather than continuing to believe the violence was the result of his own personal failings.

Jordan's engagement across the course supported the development of his learning including the language to claim his current identity and a community that he trusts will recognize his identity.

*I know what you are thinking. [Names self] you said this paper is you're [sic] coming out paper. You just said that you are not gay. This is true I am not gay. I am a heterosexual male. I am coming out as "Queer". This term is one that I don't like because of the use of the word when I was a child but after taking this class and looking deep into my heart I know I am queer. My gender identity is female in that I want and enjoy female traits as defined by mainstream society. When I was young I wanted to be a girl not enough to change my gender with surgery or drugs. I wanted to wear dresses and I wanted to have long hair, I love to shop and I'm a hopeless romantic and super emotional. I used to joke if I was a girl I would be a lesbian because I am only attracted to females and my biological sex is male. My expression has*

*been male over my life because I was trying to please the mainstream society.  
I would rather have an androgynous expression.*

Jordan's experience hiding his identity and being the target of homophobic violence created deep confusion and pain, and he did not have access to the context, information, and time to create another possible narrative of his experiences.

Jordan was able to define his gender in a manner that aligns more closely to his experience. He could also see himself as a queer teacher and the critical need to engage as an ally in his role as a teacher.

*In my understanding of this class and now defining myself as queer I feel it is as important as ever to teach in a way that is that of an ally to all the LGBT community. I am fully aware that the LGBT community does not include queer or allies in its definitions but I know that they are linked in homophobia from my own experiences and when talking to the students at UOteachOUT. My freedom of coming out has already lifted a weight off my shoulders but has also opened the door for problems. As an ally many groups may see me as "gay" and with scouting and coaching that can get me in trouble.*

Jordan's significant shifts in his understanding of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and function of systemic oppression also allowed more access to the experiences of LGBT youth and options to provide advocacy and support as a teacher, coach, and parent. He had developed a more complicated understanding of homophobia and the serious impacts it has on individuals regardless of their perceived or real identity. Jordan discovered new communities that recognize, support, and celebrate LGBT identities. He learned about his community of peers, communities in schools, and

networks of allies in the larger community. Jordan also experienced fear of losing his connection and support from communities that have been important to him.

Jordan began to speak more confidently from his identity as a teacher and his commitment to creating an inclusive classroom. He was able to highlight four specific strategies he would want to implement as a teacher, which research also supports as effective strategies in creating an inclusive classroom: assume difference in your students, recognize and attend to the power of the privilege of your identity and teacher role, speak up to address homophobic remarks across contexts, and create a classroom that explores and makes room for multiple perspectives.

*I want the future to have inclusive classrooms for all students. The first step in an inclusive classroom is understanding that I have students with many differences. “Faculty often assumes that all of the students who sit before them in their teacher education classes are heterosexual, and that assumption pervades many levels of discourse and decision making” (Kissen, 2002 p. 31).*

*The second step to an inclusive classroom is understanding that I have privilege and power. I won't tell my students that I am queer and because I still dress as a male and have a wife and two kids it will be assumed that I am a straight white male and with that comes privilege that I did not fully understand until I took this class. “The trouble that surrounds difference is really about privilege and power—the existence of privilege and the lopsided distribution of power that keeps it going. The trouble is rooted in a legacy we all inherited, and while we're here, it belongs to us. It isn't our fault, but now*

*that it's ours, it's up to us to decide how we're going to deal with it before we pass it along to generations to come" (Johnson, 2001 p. 12).*

*The third step is changing the people I work with in all areas of my life. When I hear homophobic jokes or terms used in the classroom, field, business, or anyplace I will take a stand and tell them that it is not ok. I did not think that schools had such a problem with homophobic issues but after reading Lisa Ortiz she talks about how the staff and faculty room is full of homophobic people. "No matter what school I went to, however, I regularly witnessed homophobic jokes or comments on current events, such as same-sex marriage, during staff room conversations at lunch or during meetings" (Killoran et.al, 2007 p. 61).*

*The forth step is creating a space for students of all backgrounds and opinions. I already understand that people can have different point of views and I think that political side of education brings better learning. I will not tell students what I believe; I will teach every side. I will try and create an activist approach a little later in my career because activist teaching is hard to do when you are a junior teacher. I would like my classroom to be similar to Mary Cowhey where every topic is on the board and she finds experts in the field to teach. She also runs activist teaching methods. The benefit that Cowhey has over me is she works in an area that is LGBT friendly. "I don't teach in Anytown, U.S.A. I teach in Northampton, a small city of 29,000 in western Massachusetts, which has been known as a haven for women and for lesbians. Northampton's status as a refuge from homophobia has been*



*profiled in dozens of newspapers and media outlets around the country and around the world. While the numbers vary from year to year, I have always had at least one child in my class with lesbian parents. This year, one third of my students have lesbian parents. While I probably have more lesbian parented families than most teachers, the reality is that teachers may not know by looking if they have a child with gay or lesbian parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, or family friends” (Cowhey, 2008 p. 178).*

I do not know whether Jordan will actually enact these strategies when he enters his own classroom, but I do believe that Jordan exited this course with a vision and imagining of opportunities and possibilities that he would be able to provide for and work with Students to improve their school experiences.

Jordan’s most significant learning occurred out of the classroom. He learned from students and peers through a variety of intentional community engagements. Jordan believed that through these engagements he was able to find himself and who he believed he would like to be as teacher and parent.

*I am amazed by how much I learned in such a short time. It was not the classroom where the biggest lessons were learned. It was the sitting with high school students I knew and talking about their GSA. It was talking with other students in the classroom who identify as LGBT. The biggest surprise was that I was able to be myself in the space that was created. I’m a goofy person and I’m glad that I could act my way in all my classes once I discovered allies in the class. From when I started and played devil’s advocate a few times I think that this journey has been successful in making me a better parent and*

*teacher. This knowledge will be used and passed on to others in the hope that it spreads.*

Jordan is a case study of personal identity development through an anti-oppressive education course. It illustrates how a student could engage with new knowledge as a somewhat therapeutic model. As Jordan moved through the course, he re-examined his own K-12 experiences. His writing identifies how he was able use the public and conflict pedagogy to re-narrate his educational history. Jordan was also creating a new parenting script for how he supports his son and engages with his son's school. Jordan's case study represents the preservice students who need time and support to examine their personal identity before they are ready to consider a teacher identity.

## CHAPTER VI

### ALICE

This chapter introduces Alice and her reflections from the course. Alice was a preservice teacher in the 2014 Education as Homophobia course. She identified as White, middle class, heterosexual, and female, the identities held by most preservice teachers in this program. Alice's story is unique and also representative of many students participating in the course over 5 years because it is written primarily with a future teacher perspective and makes visible her efforts in learning about privilege, oppression, and their impacts.

#### **Week 2 Reading Reflection: My Place in Privilege**

*While reading Privilege, Power, and Difference I realized that when talking about privilege such as white privilege, male privilege, heterosexual privilege, etc., there are not a lot of hidden characteristics but when talking about racism, sexism, heterosexism, there are characteristics that are illuminated and hidden. For example, when examining white privilege, the following characteristics are illuminated: White people are powerful, deserving, and above all, non-White people are below White people, not deserving, and are looked down upon. When using -isms such as racism, it illuminates people discriminating against other races but it hides the day to day effects and lack of advantages the minority groups or non-White people have to face on a day to day basis. Using the word privilege to talk about such controversial issues can make people uncomfortable, as it has done to me. Saying that I have white*

*privilege makes me uncomfortable because it gives me power and advantages that I never earned, asked for, and can never get rid of.*

Alice recognized her discomfort with the privilege her identity provided her, while trying to understand the discourse of privilege and oppression. We were able to have a follow-up conversation so I could better understand her experience with the reading. Alice clarified that the writing was about concepts familiar and unfamiliar to her. She recognized some of the privileges discussed in the text, but reading about some of the day-to-day oppression experienced by those with marginalized identities was new for her. Alice's comment that the impacts of oppression were hidden meant they were not visible to her.

*Although I am a white, middle-class, heterosexual, on a daily basis I have to think about sexism since I am a woman. Every term when I sign up for classes or put in my hours for a new work schedule, I have to be conscious of whether I will be having to come home in the dark. When I have classes that are late at night, I make sure I am taking the class with a friend or make sure to drive. Although, when I do drive, I make sure to park in certain areas, always quickly walk to my car with my keys in hand, and check my backseat when I am unlocking my car. I never walk anywhere, and I mean anywhere alone in the dark. I came to the university pursuing a mathematics degree, but that quickly changed when I was the only girl in my calculus class and spent the majority of the time crying my way through it. On a daily basis, I face sexism, and because of it, a small amount of discomfort. It is hard for me to imagine what other people encounter who are on the "wrong" side of racism,*

*heterosexism, and classism. Although I feel some discomfort for being a woman, I can't imagine it is anywhere near what others encounter even more frequently.*

Preservice teachers with privileged identities are not likely to readily understand the experiences of their oppressed future Students. The curriculum aimed to support Alice in developing the ability to identify with LGBTQ youth or what Birden (2005) calls the Out-sider praxis. Alice located herself in a marginalized group and named her daily experiences of sexism. This identity created a pathway to begin considering the experiences of oppression for others. Alice claimed her level of discomfort as a woman was minor in comparison to other experiences of oppression. She was considering oppressions as a hierarchy with a particular oppression worse or less desirable than others. Lorde (1984) identified this hierarchy of oppression as yet another form of oppression. Although Alice may not have a more critical understanding of oppression, she now recognizes it.

### **Week 2 Field Journal: Being Marked**

The instructor prompt for the field journal was, “What are your thoughts, feelings, or concerns about wearing the lanyard?”

*I have decided to use the lanyard throughout the entire term, which is something that is out of my comfort zone because I am not one to do things that would draw attention to me. Once I started using the lanyard, there were several things I noticed that I did differently. Every time I grab my keys off my dresser or get them out of my packet, it is a constant reminder that our society isn't perfect and that there are numerous societal issues I do not think about*

*on a day to day basis because of my privilege. Where ever I go, I don't think about my race, class, or sexual orientation. I live my life from day to day with privileges some people don't have, and I did nothing to earn them. Every time I see the lanyard, I am reminded of the privileges other lack.*

*Whenever I bring the lanyard out of my backpack to get into my house or unlock my bike or car, I started to notice that I look around to see if anyone is around me. I think I am nervous about people seeing the lanyard and asking me why I have it or my beliefs. I have spent a lot of time thinking about what I would say to someone if they asked me, and to be honest, the majority of the time I come back to the line "because my professor encouraged us to?" I hope that taking this class will expand my knowledge and discourse about heterosexism so I feel more comfortable using the right language to be able to talk to others about it. Only after a few classes, I am happy to see that at least I am aware of homophobia and am finally starting to learn and think about it on a regular basis.*

The lanyard was a consistent visual reminder of Alice's identity and the identities of others. The lanyard was a catalyst for Alice in developing a more critical awareness as she moved through her daily experiences. She was not concerned the lanyard would mark her as lesbian, rather it created discomfort about being approached or questioned. Alice recognized she was not ready to engage in conversations about heterosexism and/or homophobia, yet she also acknowledged her willingness and the importance to learn more and tied that to increased comfort.

*In my hometown, there are very few homosexuals in the community. I have already thought about what my family will say about the lanyard when I meet up with them in a few weeks for Easter. When I was in high school, there was a homosexual who was openly gay. Although I never thought much about it back then, looking back on the situation, it is sad how much he was bullied and teased because of that aspect of his identity. I wish I would have had the knowledge and discourse back then to have done something about it. While comparing my surroundings at this University and my hometown, I have learned that where I am physically located can make an impact on the experiences I have addressing homophobia.*

*I feel much more comfortable bringing out the lanyard around on campus than I would ever feel bringing it out in my hometown. Since my hometown is made up of a very conservative community, I would be afraid of the type of assumptions, stereotypes, and questions that would be asked of me if people saw me with the lanyard. The experiences I would have in my hometown would be very different than the experiences I would encounter on campus. Being around a more accepting, diverse community than my hometown has encouraged me to carry around the lanyard and will hopefully encourage me to use it more openly and strike up conversations about homophobia. I wanted to take this class because I do not know a lot about homophobia and I want to be able to be comfortable talking about the issue, especially in schools. Just having the lanyard with me is making me aware of homophobia, the privileges*

*I didn't earn, and how it isn't okay for the majority of the people in our society to know so very little about it.*

Alice had begun to consider heterosexism and homophobia in relation to her family, hometown, and who she knew that identified as gay. She believed there were few LGBT people in her hometown, but she does not indicate how she reached this conclusion. Most likely she is making a common mistake of assuming there are few LGBTQ people in her community because few people there outwardly signaled an LGBTQ identity. Identifying personal relationships with those who identify as LGBTQ can make Students and their experiences more visible. When Alice remembered her high school classmate and the harassment she witnessed, it provided Alice with a relationship lens to consider the significance of homophobia in schools.

Alice had concerns about her family's response, and although she did not indicate what type of response she expected, she has been preparing herself for that conversation. Students in the course frequently shared their concerns and fears about visiting home and having conversations about LGBT issues.

Significantly, she recognized the difference in her reactions to using the rainbow lanyard based on location and context. This signals a developing understanding that signifiers of difference get their meaning not only from the persons and communities they mark but also from the social processes in which the signifier is encountered. This insight is a necessary, if not sufficient, prerequisite for learning how to address heteronormativity as a systemic feature of communities and school cultures. This level of critical reflection in her role as a teacher could allow her to recognize and respond to the social, political,



and cultural context of the community, school, classroom, and unique experiences of her students.

Alice's use of the term homosexual highlights her focus on sexual orientation to the exclusion of gender identity and expression. She used the term homosexual regularly when referring to an individual's identity. The use of the term homosexual is more commonly used by those who have had less experience engaging with those who identify as LGBT or who have less access to literature and media materials. While acknowledging the limitations in Alice's discourse, it identifies movement that seems significant.

### **Week 3 Reading Reflection: Intersections of Identity, Privilege, and Oppression**

*When talking about the different categories of privilege, it is impossible to talk about one form of privilege without taking into account the others. When people look at me, they don't just see me as a woman or white. I am seen as a white, middle-class, heterosexual woman. By not looking at the different affects and relationships the different categories have on one another is like looking at me as just a woman, and nothing else. Also, "access to one form of privilege can affect access to others" (Johnson, p 52). We simply cannot measure which privilege is better to have or what form of privilege you don't want to end up with. They are all different and coexist with themselves differently. What one person may experience as a lack of race privilege isn't the same as a person's experience as a gay male. This is seen in the data presented about the biased language towards LGBTQ students. Everyone in our society is different and will all have different experiences because of privileges. This is new to my thinking of heterosexism and privilege in*

*general. I always assumed that African Americans and homosexuals or low-income people had the same experiences and discrimination because they both lacked some privilege. It was uncomfortable to see how narrow minded I am to think that everyone has the same experiences.*

This week Alice read Johnson's (2001) chapter "Capitalism, Class, and the Matrix of Domination." This reading prompted Alice to begin considering intersectional identities and to develop more complex thinking about how oppression and privilege is engaged in schools. Johnson (2001) suggests that identities of race, gender, and class are tied to each other and the "system that produces one also produces the other" (p. 53). Alice's writing is significant because it identifies the moment that a more expansive understanding of privilege and oppression is becoming visible to her.

Alice's writing shows a process of unlearning and learning that is moving her to more uncomfortable spaces, particularly as she considers the experiences of others. Her discomfort seems to have two sources. First was the discomfort of recognizing the suffering of others of which she had previously been unaware. The second, and more troublesome, was a sort of metacognitive insight—namely, her recognition of how narrow her thinking has been.

Alice utilized her new understanding of intersectional identities, privilege, and oppression and began to consider the implications in teaching.

*Talking about privilege in a classroom can be a complex and tricky subject. Since all types of privilege coexist, a teacher can't address one type of privilege without addressing the others. Privilege in the United States can be a controversial topic but is one that can be seen and examined in the lives of*

*students, no matter how old or young. Their race, class, gender, and sexual orientation have impacted each individual in the classroom, whether they are aware of it or not. Having a dialogue with students about privilege can bring up unknown problems students were not aware of.*

Alice began the course reflecting on her own identity and how she had benefited from and been impacted by privilege and oppression, and she was now focused on Students and their learning. Her concern for surfacing potential problems for Students seems to mirror her own experience in this course. Alice continued to expand the level of her analysis and was considering the complexities of teaching about privilege and oppression, the political context of teaching, intersectional identities of teachers and students, and the impact on our educational experiences. Alice's development mirrors the progression of the readings in the course, but as she applied the concepts to her personal experience and then to Students, it seemed she was wrestling with issues in new and more complicated ways.

Alice's comments also reflected a change in the conceptual vocabulary she used to describe her thoughts about these issues. The use of the term *homosexual* is often considered overly narrow and at times pejorative in contemporary gay rights and queer political movement. The term *LGBTQ* signals greater inclusion. In the third week, Alice wrote:

*Other important educational implications include the safety of LGBTQ people in the school environment. The high percentage of biased remarks heard in school along with the victimization of LGBTQ students in a school setting can negatively impact their right to receive an education. Especially when not*

*only students are using biased language but teachers are as well, LGBTQ students can feel threatened to attend school.*

This shift in vocabulary is significant. It does not necessarily signal a shift in the underlying understanding of the difference between these terms. However, it signals an understanding that choice of vocabulary carries with it nuanced implications. Her language shift reflected her engagement with the course literature and other activities.

### **Week 3 Field Journal: Discomfort and Stereotypes**

The instructor prompt for the field journal was, “What are your initial thoughts, feelings, or concerns about soliciting donations?”

*When I first started to think about the Pink Prom silent auction donation, my first thought was to make something to put in the auction instead of seeking a donation from a business around the area. I began to think about my thoughts and actions and to analyze why my first thought was to make something and avoid talking to businesses. I would consider myself a “crafty” person so I could potentially blame not going to seek a donation on that, but deep down, I don’t think that is the case. I realized that I am afraid to engage in conversations with organizations and businesses because I’m afraid I won’t have the answer to a question they may ask. I’m scared that I won’t know what to say, or will say something that may be wrong. The main cause of me being nervous and afraid has to do with me not even knowing what I believe. I come from a hometown that is conservative and doesn’t support homosexuality but I have spent the last four years at the university where homosexuality is more accepted by others. This class will help me nail down*

*my beliefs about homophobia and will expand my discourse and knowledge on the topic to hopefully be able to feel comfortable talking with students, families, staff, and businesses about homophobia.*

Within the same journal entry Alice articulated her thinking about the donation process and immediately critiqued her own “excuse” and identified her significant concern, which was an internal conflict about her own beliefs. Alice’s writing reflects the interaction and conflict between what she learned from her family and home community and what she learned in the university community. This is her Nепantla space (Anzaldúa, 2002). Alice wanted to move out of the in-between space and “nail down” what she believes, although Anzaldúa (1987, 2002) would offer it is the conflictual in-between space that is the site of transformation.

Alice said that she has been avoiding conversations because her responses might be “wrong.” This binary construction of right or wrong closed off her opportunities to practice discourse rather than creating possibilities for her to explore and practice a variety of responses or answers.

While considering where to request donations, Alice assumed businesses and organizations would have little information regarding LGBTQ youth. She did not recognize how likely it could be that business owners and employees would identify as LGBTQ or have a family member, friend, co-worker, neighbor, etc. who identified as LGBTQ.

*I don't think businesses or organizations that are capable of donating know much about LGBTQ youth and this may be contributing to my wariness of talking to people for donations. During the first two and a half weeks of this*

*class, I have learned more about LGTBQ youth and homophobia than I have ever learned or talked about outside of this classroom. Unfortunately, I know that I am not the only one who knows little about homophobia. I have the opportunity to take this class and to expand my knowledge, but the majority of others will never learn about LGTBQ youth unless they see something in the news, read an article in the newspaper or take it upon them to learn.*

There are communities of people who identify as LGBT and/or as an LGBT ally that were not a part of Alice's world, so she was not able to construct a possibility of a larger supportive community for LGBT youth. This suggests that Alice's conception of attitudes about LGBTQ persons and families was as an individual attitude. She knew the university had a more inclusive culture, yet her imagining did not tend to think of LGBTQ inclusiveness as a collective community value. She did not, for example anticipate that some business owners might be committed to supporting LGBTQ youth.

Alice articulated an increasingly nuanced sense of who might or might not express support or bigotry about LGBTQ persons.

*When speaking to people about donations, it is very nerve wracking because you don't know the person's opinions and beliefs regarding homophobia and how they may react to your proposal. As I sat here thinking about whom to approach and why it would matter, privilege continued to pop into my head. A white, middle class, heterosexual male may not want to donate something because he may not feel obligated to or not think he is part of the problem, therefore, not part of the solution. If you approach a woman, a minority race, or a homosexual, they may be able to understand or relate to the frustration*

*and discomfort LGBTQ people have on a daily basis. Unfortunately, the assumptions I have made of who to approach are not always true because there are white, heterosexual males who support gay people and women who don't. Based off of what privileges you can identify from the appearance of a person, assumptions of their beliefs regarding homophobia are automatically assumed.*

Alice struggled as she deconstructed her stereotypes and continued to prefer the option of asking for donations with her colleagues. This entry in her journal made explicit her thought process, beginning with her own stereotypes and then working through a deconstruction of the stereotypes. She was beginning to recognize that being supportive of LGBTQ communities does not map easily onto other identity categories. This writing also signifies her growing recognition and understanding of intersectionality and the complicated interactions between identities.

Alice described how anxious she became while thinking about asking for donations because she would not know what people believed and whether they would be supportive. Alice had noted in her earlier writing she had a choice in whether to ask for donations, whom to ask, and whether she went alone or with colleagues. Through her reflections she did not make connections between her own experiences in this process and the risk and/or fear that LGBT youth experience every day in choosing to share their LGBT identity. These youth never know what people might believe, whether they might be supportive, or whether they might be dangerous.

Alice seemed to be focused on working through her own phenomenological experience of social anxiety related to wearing queer positive signifiers, as the following comment suggests.

*I also wanted to do a quick follow up from the last field observation journal. Previously, I was hiding my lanyard, consciously looking around to see who was around me when I pulled it out because I was nervous of what I would say if people asked me my opinions and beliefs regarding homophobia. Recently I have kept my lanyard out in the open for people to see making myself an open target for people to talk to me about it. Although I am still unsure of what I will say, the only way for me to become more comfortable talking about it is having more conversations with people.*

It was not common for students to do a follow-up in their journal as Alice did here. I interpreted this move as evidence that she considered the exercise important for her learning. Alice demonstrated openness to the possibility of public engagements and recognized the opportunity to practice new skills. She also understood that her learning required some risk.

#### **Week 4 Reading Reflection: Systems of Privilege and Oppression**

Alice had just finished reading Johnson's (2001) chapters "The Trouble With Trouble," "What It All Has To Do With Us," and "How Systems of Privilege Work." These three chapters deconstruct the systems of privilege, how we are complicit in those systems, and what it can look like across contexts.

*An important theme throughout these three chapters is the ability to recognize that privilege in our society is not created by individuals; rather it is created*



*and reinforced in the various social systems we identify with. The dominant groups in our society often think that the blame is pushed onto them or thinking that it isn't their issue to deal with, making it an individual's fault rather than recognizing the social systems that are continuing to reinforce it. Socialization and the paths of least resistance continue to shape our society. Throughout my education, I was never explicitly taught about privilege. As a future teacher, I want to make sure my students learn about privilege and how it affects countless numbers of people in our society.*

The course readings seemed to help Alice recognize that systems of oppression are always at work and have been instrumental in her development—they impact who she is and how she thinks. Alice was tracking and responding to the readings, but the ideas were theoretical and had not transferred to practice.

She now knew that the path of least resistance is only one option in responding to systemic oppression. She identified the easiest, most comfortable path—the one she identified as “the path of least resistance”—as the one that acquiesced to systemic oppression. Discomfort, by implication, was considered necessary for resisting oppression.

Although she was practicing her critical analysis skills she was not yet identifying the role individuals hold in supporting and engaging systems of oppression. Alice had begun to imagine new possibilities and entertained the idea that she might be able to tolerate some discomfort, but the possibility that she could create discomfort for others was still beyond her reach.

#### **Week 4 Field Observation: Practice and Discomfort**

By week 4 the preservice teachers were prepped to begin requesting donations. There was a general fear and apprehension about this process. Many students began their donation requests with a business or person they had a relationship with.

*I have made strides on getting my own donations as well. I love being crafty and making things. I recently hand painted two wooden signs to contribute to the silent auction. I think people will really like them and I am very excited with how they turned out. I also thought of another donation that has allowed me to strike up a conversation about homophobia and UOTeachOUT. For three years, I worked at the Oregon Jamboree Country Music Festival in my hometown. A friend and I were talking about other music festivals in general and she mentioned how giving away free tickets can really benefit the venue. Until then, I had completely forgotten about my relationship with the Oregon Jamboree. After talking with my parents, family, and friends for their opinion, I decided to write the event manager an email explaining the class, UOTeachOUT, and asking for a donation. At this time, I have yet to hear back from her but am hoping she will donate at least two tickets to this year's 3-day festival. At first I was very reluctant to send her an email because I didn't know what her personal beliefs are about the issue and if they would be interested in supporting it since my hometown is very conservative. I elaborated on the importance of the topic and the effects it will have on me as a future educator. This is the first major step I have taken, especially with people in my hometown, to strike up conversations about LGBT issues.*

*Although I know it is going to be uncomfortable and out of my comfort zone, I know it is necessary to do in order to feel comfortable enough to talk about it in my own classroom.*

*Overall, I am happy with myself that I didn't resort to just making something to contribute for my donation. Even if they do not donate anything for the silent auction, I am pleased that I have at least tried to talk to others about the issue. I know I will be seeing the event manager and other employees in less than a month, which will give me another chance to talk to them about how the BBQ, silent auction, and UOTeachOUT went. I am really enjoying the hands on, real life, applicable activities we have been doing in this class instead of strictly reading texts and discussing. I love that we are able to be a part of something bigger, something that is so meaningful and special to LGBT people and supporters around the Eugene area.*

Alice had been wrestling with her fears of approaching businesses for a donation since the beginning of the course. Several elements seemed to support her ability to take a risk with approaching the music festival. First, Alice did not know the festival politics surrounding LGBT identities, but she did have a positive relationship with employees at the festival. Second, Alice was able to write her request for a donation instead of making a request in person. Writing allowed her the time to think and choose her words without the face-to-face interaction. Finally, Alice would be seeing the event manager and other employees, and the donation request provided an opening to talk with them in person about the course and events. Alice seemed to recognize that conversations are often a process and not a one-time effort.

Alice intentionally pushed herself to do something she found uncomfortable and believed she would learn from the experience and improve her skills as a teacher. She was able to try out her learning in real situations with real people and identified the challenge of implementing learning from course materials and discussions. This seems important as it might translate to skills as an advocate/activist teacher. Advocate/activist teachers are engaged in education work that is disruptive and uncomfortable in efforts to improve Student experiences.

Alice noted the importance of class engagements in the community and had developed energy and excitement about work she believed was part of a larger movement in making schools better for LGBT youth. Alice found energy and excitement in the BBQueer, youth summit, and Pink Prom because she wanted to be a part of a community working to support Students. She also had opportunities at each of these events to see specific examples of teacher advocacy/activist strategies being modeled by the course faculty. Having models of engagement, practicing discourse, feeling uncomfortable, and having a desire to advocate for LGBTQ youth are all key elements in developing an advocate/activist teacher identity and practice.

### **Week 5 Reading Reflection: Developing a Critical Lens**

Alice had read Pascoe's (2005) "Dude, you're a fag: Adolescent masculinity and the fag discourse." The text provides examples of heteronormative discourse in a high school and deconstructs the impacts on students and school culture. The text allowed Alice to recognize the heteronormative discourse in her own school experience.

*This week's reading provided a lot of examples of how heterosexual discourse is embedded in the school environment and allowed me to recognize the*

*heterosexual discourses that were apparent in my K-12 experience. For example, the book talks about how for graduating seniors, boys wore one color of robe and girls wore a different color. I had never thought about how clear this was in line with promoting heterosexuality. In my high school, during graduation all of the women wore white robes while the men wore green robes. I wish I would have been aware of the significance of men and women wearing different robes and how excluded people can feel. Although my town is very conservative and would be unlikely to change all of the robes to the same color, I am going to bring up the idea to my parents who both work in the school district to see what they think I can do about it.*

*I am very thankful for being able to take this class because I feel like I will be able to go into a classroom and have a critical lens and filter that will not perpetuate heterosexual discourse. I am feeling more confident every day that I will have the ability to effectively talk about these hard pressed issues in my own classroom.*

Through Pascoe's (2005) text about school discourse, Alice was able to identify a specific practice in her high school she had never critically considered. She demonstrated the ability to move from theory to practice as she formed plans to address this issue. She was practicing her advocacy skills with a tentative first step. Alice was encouraged by her developing critical lens and advocate/activist teacher identity. Although Alice appeared tentative to me, her writing identified a growing confidence. I think with the opportunities she had to practice discourse inside and outside of class combined with

course readings, Alice experienced rapid learning, which made it possible for her to imagine herself engaging these topics in her classroom.

### **Week 5 Field Observation: Community Support and Engagement**

*The work we have been doing in our teams has been going really well. We have done a lot of work both inside and outside of class because we are in charge of the silent auction at the BBQ this Friday. I was pleasantly surprised to see the overwhelmingly large amount of donations our classmates gathered over the last several weeks. It was heartwarming to see the vast amount of businesses that donated to the cause. It was also a rewarding experience when we began making the “thank you” poster to showcase the donors. There were so many donors and such a variety of different businesses, organizations, and people. It is a humbling experience to take part in this event, something that is so much bigger than me. If I would have never taken this class, I would be at a disadvantage to people who did because of the vast amount of information we are learning especially through real life, hands on, applicable experiences. I am really excited to see the BBQ on Friday to see everyone in the community come together to support the cause. Although I don’t know what to expect from the BBQ, for example the atmosphere, amount of people, energy, etc., I am really excited to take part in it.*

In week 3, Alice wrote she was concerned that businesses would not have enough information or be supportive of LGBT youth. Thus, the number of donations surprised her as well as the diversity of those who donated. The process of gathering donations was an opportunity for Alice to consider her beliefs and stereotypes about local businesses,

organizations, and community members. The donations provided a concrete representation of community support for LGBT youth.

Alice was nervous about the BBQueer and seemed to be excited about what she was learning. Enthusiasm was becoming a more prominent theme in her remarks than anxiety and uncertainty. Alice was aware of the significant learning occurring outside the classroom through her engagements with youth, peers, and the larger community.

*I also wanted to give an update from my last field observation journal about the donation I was asking for from the Oregon Jamboree, an organization I worked with for several years. After creating a rough draft email and sending it out to friends and family, I finally sent my finalized email to the event director. In the email I did a lot of explaining. I told her about the importance of the class from an educator's standpoint, UOTeachOUT, GSA Youth Summit, Pink Prom, and the BBQ and silent auction. I also included a blurb at the end not to feel obligated to donate if she did not feel it was in the best needs of their organization. Looking back on it now, I think I added this to cover my tracks and to make sure I wasn't burning any bridges with the organization. I was very pleased when I got an email back from her the next day. She said she would be happy to donate to such a great cause. I was overwhelmed with the positive support and willingness to donate two adult GA tickets and two children GA tickets to the Oregon Jamboree, a \$340 value! I am so thankful I took the time and effort to reach out to the Oregon Jamboree.*

Alice had a careful and cautious process for writing her donation request. She intentionally provided a convenient opportunity for the organization to say no to her request, and she chose this process to address her own comfort. She had been very nervous about approaching the Jamboree and did not want to damage her relationship with the organization and more specifically with the people she had worked with while she had been employed there.

### **Week 6 Field Observation: Hearing and Seeing Students**

*On April 30th, my group was able to go to a GSA meeting at the High School. On our drive over, we all talked about how we didn't know what to expect especially because they weren't going to be having their typical meeting. The GSA has their meetings on Wednesday at lunch time. When we went, they were having a celebration during lunch for everyone in the school that participated in the Day of Silence. I thought it was the perfect setting and environment for us to meet the advisor, students, and supporters of the GSA. We passed out pizza to students who participated and got to have several conversations with the active GSA members. Going into it, I thought it was going to be awkward and wasn't going to know what to say. I actually thought it was really fun.*

*The advisor told us about the recent middle and high school dance they put on to raise money. For the past several years, the GSA has reached out to the Middle School to give them information and fliers to put up around the school to invite them to the dance. She explained that for the past several years, the principal of the school has refused to put up fliers because it was*



*promoting the GSA but would put up other religious fliers around the school. This year was the first year they were able to put up fliers in the Middle School because the former principal who wasn't allowing it was gone. The turnout to their event was amazing. They raised the most money they ever had in the past. Breaking down the walls and barriers at the Middle School was an important task for several of the students in the GSA. One girl in particular has been an active member in the GSA since middle school. Her older sister was a part of the GSA and worked towards breaking down the barriers at the Middle School. Now her younger sister, an active member of the GSA can finally say they did it.*

Alice watched the relationships between the students and teachers. She was able to listen to stories of their leadership activities and how they were able to make changes in their schools. The visit provided more information for Alicia to consider in her understanding of LGBT student experiences. Alice witnessed an example of student leadership from youth she had primarily seen as victims. She also watched the teachers model their activist/advocate role with students. In class there were discussions of how long it can take for people and systems to change, and Alice was presented with a story from the GSA students that provided a specific example and also emphasized the importance of collaboration and teamwork in creating that change. Being in the schools and listening to Students provided a learning experience that could not happen in the classroom or with a text.

The opportunity to listen to Students was also available at the BBQueer event. Alice seemed surprised that the Students at the BBQueer would want to talk to the preservice teachers, and she thought the students might be hesitant.

*Another great event that I was able to be a part of last week was the BBQueer. Since my group was in charge of the silent auction, it was finally our time to shine and our hard work to be put to the test. The event was an awesome experience for me and one that I really enjoyed. If it wasn't for this class I would probably have never gone to such an event. I thought it was awesome to see all of the students that showed up to the BBQ. It seemed like everyone felt comfortable surrounded by their peers, teachers, families, and community members that supported them. I appreciate the student's willingness to talk to us and include us in the activities they were doing. They did not seem scared or hesitant to include us. They were willing and wanting to talk to us just as any other person.*

Alice's remarks are interesting because of her expectations of the Students and because she wrote that prior to this class she would never have attended an event to support the LGBTQ community. Alice expected the Students to be hesitant, and from my observation of the preservice teachers and Students at the BBQueer it was the preservice teachers who were initially nervous and hesitant to talk with Students.

Alice does not specifically say why she would not have attended an event like the BBQueer, and regardless of the reasons, she was able to have a new experience that gave her access to a community she would not have engaged. The opportunity to be in a new community, in this case a queer community, provided a unique learning space.

## **Week 7 Reading Reflection: Addressing Bullying and Harassment**

The class was reading *One in Every Crowd*, (Ivan Coyote, 2012) a book of short stories of Ivan's own tomboy past. Ivan is a storyteller and author who identifies as transgender and uses their stories to educate on issues of gender and gender identity and to support transgender youth. The class was reading the text in preparation for Ivan's visit to speak at the youth summit.

*I read One in Every Crowd by Ivan Coyote for this week. I really enjoyed this book, especially because of how she organized it. The short stories showed a lot of different perspectives of Ivan's life and her friends and family. Having read this book, I am so excited to be able to hear Ivan's storytelling this week. I think it is such an awesome opportunity that we have gotten to read several different books by different authors and we get to see them perform or speak this week.*

*One main theme I took away from Ivan's book was the importance of addressing bullying, especially in schools. Throughout Ivan's book, you see her transform from one stage of her life to the next. She is continuously figuring out and identifying with who she really is. Along this journey, she experiences harassment and bullying along with other people in her life like her cousin Chris and her young friend Francis. Ivan performs in schools around the country to let students know the damage bullying and harassment can have on individuals. Ivan wants kids to be aware of the impact bullying someone can have. When Ivan does her storytelling, I like that she doesn't talk about homophobia, homosexuality, or LGBT specifically. I feel like she is able*

*to get her point across, about bullying and harassment, especially to LGBT youth, without even saying it.*

Ivan's writing offered vulnerable and honest experiences of being bullied because of gender identity and expression. The readings created an intimacy with Ivan through personal information and experiences. Ivan is explicit through their stories about exploring their gender, and for most preservice teachers, this would be the first transgender person they would knowingly meet. For Alice, Ivan's stories provided a connection to someone who identified as transgender. Through text, Ivan became familiar to Alice, and Ivan's experiences were now a story that could provide context for other readings and Students she would meet.

Without knowing anyone who identified as transgender, the student's only reference was media, which have not represented transgender people positively or accurately. As a talented writer, storyteller, and musician, Ivan offered Alice an opportunity to challenge her stereotypes of what she believed about people who identify as other than cis-gender.

Ivan also provided another model of what being an advocate/activist could look like and sound like. Ivan intentionally presents themselves visually as neither male nor female and could be interpreted as either. Throughout Ivan's storytelling they intentionally do not discuss gender or homophobia, rather Ivan crafts stories that describe the experiences of young people. Through Ivan's stories the pain of homophobia and harassment are clear. The importance of adults supporting youth with LGBTQ identities are made explicit through the stories. This form of advocacy and activism, which occurs through Ivan's body and stories, becomes another model to support LGBTQ youth. This

model disrupts the normalized notions of what advocacy and activism for LGBTQ people looks like and sounds like.

### **Week 7 Field Observation: Who Looks Gay?**

*This week my group has been working on our visual project for UOTeachOUT. A few weeks back, we were given a handout that had a list of names of people who were authors, athletes, and politicians, and other famous people who identified as LGBT. When we first received this handout, we were all very intrigued about the names that were on the list. There were several famous actresses who we really knew and liked but had no idea they identified with the LGBT community. I remember having a conversation with one of my classmates about the actress and we didn't quite believe she was gay. Sure enough, we ended up going home and looking it up and found out she was. It was interesting to notice that I don't think my opinion about the people I knew on the list changed at all. Before this class, I think if I saw that same list, I would look at them differently every time I saw them from then on. Now, I don't even bat an eye. I have never been homophobic or against the LGBT community, I just never really knew what to think or say regarding the issue. I have found that this class has really broadened my horizons and now I have my own opinion. If someone asks me, I will tell them. If someone tells me they are LGBT, I support them.*

Alice was surprised to learn that a famous actress identified as a lesbian because she had relied on visual stereotypes to create an idea of who she believed was LGBT. Alice had her stereotypes disrupted, and this created the possibility of Alice imaging a

LGBTQ identity that is much more diverse and complex than she had previously considered.

Alice made a distinction between homophobia and ignorance. She believed there was a difference between disliking someone because they identify as gay and lack of information about people who identify as gay. She also acknowledged that prior to this course, if she had learned someone identified as LGBT, she would have thought about them differently, whereas now, through this course, she believed she would not think about them differently. The ongoing self-reflection process pushed Alice to analyze her belief systems and behaviors.

There were, however, limitations to the depth of Alice's reflection on these issues. For example, she did not recognize that it was her privilege that allowed her to be uninformed about sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Further, Alice's statement that she had never been homophobic sits in tension with her statement that prior to this class if she had learned someone identified as LGBT she might look at them differently.

The list of famous LGBT people created some energy in Alice's work group. The list informed their poster project.

*After seeing the list of famous people who identify with LGBT, we all decided we wanted to include this information in a poster type format. Our main goal was to create something for the students who will be attending the GSA Summit and the high school this Thursday. I want the students to be able to take a look at our poster and realize that they are not alone. This was a message that was continuously presented throughout Ivan Coyote's book One*

*in Every Crowd. As Ivan traveled around the country doing performances at different schools and venues, she wanted students to know that they aren't alone, and there are people out there that are just like them. I want students to be able to look at our poster and realize they are a part in a larger community.*

*My job as a future teacher will be to address bullying and harassment at the elementary level to help make the school climate a safer, more inclusive environment for all students.*

Alice believed sharing this list of famous LGBT people with Students would be a supportive activity that helped to create community. She was also trying to model the message of Ivan Coyote. A consistent message in the course had been the importance of listening to those who identify as LGBT, listening to learn and support. Alice had taken Ivan's message to heart and was trying to put what she learned into practice. Alice had begun to believe it was her responsibility as a teacher to advocate for and support students.

### **Week 8 Reading Reflection: Finding a Teacher Voice**

*One key theme I want to discuss is the hostile school environment not only students who identify with the LGBT community, but also for students who have a family member who identify with the LGBT community. At Ivan's talk at the High School, they mentioned that for some LGBT students whose parents or family members do not accept them, school is often the safest place for them to be. This scared me. It scared me to think about that while reading this text because school is not a safe place for people in the LGBT community*

*and if this is the safest environment they enter every day, they can be negatively impacted. I had never deeply considered the negative impact schools can have on students who have a family member that identifies with the LGBT community. Hearing homophobic remarks and being teased because of their family member's choices can negatively affect a student. It must be difficult to go to school from a home where homosexuality is embraced and loved to a school where conflicting views are highlighted and taught through tolerance and heteronormativity.*

Alice had expanded her understanding of who is impacted by homophobia. At the beginning of the course, Alice thought of gay and lesbian youth as the LGBT community. Once she was introduced to Ivan, transgender people became a part of the LGBT community. In this writing Alice considers the LGBT parents and family members of youth. She wrote, "I had never deeply considered the negative impact schools can have on students who have a family member that identifies with the LGBT community."

Alice wrote specifically about those who identify as LGBTQ and did not mention those who do not identify as gay but may experience the impacts of homophobia because of their gender expression or perceived identity or orientation.

After the last journal entry, Alice had the opportunity to meet Ivan Coyote when they spoke with Students at the youth summit. In her writing this week, Alice used Ivan's preferred pronouns. She wrote, "At Ivan's talk at the High School, they mentioned that for some LGBT students whose parents or family members do not accept them ...." In Alice's previous writing she referred to Ivan as she. Using preferred pronouns became an active conversation prior to and during Ivan's visit. Most of the preservice teachers had



not met anyone who used pronouns other than male or female. The faculty and I both modeled using pronouns “they” and “them,” and Alice and most of her colleagues began to try using alternative pronouns. The practice of using non-gendered pronouns was a powerful tool to disrupt the idea of binary identities because it requires one to slow down and be intentional rather than habitual.

*Although I was not surprised, I was disappointed of how little teachers and schools did when homophobic remarks, bullying, or harassment were heard by students at school. I think this is a main reason why our school environments are so hostile. When homophobic remarks are tolerated by teachers or said by school personnel, homophobia and heteronormativity continue to be reinforced. The majority of the teachers in our country are apprehensive and afraid of the questions and consequences of addressing the issue in their classroom. Their decision to do nothing and say nothing is a choice. A choice that doesn't give students the opportunity to learn about the issue and is continuing to reinforce homophobia. Schools will not become a safe place for students until teachers begin to see the importance of not tolerating homophobic remarks and educating their students about the issue through an inclusive curriculum.*

Much of Alice's previous writing had the language and tone of a student as she noted what she had been learning. The language and tone in this entry began to sound more like a teacher as she described the impact of teacher behavior on students. Her discourse shifted from a focus on individuals to a focus on systems and some understanding of the power of systems to do harm.

## **Week 8 Field Observation: Bathrooms**

*The last week has been very overwhelming for me. Not only were the events I attended completely new and different to me, but my beliefs and views were consistently being challenged and put into question. The first event I attended was the GSA Youth Summit. I was pleasantly surprised with the number of students that attended the event and the amount of students who were from middle school. I have read several articles and texts that mention the age at which people are coming out is decreasing. The GSA Youth Summit was a perfect representation of the decreasing age of people coming out. I have also done a lot of research and have read a lot about the harassment, bullying, and violence towards LGBT youth. It was very overwhelming to hear the stories the students have gone through and what negativity they have experienced. Everything is just so hard for me to wrap my mind around. I try to understand it, and wish I did, but I know I never will because I will never walk in their shoes. The students who expressed their suicidal thoughts or attempts due to the harassment, bullying, and hostile attitudes from families saddens me. Having the opportunity to attend this event and hear the student's stories was priceless. Hearing personal stories is a lot more meaningful than reading about them. I feel as if I will be able to better understand the students in my classroom and will be able to find ways to create a school and classroom climate that is inclusive for everyone.*

Alice struggled to make sense of the devastating stories students were willing to share at the youth summit, and then she watched them laugh and play with their peers.

Middle school Students shared stories of being kicked out of their houses for being gay or getting beat up at school for being gay and contemplating suicide because of the severe harassment. Students also shared stories of their LGBTQ parents losing jobs and housing because of their identity.

Alice and I talked frequently throughout the term as the classroom activities unfolded. Alice had been working through a lot of new ideas and challenges through this course, and spending the day with Students at the youth summit, listening to their stories in person offered new information that provided an opportunity for Alice to recognize the complexity of student identities and experiences.

*Another event I attended was Ivan E. Coyote's conference session on Friday. First of all, I really enjoyed this session because it was geared towards talking about what teachers, administrators, and other school personnel can do to help LGBT youth. Ivan spoke a lot about the need and importance for gender neutral bathrooms. I didn't know that the bathrooms were the most common place for LGBT youth to be victimized partly because there is no supervision. As I started to consider the concept of gender neutral bathrooms, what it would look like and how it would get done, empowered me. My ultimate goal is to be an administrator, and this made me want it more than I ever have before. I have continuously read and heard about the hostile school climate seen in the majority of schools around our country today. It isn't the students' fault. Teachers, the administration, and other school personnel are letting it happen. Now everywhere I go I can't help but check out what kind of bathrooms are around. For instance, several days ago I was at a bar that had*

*two single, locking bathrooms with a women's sign on one and a men's sign on the other. WHY?! They are identical. Why can't they take the signs off and put a "restroom" sign up on both of them? Chances are, the owner, the person in charge of making decisions, doesn't see the world through the lens that now I see everything through. It frustrates me because it is something that is so easy but can make such a difference.*

Alice became focused on gender neutral bathrooms. This was a place she could actively engage, and she began to notice gendered bathrooms with growing frustration. Her language was more demanding with her developing critical lens and how it had begun to change the way she viewed the world. As Alice considered the bathrooms she wrote, "it is something that is so easy but can make such a difference" whereas just a couple of weeks previous to this entry, Alice did not know what a gender neutral bathroom meant. These are important changes for Alice in a short period of time in regard to bathrooms for transgender and gender fluid people. What Alice now considered easy was unknown to her a couple of weeks ago.

*After Ivan E. Coyote's talk at the UOTeachOUT a peer and I left the room questioning the ultimate goal surrounding gender neutral bathrooms and what changes should be made in schools today. After several hours of mulling over the topic with one another, we decided we needed to ask someone to get clarification on the topic. At Ivan E. Coyote's night performance at Global Scholars Hall, Tina clarified the ultimate goal for gender neutral bathrooms, what it would look like in schools today, and the importance of having both gender neutral bathrooms as well as men and women bathrooms.*

Standing in the high school auditorium I was approached by Alice and another student with a question about how it would work to have gender neutral bathrooms in schools. With their current vision of school bathrooms, they could not imagine how to make that work. I shared several scenarios of how a gender neutral bathroom would be set up in an elementary school, middle school, and high school. My goal was to expand their understanding from a gender neutral bathroom just for transgender students to gender neutral bathrooms that could be accessed by any student who was more comfortable there.

The bathrooms were an important issue for Alice as it is for many teachers and administrators. As she became more comfortable discussing issues of homophobia and heteronormativity in schools, she began asking more questions. Alice and two of her colleagues in the program spent several days wrestling with the topic of bathrooms. As with many topics during the term, they had to consider and unlearn before they could consider something new.

*After receiving clarification on the issue, in a matter of minutes, we were asked to hang up gender neutral bathroom signs as well as men and women bathroom signs in the bathrooms closest to the performance hall.*

*As the papers were dropped into our hands, we both looked at one another and acknowledged this would be a great opportunity considering our interest in the topic. Then, my eyes grew two times their size once I realized this meant going into the men's restroom. Our job was to put up several different types of signs that included directing people towards gender neutral and men and women's bathrooms, and signs outside the men and women's bathrooms*

*making them gender neutral. The last type of sign we had to hang up were signs on the back of stall doors and on the back wall of each stall and on the mirrors to give information on gender neutral bathrooms and to explain what a gender neutral bathroom is and why they are important.*

*As we finished putting up the majority of the signs that directed people towards the correct bathroom and the information signs in the women's bathroom, it was time to face the men's room. Looking back on the situation, I question why we were so apprehensive to go into the men's restroom. I blame it on our society. We have been taught that in any public restroom we use, we must go into the correct one or else we are breaking an unspoken norm. Our society has socially constructed the idea that men and women's bathrooms are the only way bathrooms should appear and that to use them, we consciously or unconsciously are required to make a choice.*

Alice grappled with her reaction to going into the men's bathroom and attempted to blame the social expectations of gender assignment and use of public bathrooms. Accurate or not, her frustrations and struggles are crucial for interrupting unquestioned behaviors and practices and creating new possibilities for how we consider gender, bathrooms, and school environments. Alice struggled as she became an active part of creating change and worked to figure out why it was so challenging.

Alice's experience highlights the phenomenological impact of heteronormative discourses—Alice felt an almost physical barrier to entering the men's bathroom. This was an exercise that revealed to Alice the force of these norms and points to the powerful possibilities of public pedagogy.

*We almost made it out of the men's bathroom without any confrontation or conflict. We had two signs left to hang up and two men walked into the restroom and just kind of stopped and stared at us. After we told them to "come on in", it was interesting to see the two completely different responses the men had. One didn't care and walked up to the urinal and did his business. The other hesitated and went into one of the stalls. Although this was something that was completely out of my comfort zone, I realized that I was only uncomfortable because I was making someone else uncomfortable. I will have to note, that I enjoyed the discomfort because that is not typically something I feel on a day to day basis. I have learned with firsthand experience that gender neutral bathrooms are not as scary and unusual as some may think. Like Ivan E. Coyote pointed out, we use gender neutral bathrooms at home every day.*

Alice expected confrontation or conflict in the process of putting up bathroom signs. Neither of the men was upset nor did they leave the bathroom; further, no one commented or complained during the evening. Without any resistance to creating gender neutral bathrooms, Alice tried to make sense of her own discomfort. She was not certain whether she was afraid of the bathroom or afraid of making someone else uncomfortable or upset with her. Alice wrote, "I enjoyed the discomfort." This marks a powerful experience, one Alice noted is not common for her. An advocate/activist teacher attempts to disrupt normalized ideas of education and push back on systems of oppression, and there is certainly discomfort in that work. Teachers who can engage or even "enjoy" discomfort in their work are building skills as an advocate/activist teacher.

*After hanging up the signs and sitting back down for the performance, I began thinking about what we had just done. Although we were just hanging up pieces of paper, we took an active part in engaging in social activism. The Global Scholars Hall is a dormitory, a library, a popular dining area, and a classroom full of a variety of diverse students, staff, and adults. The signs we put up around Global Scholars Hall and in the restrooms had the potential to raise awareness and have students think about and question the importance of gender neutral bathrooms.*

Alice recognized that the task of changing bathroom signs was small yet significant. She identified the larger potential impact through the many uses in the building and the number of people moving through the building who might have read the information on the signs in the bathrooms. Doing something was important for Alice, even if it seemed small. This desire for active engagement signaled her growing awareness of issues that seem more significant than her discomfort or the discomfort of others—that discomfort is often a necessary part of working toward equity and inclusion.

*Before taking this class, I had very little knowledge about homophobia. I had never heard about gender neutral bathrooms let alone their importance and need in our society and I can't imagine that I am the only one. Whether the students and adults in Global Scholars Hall ever went into the bathrooms, they could have seen the signs hung up in the hallways that directed people to two different kinds of bathrooms: gender neutral and separate men and women's bathrooms. Who even knows that there are two different kinds of bathrooms? I sure didn't but now they do. Whether they went home and*



*googled it, talked about it with their friends, or simply ignored it, it is there, in their head. They saw it, read it, and now can't get it out.*

Alice wrote in a previous journal entry, "I can't un-see" something she had experienced, and now she recognized that she could facilitate that experience for others. Alice shifted from student to a teacher role. She wanted to create an experience that people could not get out of their heads. The course public pedagogy events (GSA meetings, donation requests, BBQueer, youth summit, and Pink Prom) had been significant learning experiences for her, and she believed others could also have those experiences.

In the following journal entry, Alice expanded her thinking about who benefits from and utilizes gender neutral restrooms, just as she had previously expanded her understanding of the identities considered LGBTQ.

*Making the bathrooms gender neutral didn't just make them inclusive for Ivan E. Coyote or other people who attended their performance. They also could have made a student, staff member, or any adult that struggles with men and women's bathrooms on a daily basis feel included and comfortable in the bathroom for once. The signs were hung up to make people feel comfortable and included in the bathroom setting, only if it was for a few hours, and to raise awareness regarding the importance and need for gender neutral bathrooms in our society. The students, adults, and staff members who entered the bathrooms throughout the performance hopefully took time to look at the signs and learn about the importance of gender neutral bathrooms. Whether they read about gender neutral bathrooms or not, if they entered into one,*

*they were exposed to the term which may have empowered them to learn a little about it.*

Alice had great insight into the developmental process of learning when she recognized that even if people did not read about or go into the gender neutral bathrooms, they were exposed to the term and they have that new information. This insight supports her ability to create a developmental learning process for her future students.

Through this process Alice learned that gender neutral bathrooms are critical for many people, not just those who identify as transgender. She recognized there are a multitude of reasons that someone may not be comfortable in gendered bathrooms. The bathroom conversations and activities became symbolic of Alice's learning throughout the course. Through my conversations with Alice, she was able to generalize her learning from the bathrooms to many other issues of homophobia and heterosexism in schools and community.

The ongoing national debate regarding transgender youth in schools often revolves around use of bathrooms. Having accessible bathrooms is a critical need for transgender students, and this debate can also distract from other systems and structures that create barriers for LGBT youth. Therefore, it seemed significant that Alice could utilize her learning from the bathroom exercise to more deeply explore other barriers for LGBT youth.

*At the end of each event, I was so overwhelmed but so empowered that I went home and had massive word vomit with whoever I came into contact with. Whether they wanted to hear about it or not. I want to raise awareness about the simple changes we can make to make our society more inclusive. Overall,*

*all of the events I attended were awesome. They not only challenged my views and perspectives, but changed them. Once you are made aware of a certain aspect of life you never knew about, you are never able to turn the lens off. I will never be able to look at the world the same way.*

Early in term Alice wrote about her fear of not knowing how to answer questions or talk about LGBT youth. Through the course readings, her internal conflict and discomfort, and public pedagogy assignments, Alice had found some answers and had much to say regarding the experiences of LGBT youth and homophobia in schools. Alice had begun to advocate for youth and become an activist in making change focused on equity and inclusion.

#### **Week 10 Final Paper: Change**

*It was very interesting to hear from Eric Rofes's perspective as an educator who is teaching a course on LGBT issues. Throughout the article, I was able to reflect on the experiences and priceless opportunities I was able to have taking this course. Throughout the last four years we have learned about a vast number of problems and issues the public schools in our country face without learning about the hopefulness and the solutions to fix the problems. I was pleased to see that the students in Rofes's class didn't sit back and ignore their frustrations. There are a lot of great, positive things happening around the issue of homophobia and these points and ideas are essential to address.*

*I would like to mention that I am very thankful and feel very lucky with how our class is set up and having the opportunity to be a part of it. First of all, I think our homophobia class has done a good job showing a variety of*

*different perspectives because we have had the opportunity to participate in and be a part of the TeachOUT events. Although we learned about the issues, the problems, the troubles seen in schools, and the long way we have ahead of us, we were able to see the good that is being done in schools today and the positive impact they are having. For example, it was a positive thing to see so many LGBT students and supporters attend the GSA Youth Summit and the diversity of students that were represented. To be able to be an active participant in my learning and in the community was a priceless experience I cannot thank you enough for!*

Becoming an advocate/activist teacher requires many forms of knowledge and skill including ideas and modeled examples of how to address systemic oppression in schools. Alice was clear that it was not enough to learn about the issues in our public school system. As a future teacher she needed to know she could be a force behind the solutions. Alice needed to be hopeful that schools could be supportive and inclusive for all students.

*As Ivan E. Coyote mentioned, not very often do you see a university, teacher candidates, and high schools and middle schools in several school districts come together to work towards a common goal. I didn't realize how rare this type of opportunity is until Ivan said this and once I read this article by Rofes, I now realize that this class can be just like the rest of them, a sit down and lecture kind of class. Having a class where we not only learned the discourse, but were able to practice the discourse and emerge ourselves into the*

*community will undoubtedly help me be confident enough to bring these issues up in my own classroom.*

Alice began this course committed to addressing heterosexism and homophobia in her classroom and awareness that she had not developed the language or skills. In this writing she believed she had gained enough awareness, knowledge, and skills to attend to these issues in her classroom.

A significant element of teacher education programs is clinical practice. Teacher candidates must have time watching a mentor teacher with opportunity to practice what they have learned about curriculum and pedagogy. Teachers are also expected to teach all students, and research consistently identifies the lack of progress in educating and supporting those students whose identities live at the margins.

*Until taking this class, I had never deeply examined the privileges I have been given whether I want to have them or not. In the beginning I thought of many ways I benefit from being a white, nondisabled, middle class heterosexual but as this class continued on, I began to add many privileges to my list that I don't think about on a daily basis but other people are forced to. This began to fascinate me how I could be so oblivious to the privileges I am given which is a common trait dominant groups hold (Johnson, p. 69). As I became aware of every new privilege I was not mindful of, twenty two years of being unaware of privileges people have to deal with every day, I began to feel guilty. I never realized the privilege I hold being able to go into a bathroom in a public place without being scrutinized, kicked out, questioned, and harassed until Ivan E. Coyote spoke about the importance and need for gender neutral*

*bathrooms. “Avoidance, exclusion, rejection, and devaluing often happen in ways noticed only by the person experiencing them...” (Johnson, p. 56). Since I have never had negative experiences in a restroom or locker room, I didn’t notice the privilege I am consistently taking advantage of. I hope I am able to open up my eyes and my mind to be able to identify certain privileges students lack and have to deal with on a daily basis to be able to find and implement ways to make the school environment more inclusive.*

Alice had generalized her learning of homophobia and heterosexism in schools to the experiences of students of color, students living in poverty, and students with differing abilities. Alice developed a deeper understanding of how systems of privilege and oppression are engaged and supported in the school system and who is negatively impacted.

*My main goal is to be an administrator, and I have become empowered to attain my goal to help create a safe, inclusive environment for all students. Although, the work I want to do around homophobia can be very risky, scary, and frustrating. It is going to be difficult to leave this community where these issues can be freely talked about into a hostile environment with colleagues that believe differently than I do. I am very happy that I have developed the discourse to be able to talk about homophobia to give me the opportunity to take risks in my future educational endeavors.*

### **Next Year**

Alice completed the homophobia course in the spring of 2014. In the following fall while she was enrolled in her teacher licensing program, a local middle and high

school had been so pleased with Ivan Coyote's visit during 2014 UOTeachOUT, they decided to bring Ivan Coyote back to their schools. With Ivan's announced visit came significant push back from a group of parents at the middle school. As instructors of the course, we received a frantic phone call from the principal of the middle school who wanted help negotiating Ivan's visit and the parental response. One of the many elements of our collaborative response was to ask some of the students from the 2014 homophobia course who had worked with Ivan to be available at the school before, during, and after Ivan's visit to the school. Alice was one of these students. When asked if she was interested in this opportunity to support students, parents, and staff, Alice was beyond excited.

On the day of the event Alice and five other students from the 2014 homophobia course put on their Ivan Coyote t-shirts and met with teachers and administrators prior to Ivan's talk to plan for the resistant parents and the class discussions that would follow Ivan's presentation. Alice and the other students introduced themselves to the group of resistant parents who had been invited to Ivan's talk even though they would not allow their children to attend. These future teachers sat in the auditorium with the parents.

After Ivan's presentation the middle school students were excused to their classrooms where they would have facilitated conversations about the presentations. Several of the former Education as Homophobia students helped to facilitate these classroom discussions. Alice, along with two other future teachers were drawn into a conversation by the parents. Many of the parents were emotionally moved by Ivan's presentation. The parents proceeded to ask Alice and her colleagues questions about gender and gender identity. Alice and her colleagues were confident and articulate in

their reassuring and supportive tone with the parents. The parents wanted to have a follow-up conversation with the school principal, and this group of earnest students was invited to join in that meeting where they continued to debrief Ivan's presentation and what this meant for improving the school climate for all students.

Alice and her colleagues, all identifying as White, female, heterosexual, middle class, and cis-gender future teachers, were able to confidently talk with the parents and school administrators about the importance of honoring student identities, the significance of homophobia in schools, the impacts on all students, and what teachers can do to support all students.

This event offered a beautiful demonstration of Alice's learning in the Education as Homophobia course and the impact future teachers can make in changing the school experiences for all Students.



## CHAPTER VII

### ELLA

The final case study presents Ella. Ella was a preservice teacher in the 2015 Education as Homophobia course. Ella identified as Latina, a child abuse survivor, and an undocumented bilingual immigrant. She began the course with a strong claim on her personal and professional identities and understanding their relationship to each other. Ella understood how privilege and oppression are engaged and their impacts particularly on herself and those she loves. Just like the case studies of Jordan and Alice, Ella's story is unique and speaks to the experiences of preservice teachers with marginalized identities in the course.

#### **Week 1 Journal Reflection: Fear and Discomfort**

The instructor prompt for the field journal was, "What are your initial thoughts, feeling, or concerns about taking this course?"

*My interest in this class is very high. This is because I don't know much about the LGBTQ community and I know it is something very important to learn about. This week, we were supposed to wear a rainbow lanyard and carry some sort of item that said Gay on it. I had a harder time doing this, more than I had anticipated. Having my lanyard was easy since it was somewhat disguised. I had seen this lanyard worn before, but I never knew it stood for LGBTQ Pride. I thought it had to do with elementary school and learning colors (I know, I can be pretty naive). However, I couldn't bring myself to go any further than that. I was actually pretty scared to do it. I knew my family*

*would be okay with me if I really was gay, but I was really worried about what people who didn't even know me would do.*

Ella began the course believing the issues addressed were important, and she was open and anxious to learn. During the first week of class, students were asked to mark themselves in some way that would indicate they were an LGBT ally while they moved around in public. They could use a rainbow lanyard, a book, or any other visible item and write reflections of their own and/or public responses. Ella, similar to many students in the course, was surprised by the level of discomfort. The reasons for discomfort are varied; for Ella it was fear. Her fear was not related to people she knew but was a fear of potential responses from strangers.

*At some point, one of my EDST friends needed a ride to a book store and she asked me where I got my lanyard. I told her that it was from the Equal Opportunities class for Homophobia. I expressed to her how hard it was for me to do anything more than wear my lanyard. She then began to tell me how in Russia (where she is from), the LGBTQ community is almost unheard of. That if you are anything other than heterosexual, you are beaten and even killed. She said that as people became more vocal about being a part of the LGBTQ community, laws began to get passed to jail anyone who identified as such. This then led into a discussion about how she too wouldn't feel comfortable. Then we both agreed that we were also worried of offending anyone who really did identify as part of the LGBTQ community.*

The conversation between Ella and her colleague captured a tension many students share through this exercise. Students are afraid to mark themselves as an LGBT

ally or even more frightening, someone who identifies as LGBT. While they know they are afraid, they also recognize what their fear communicates to those who identify as LGBT. For this exercise, students are given guidance, support, and options, including the option to not participate. Yet, all options create some form of discomfort. Students had many responses to the discomfort, and Ella's was to stay with the activity.

Carrying the lanyard during the first week of class shifted Ella's awareness. She was able to make connections between her experience and the experiences of those who fear violence daily due to their gender identity.

*Throughout this whole week, I truly saw how much easier my life was since I didn't have this day to day internal battle about how I was expressing my gender or sexual orientation. As a young woman, I still have to worry about my safety as I move around the world, but I was not once ever asked what gender I was. When I did have to think of it, my anxiety heightened and it was really scary. This being said, I want to do everything in my power to make sure that my students don't have to feel afraid to express themselves in my classroom. I want to make it a safe place for them. This was an eye opening experience for me, as to how difficult it must be to feel like you have to hide.*

Ella located her female identity as a place she experiences fear for her safety, and then used her experience to make connections to the experience of someone who identifies as LGBTQ. Ella moved quickly from her discomfort to acknowledge the potential fear her future students might experience and what action she would need to take to ensure they could keep their identities present in her classroom. Ella demonstrated her ability to quickly generalize her experience to her future students, shifting to her

teacher role, and identifying her responsibility to create a supportive and inclusive classroom. Ella introduced her teacher identity very early in the course and named her concern and responsibility about being in the teacher role throughout the term. Ella's personal identities, which she discloses through her writing, taught her very early about the impact of oppression, and it is these same experiences that are the foundation of her teacher identity.

### **Week 2 Journal Reflection: Confidence**

Ella was determined with her donation request. She described a more confident engagement with the donation process than her experience of carrying the lanyard.

*This week I was able to gather two donations. One donation came from Wal-Mart and the other came from my partner. When I first approached the HR manager, she seemed reluctant. I explained to her that the Pink Prom was an inclusive prom that welcomed everyone. I could tell that she seemed a bit uncomfortable, so I stepped back and shared what I had seen when I was in high school and how money and sexual orientation barred students from participating. She began to explain to me that the store doesn't give her a big budget to work with and that she had already signed off for other donations. In response, I told her that any bit helped. If they could donate one item under \$10 or \$5 it would help a lot. I then shared some of the statistics from the quiz given to us on the first day of class (emphasizing on the importance that this safe space is made a reality for another year) and it was then that she said that she could guarantee a \$30 gift card donation. I noticed that since I had some knowledge on the subject, I was able to persist in a way that wasn't*

*pushy, but informative. I feel more confident in sharing and continuing to gather donations.*

Ella's strategy with the HR manger was scaffolded with a personal story followed with LGBTQ statistics. It does not seem that Ella practiced this approach; either way it was a sophisticated and persistent approach, particularly so early in the term. Ella seemed quite comfortable advocating for LGBT youth while requesting a donation, yet while carrying the lanyard she could be seen as someone who identifies as LGBT, which created fear for her. The difference between advocating for LGBT youth and being marked as the Other prompted remarkably different responses for Ella.

### **Week 3 Journal Reflection: Critical Lens**

*When I went to my field placement at the elementary school, I began to notice how gender roles are played out in schools. This happened at recess, when I saw the children chasing each other, but upon closer observation I realized that they had split themselves up into girls vs. boys. I found it interesting how they display their interactions through play time and later saw how this dipped into the classroom when a boy called a girl, "bro" and she got really upset about it. I didn't address anything since I don't know if the host teacher would be okay with me doing that, but I will ask her next time if I have the green light to step in when necessary. I feel like now that I am aware of this, I am seeing it more and more. I feel like a fog has been lifted and I know what it is I am seeing, now I just want to learn more about the best way to address things when they happen.*

Ella's course work prompted an awareness of student engagements that she had never noticed before. When Ella wrote "a fog has lifted," it demonstrated a developing critical lens. She understood that the behaviors she was noticing had always been there, she just did not see them.

### **Week 3 Reading Reflection: Privilege and Oppression**

*It is important to remember that having privilege doesn't automatically make someone a bad person, but it does mean that there isn't a single member of a dominant group who doesn't have issues of privilege to deal with. These are internal and external in relation to the world around them. They didn't do anything, but it is their responsibility to deal with it, just as it's there for women, people of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ people to deal with. Marginalized groups of people didn't do anything to deserve oppression that profoundly shapes their lives, so it is up to everyone to address this issue.*

This journal entry demonstrated Ella's effort to shift the privilege discourse away from individual blame for privilege to a discourse of personal responsibility to correct it. She recognized that privilege is contextual and people with marginalized identities also hold privileged identities.

*School climates that allow harassment and bullying to continue have a negative impact on all students. Teachers who know they should be proactive in challenging homophobia find themselves unable to go against social and institutional pressures. This is why parents, LGBTQ, and ally students argue, that when authority figures in schools retreat from contentious issues, students with strong—and mostly negative—opinions fill the gaps. If teachers*

*are not adequately prepared to look for diverse family representation, they may exacerbate the feelings of exclusion that children from diverse family structures already experience from the lack of representation in storybooks or textbooks. Educating about the persistence of homophobia and heterosexism can give students a fuller sense of why certain varieties of prejudice have wide circulation and implications that stretch beyond their purported targets. We need to stop zero tolerance policies and instead use these instances as teachable moments.*

Ella's understanding of systemic oppression was highlighted with her recognition that oppression in schools impacts all students, not just identified students. She also identified the pressures and fears teachers can experience when they attempt to address homophobia as well as the critical impacts of teacher and administrator silence.

#### **Week 4 Journal Reflection: Public Pedagogy**

*This week I was able to attend the school board meeting for the gender neutral bathrooms and policies to help make schools safer for the LGBTQ community members. I had never been to a school board meeting, so this was a very interesting experience. I didn't know what to expect, so I felt really worried about that. I saw that there were LGBTQ community members on the right side of the room and older looking people with red sweaters on the left side of the room. I thought that the people dressed in red were going to be opposing the policies that the LGBT community was there to support. To my surprise, they were there to support music instruction in schools, and there was no one there who actually showed opposition to passing policies that*

*would help the LGBTQ community. I thought about this, and I realized how much the media made me think of a debate as there always having to be someone opposing. I was relieved that this wasn't the case and the students were going to be able to share their thoughts without someone attacking them.*

Attending a school board meeting was a new component of the educational system for Ella, and she had an opportunity to witness the development of school district policies. Ella recognized how much influence media had on her thinking about homophobia and LGBT youth; she had assumed there would be strong opposition at the board meeting to the policy supporting LGBT students. As Ella was writing this journal entry she did not have the historical information regarding this specific policy. There had been significant opposition to the policy, including by some school board members. It had also been a 5-year process for this policy to be presented to the school board and receive approval. In class we were able to explore the policy process more deeply, including providing highlights of historical moments. Ella's expectation of opposition was not wrong; the opposition was one element of a longer and more complicated process.

*Some things that I noticed that kept coming up by students and family members were, safety, gender neutral restrooms, need for respect, pronouns, and training for teachers. I thought that every person that went up to speak, did a very good job at explaining terms like, "cisgender" to the board members. I also liked that there were parents who spoke out about their own experiences in trying to keep their children safe while in school. I also liked that the board members were very respectful and were willing to listen. I think*



*that this was a very empowering experience and I feel responsible to know more about these issues and work towards contributing towards a solution. As a future teacher, I will make sure to let myself be known as an ally and continue to do what is right for the sake of creating a better world and not for what people may think of me. I was informed at the meeting that the policy will become an action item on May 20th. I will make sure to attend that board meeting to see what the outcome will be.*

Ella's experience at the board meeting reinforced the course emphasis on public pedagogy. She recognized it was parents and students educating the school board and audience, while the school board members were provided an opportunity to be learners. For these future teachers, it demonstrated the critical need to be engaged and listen to students and parents as well as modeling how school administrators can support parents and students to be advocates of school policies. Ella was motivated to learn more about the policy process and felt a sense of responsibility for her future actions as a teacher after hearing the parents and students speak to the board.

Ella began the course talking about and seeing herself as a teacher, while many other students were just beginning to consider their teacher identity. She had begun to identify strategies, such as publicly identifying herself as an LGBT ally, which would support students while acknowledging the possible risk. Ella had begun to develop an advocate/activist teacher identity.

#### **Week 4 Reading Reflection: Responsibility and Activism**

*When you deny the reality of oppression, you also deny the reality of the privilege that underlies it, which is just what it takes to get off the hook.*

*Members of privileged groups are culturally authorized to interpret other people's experience for them, to deny the validity of their own reports, and to impose their views of reality.*

*The oppression is blamed on the people who suffer most from it, while privilege and those who benefit remain invisible and relatively untouched. Avoiding the trouble by renaming it is most prevalent in matters of gender inequality. The ideology isn't about truth or accuracy, its purpose is to support and perpetuate the status quo by making it appear normal and legitimate. Consequences matter whether or not they're matched by intentions.*

Ella wrote a call to action through her understanding of how privilege and oppression are engaged and supported. She understands that privilege and oppression must go together and how privilege engages to maintain oppression. Ella claimed that experiences of oppressed lives are ignored and re-narrated into something different, which is a nuanced understanding of what oppression looks and sounds like. I suspect that her own experiences with her identity have created a lot of personal knowledge with oppression.

*We need to think about the trouble as everyone's responsibility and nobody's fault. We believe that we alone cannot do anything to make changes; however, it is important that we begin with ourselves if we hope to ever make a difference. We may not see the finished product in our life time, but we can be part of the process. We need to acknowledge that privilege and oppression exists. As well as understand how privilege and oppression operate and how*

*we participate in it. We must listen, even if it's hard to do so being in the dominant group.*

Ella's language is noteworthy in this entry. She was not just talking about herself; she wrote in plural, that she is part of a larger community. The "we" Ella identified is a broad "we," as she is holding everyone accountable for change. Ella located change at the individual level as the place to begin creating change. Ella's plea for individual change, the voice she used, sounds like an activist's call for change.

### **Week 5 Journal Reflection: Practicing Skills**

*This week we had the BBQueer, GSA meetings and I also saw the 20/20 interview with Bruce Jenner coming [out] as a transgender person. I thought that the interview was very interesting because I was expecting it to be like the media we had seen in class, where it was not given justice. To my surprise, they explained terms and I felt like it was educational in a good way. I liked that Bruce stated that he was in no way speaking for the whole LGBTQ community by taking the interview, as well as explaining that he himself is learning too.*

*At the BBQueer, I had a learning moment for myself. I was sitting next to one of the GSA students and someone asked if we were selling the cookies and brownies. I said, "no but SHE is." Just like that without even thinking. It took me a second to catch it and I went back and said to the student, "I'm sorry, I assumed your pronoun. How do you want to be addressed?" The student then told me that they would like to be called "he." It was a big moment for me because before taking this class, I would have just walked away and not*

*known that I had completely ignored such an important part of someone's identity. Now that I am aware of the issues regarding gender identity, I actually think about it and can address my mistakes. I feel much closer to the student and look forward to getting to know him more at the GSA meetings. I also look forward to learning more and implementing my learning into my daily life.*

This journal entry shows Ella's developmental process in action. She noted the interview with Caitlyn Jenner and used the name "Bruce" with male pronouns. She did not acknowledge that Bruce now identifies as Caitlyn. Ella then practiced new knowledge and skills when she mis-gendered a student, recognized the error, made a decision about how to respond, and wanted to re-engage with the Student. Her ability to catch her mistake so quickly, and then respond, demonstrated that her focus was on the Student and not herself. Ella did not comment about how the student experienced being mis-gendered, so I talked with her about this experience in class. Ella had continued to think about their exchange, and she was surprised at how quickly she had mis-gendered the Student, which prompted her to consider how habituated our language and behaviors are related to gender.

### **Week 8 Journal Reflection: Active Oppression**

*This past week we had the Youth Summit event. I thought it was cool that some of the school board members came to the event and were able to witness how many students they will be impacting with the decisions they make for the gender neutral bathrooms amongst other things. I thought Julio had an incredible story to share. However, I did hear some GSA advisors mention*

*that they thought he talked too much about his undocumented status and not enough about being queer. I also heard some students make similar remarks. At first I thought, "Of course you would say that, you are white". Then I simply said, "Well, when you think of events like this, look around. Who is present and who is not? Too often, there are more white students than students of color, and a part of that is because they don't feel welcome. There was a reason why he was chosen to be here." I could see that the advisors didn't even think of that, until I brought it up. Then one wanted to go into bashing undocumented people, so I just left the conversation at that point. When I was reading Kumashiro's book and saw that LGBTQ people were racist, it didn't make sense to me and I even thought that he may have been stretching it a little, but I got a good dose of reality. I was mainly expecting it to come from the kids, not the GSA leaders. Kind of disappointing, but it makes sense as to why these students don't show up to the GSA meetings. Overall, I thought it was a good learning experience, and felt very fortunate to be a part of it.*

The bias and stereotyping that occurred between some GSA advisors had a significant personal impact on Ella. Julio Salgado, a presenter at the youth summit, identified himself as Latino, immigrant, and queer. His multiple and intersecting identities were reflected in his work with the youth. Ella is also an immigrant, so the advisor's comment about how Julio presented his identities was painful for her, yet she stayed in conversation and shared her opinions. She witnessed this educator, who chose to come to the youth summit to support the LGBT youth, identify bias toward

immigrants. Not only was it personally painful to Ella, she was very concerned about the impact on youth in schools. This situation was discussed in class following the youth summit, and many students, including Ella, wrestled with how biases and stereotypes are engaged and supported by everyone, including LGBTQ allies.

Just a couple of days after the youth summit, Ella had a conflict within her own family about gender neutral bathrooms.

*I was having dinner with my partner's mom and her boyfriend. I spoke about the gender inclusive restrooms that the school district was trying to incorporate into its schools. Her boyfriend automatically stated that he completely disagreed with that and began to make it seem like a transgender person would try to sexually assault a woman. I got really upset and began to inform him of the information and statistics that I had recently learned in class and shared thoughts that I had gathered from the course readings. After realizing that he really didn't know what he was talking about, I got up and left the room. I was very upset and thought that I needed to calm down. I then began to question why it affected me so much since I had heard the same argument in the past, but I didn't get upset about it. I then realized that due to events like the BBQueer and GSA meetings, the people I was talking about were no longer 'others' or 'strangers', these were people that I have met and gotten to observe and really enjoyed being around. They didn't do anything wrong to be looked at with such hostility. The realization finally hit me at how dangerous heterosexual spaces can be for people who identify as LGBTQ. It*

*was then that I deeply understood how important it was for me to make sure that my students learn about the LGBTQ community.*

This conflict was significant for Ella and allowed her access to a deeper understanding of the lives of those who identify as LGBTQ. She used her knowledge from the course to defend the rights of transgender youth in schools and then recognized her efforts were not producing any changes in that moment and chose to leave. Ella was not only engaged intellectually, she was engaged emotionally. The LGBTQ community had, in some form, become a part of her known community, and she now had a responsibility to that community. The course had modeled for Ella how she could use her role as a teacher to educate her students to create a more welcoming and supportive community.

### **Week 9 Journal Reflection: Moving from Discomfort**

*One of the stories that I would like to share about would be about my growth in understanding at each event. Starting with the BBQueer and realizing that I can't assume people's pronouns. To meeting with my GSA group and getting to know the students on a deeper level that made it hard to continue to perceive them as "other." All the way to the Youth Summit, where one can see who all is impacted by oppressive school policies. I will also talk about how my silence due to lack of information on the topic has been broken. I try not to have opinions on things that I don't know about or understand (to avoid looking like an idiot), but this class taught me that having a "neutral" stance on things just because we don't understand them can be destructive/hurtful too.*

In one short paragraph, Ella identified significant learning through the course. She noted how differently she thinks about LGBT youth—they are no longer the “other.” The Students have become familiar to Ella through her visits to their GSA group, hearing their stories, and having shared experiences. Their unique identities, along with her assumptions and stereotypes, became visible as she wrestled with using their chosen pronouns.

School policies and their impacts have a different meaning for Ella now that she has developed relationships with Students who are most impacted. Ella situated her learning from her teacher identity as she described the impacts of silence. She has wrestled with when and how to engage in issues of equity and inclusion when she did not feel she fully understood. She acknowledged the risks and importance of engaging to prevent and interrupt the impacts of silence on Students. The idea of a neutral teacher stance has been disrupted for Ella as she writes herself into an activist/advocate teacher identity.

*Some of the connections that this makes with the BIG ideas in the course are Othering, deconstructing of heteronormativity, resistance towards homophobia, as well as how power and privilege are intertwined. This connects to my heart in a way that really surprised me. When I first came into this class, I didn't know what to expect and tried to have an open mind. There were many times that I felt uncomfortable, especially towards the beginning. Now I feel more empowered with the knowledge I have gained. I think it's easy to be ignorant and not take a stance on things that are “controversial”. However, like Kumashiro (2002) states, “privileging one thing requires*



*marginalizing others” (pg. 151), so being able to address that even though I may not have privilege economically, racially or in gender, I do hold privilege in the fact that I identify as heterosexual. Knowing this allows me to do something about it around those who are oppressed by the fact that I identify as such.*

Ella was able to connect theory to practice and named how her learning through community engagements related to the theoretical frameworks in the course. Although Ella was surprised by her connection to the course content and activities, she recognized how similar her own identities and school experiences were to those of the LGBT students she met. Throughout the course Ella had shared her stories of being pushed to the margins throughout school, including her current higher education experiences. She had keen narrations of how she navigates barriers to stay engaged.

Ella experienced discomfort, yet her discomfort was different than that of many in her cohort. She was already familiar with the distress of living at the edge; rather, her discomfort came from realizing that this population of youth was not familiar to her. In the beginning of the term, she had little information about youth who identify as LGBT, but her own identities and background provided a meaningful context to engage the course materials and engagements.

### **Week 10 Journal Reflection: Teacher Identity**

*As a teacher, I am someone who believes that in order to teach successfully, there should be trust, love, and understanding towards all students. I understand that every student who comes into my classroom will bring pieces of themselves with them, to add to the collage that will shape our classroom*

*community. This is why I also understand that I too will be bringing my own pieces to add to that collage. I say pieces, because we rarely show ourselves completely. My personal goal would be to create a classroom environment where students can show themselves wholly.*

Ella claimed her identity as a teacher and her philosophy of teaching. She recognized the complex identities of her future students and for herself as their teacher. She began to envision a classroom where everyone could have their identities recognized and supported.

*The parts of my personal identity that are also parts of my teaching identity include me being Latina, have a growth mindset, survived child abuse, was undocumented, bilingual, an immigrant, understanding of stereotype threat, understanding of gender identity, and acknowledge where I hold privilege. I identify as a Latina who is Mexican. This will allow my Latino students to identify with me, which is something that is rare in the classroom space for most Latinos. Since I am bilingual, I will be able to communicate with their parents as well as ELL students who are Spanish speakers. When it comes to intelligence, I follow the growth mindset, which is the belief that intelligence is continuously built over time instead of fixed. By following this belief, I can challenge stereotype threats that minority students face in education.*

*Stereotype threat is a situational predicament in which people are or feel themselves to be at risk of confirming negative stereotypes about their social group.*

Ella is clear about her identities and experiences in the world. She also recognized that her identities are not separate from who she is and will be as a teacher. She can connect her identities and experiences to specific knowledge and skills she will bring to a classroom to support students.

*As an undocumented immigrant, I faced the challenge of not being accepted into an institution of higher education (amongst other things). I was also physically abused as a child, so one could say that I had a strong reason to give up and fail. Having that background, I will teach my students about the hardships that some children face, and open the space for disclosure. I can be someone who they can share their experiences with. This is why trust is important. I think that as the year progresses, I will take the initiative to share about myself and overcoming struggles, so that my students know that they have a safe space for sharing and see that they can overcome struggles too.*

*I will try to get to know each of my students with a deep understanding of who they are. That being said, I will introduce the school year with addressing the diversity of families in our classroom, as well as the diversity of gender identities. I will give my students the opportunity to share their pronoun and preferred name. Like I mentioned earlier, I want my classroom to be a place where students can be their whole selves. I understand that I don't hold privilege in my gender, race, or immigration status. I do however hold privilege in my gender identity and sexual orientation. This means that it's key that I address the privilege that I do hold, and work towards not letting it oppress my non gender conforming students or their families. I*

*wouldn't consider myself someone who fully knows what it takes to be a successful teacher, but I have some fundamentals to start with. I think that as long as the professional is willing to learn about his/her students to make the learning environment a positive one, they are on the right track. I still have a lot to learn about myself and others, and am willing to put in the time and effort to do so. Which is why I will continue to work on my teaching identity, so that as many of my students can benefit.*

Ella shared her multiple, intersecting, and complicated identities and how those very identities have pushed her to live at the margins and are the same identities she will use to connect with and support her future students and families. She was also able to write about her privilege and using it to support LGBT students and families. Ella knows she does not hold a neutral teacher identity; her personal and teacher identities live together and can have an impact on her future students learning and school experiences. Ella's writings offer an opportunity to see the development of her teacher identity, which became more nuanced and sophisticated as she moved through the course.

### **Final Project: Music Message**

*I chose to write song lyrics to a popular song beat, because I feel like music is one of the strongest outlet forms that people use to cope with struggle. I try to highlight the idea of reinforcing masculinity through the use of homophobia. In the song the protagonist is looking at the directed homophobia from a teaching standpoint. This is important because the protagonist understands to some degree that the oppressor is oppressing because he doesn't understand (like many others) that this belief harms him as well. Throughout the song, the*

*protagonist tries to explain the situation to the oppressor and at the end, when the oppressor finally realizes what is happening, he feels guilt (when the protagonist sees the pain in his eyes). The system that the oppressor has been so loyal to, has been working against him too, and comes off as this loss of trust and being used.*

Title: "Fragile"

Instrumental from Tech 9: "Fragile"

You call me a faggot  
Like it only hurts me  
You're in for a surprise  
You stuff me into a box

So my queerness won't shine through  
And shake your power  
Come on, my oppressor  
You cage yourself too  
You cage yourself too  
Patriarchy is playing you  
It's playing you

Chorus:  
We're fragile  
I never thought I'd be so fragile  
If it didn't break before it's about to  
I don't ever want to change  
I'm fragile  
I don't ever...

You believe that by othering me  
You will hold superiority  
Who are you kidding?  
You aren't that different from me  
Try to push me towards the dark  
But my light resists and sparks  
[Um hum]

Deconstruction ensues  
Your privilege has been abused  
I see the pain is your eyes,

When you realize  
You've been utilized for LGBTQ demise.

#### Chorus

Students were given the option to create their own final project for the course and Ella chose to write a song, made a recording of her performing the song, and shared it with her colleagues. Ella wrote the song to capture her understanding of how privilege and oppression operate.

Ella is quite familiar with the significant negative impacts of oppression through her own life experiences. The course introduced Ella to some of the experiences and identities of LGBT youth, her own privilege, and some of the complicated ways we are all complicit, enact privilege with awareness or intention, and are impacted by systemic oppression. Ella no longer considered those with LGBTQ identities as separate from her personally or professionally, and she was willing to practice her advocacy skills. Ella had begun not only to vision herself an advocate/activist teacher but was also enacting this role with her family and friends.

Ella's case study illustrates the impacts of public and conflict pedagogy for a preservice teacher that is living in marginalized identities. Ella began the course with a strong claim on her personal and professional identities and understood their relationship to each other. Ella had experience in recognizing how privilege and oppression are engaged and their impacts, particularly on her and those she loves. I believe Ella began this course with an activist identity born from her own experiences living in marginalized identities. The preservice teachers who held marginalized identities articulated their experiences with frameworks that were unique but were similar to Ella's.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ANALYSIS

The case studies of Jordan, Alice, and Ella provide detailed portraits of their complex and unique experiences in the course. The narratives offered some analysis through my interpretation of their experiences in relationship to the course and the context of their lives. The research question around which the subsequent analysis is organized is “How do conflict and public pedagogy in an anti-oppressive education course impact preservice teacher identity?”

In this chapter, I zero in on the specific pedagogical events and curricular elements that appeared to stimulate these transformations. The focus here is more on the elements of the course and student’s responses to specific course assignments and activities. As such I draw on the extensive journal and interview data I collected from other students that took the course over 5 years.

This chapter includes a brief review of the analysis process and then a series of examples that help illustrate the effects of public and conflict pedagogy on preservice teacher identity. The examples I illustrate closely track the momentary articulations and shifts in identity of the individual preservice teacher.

#### **Analysis Process**

The framework for analyzing and interpreting data utilizes poststructuralism, feminist pragmatism, and queer theory, which require attention to the historical and culturally discursive context in which the experiences were created and analyzed. Simultaneously it is necessary to consider that the participants and the construct of their identities, as well as my own, are fluid, unstable, and perpetually becoming—thus

resisting any notion of stability or certainty. The analysis and interpretation of the data are particular, located, and situated, which highlights that there is no singular way to interpret these preservice teacher experiences.

The research data were produced by preservice teachers as they shared their experiences, ideas, and feelings through interviews and writing. I viewed the data from students as stories that emerged through the context of their histories and sociocultural positions as they interacted with written and public text. I examined each student's stories over the 2011–2015 courses and sought to identify consistent themes to create a macro-narrative of how preservice teachers articulated their identities through their experiences associated with the course.

There are many methods to document the discourses that shape both individual preservice teacher experience and patterns of engagement across the courses. For the purposes of this study, I analyzed the preservice teacher stories in an effort to identify moments, events, or actions experienced by the students that make visible or explicit the engagements with public and conflict pedagogical strategies and how those strategies function in the development of teacher identity.

Choosing and not choosing which student narratives to highlight was a challenging process particularly within a project that aims to recenter marginalized identities. My goal, however challenging, was not to represent each student voice but to present narratives representative of the overall themes prevalent across the students in five cohorts. The analysis, therefore, situates students' experiences in their biographies but is not primarily intended to be a commentary on their specific biography. Instead, the data have been parsed in a manner that seeks to highlight how student biographical



narratives are generally activated and transformed by the encounter with public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy. The general patterns of interaction are represented through multiple narratives and experiences rather than any single or unified experience. The analysis proceeds through references to both similarities of experience and the uniqueness of experience. The narratives I have included give emphasis to preservice teacher identity and the possibilities of supporting an advocate/activist identity.

### **Public and Conflict Pedagogy**

Traditional university teacher education programs are brick and mortar, desks, and blackboards. It is school as usual even as teacher candidates move into their clinical practice in classrooms. Traditional classrooms can offer rich learning experiences for teacher candidates and model the school environment where they will be teaching, yet traditional classrooms are limited. A traditional model of teacher education supports the view that academic knowledge is the “authoritative source of knowledge about teaching” (Zeichner, 2010, p. 89) and does not often support a relationship between academics, practitioners, and community expertise. An authoritative discourse can pull ideas to a normalized center, whereas engaging different groups across contexts can pull ideas out into various directions (Abraham, 2014). Research indicates field experiences and service learning projects are beneficial because they prepare teachers to connect theory to practice, challenge teacher assumptions and beliefs, and prepare teachers to work with students and families whose identities are different from their own and to learn about the communities where they will be teaching (Coffey, 2010; Hallman, 2012).

Scholars such as Ken Zeichner (2010) have been researching and writing about the benefits of hybrid preservice field experiences for years and have demonstrated

strategies to creating alternative or third spaces for learning (Hallman, 2012; Zeichner, 2010). Recognizing the importance of bringing this new epistemology into teacher preparation, I also want to reinforce teacher education as a political project. Holding teacher education as a political project central in the research of this course, I use public pedagogy as a framework to consider alternative forms of learning for preservice teachers in preparation for their work with Students, families, and the larger community.

Public pedagogy is social action; it is dynamic, dialectical, political, and engaged with power. Public pedagogy is where human action meets ideas and practice, and it recenters the language and learning that exist outside the walls of the traditional classroom and provides different possibilities in the larger community. Public pedagogy creates opportunities to engage with those who are unknown to us (Greene, 1982; Haddock-Seigfried, 1996; Sandlin et al., 2010). Classroom walls are borders, keeping some in and keeping some out, but a public pedagogy allows us to move between borders. Unlike most field experiences, public pedagogy recognizes the power of spaces and that individuals have different possibilities of access to spaces, places, and engagements. Public pedagogy demonstrates a reimagining of how we might approach teacher education that supports critical knowledge and skills in a meaningful context with clear social and political goals to challenge and disrupt dominant educational paradigms.

The public and conflict pedagogy projects embedded in the course were intentionally created with Students at the center and scaffolded in relationship to course literature and discussions. In these public pedagogy spaces where human action meets ideas and practice, there is a strong likelihood of conflict of various types. In addition to the strong probability of emergent conflict, topics of difference and tension were

intentionally built into the public pedagogy projects (described in Chapter IV) to create the possibility for critical sites of teaching, learning, and transformation or Nepantla space (Anzaldúa, 1987). Intentionally utilizing the conflict that exists between differing perspectives, ideas, beliefs, and identities to deeply explore those differences may produce new perspectives, ideas, beliefs, and identities.



Figure 4. Public pedagogy projects, 2015.

### Being Marked

The students were provided with materials such as books or lanyards to mark themselves as LGBTQ allies and advocates. They were invited to experiment with these materials in public and pay attention to their reactions and the reactions of others. This exercise prompted an array of responses, primarily a concern that others would think they were gay or would ask questions they could not answer.

Jordan, in Chapter V, commented in his journal about his refusal to carry the lanyard.

*What I'm trying to explain is that I will not wear my gay pride lanyard for the fact that I don't have pride in people who have gay sex.*

Jordan's response to the exercise was not common. Most students were willing to engage the exercise but certainly had different levels of commitment and concerns. Ella worried about what someone might do if she were seen carrying the lanyard.

*Having my lanyard was easy since it was somewhat disguised. I had seen this lanyard worn before, but I never knew it stood for LGBTQ Pride. I thought it had to do with elementary school and learning colors (I know I can be pretty naive). However, I couldn't bring myself to go any further than that. I was actually pretty scared to do it. I knew my family would be okay with me if I really was gay, but I was really worried about what people who didn't even know me would do. (Ella, 2015, Week 1)*

Ella, with her multiple marginalized identities, was having to consider marking herself with an identity that she felt would make her feel more vulnerable. Ella did not know what to expect from the public, but her previous experiences identifying as an immigrant led her to believe the reaction could be hostile. Ella's and other student's responses created the ability to see how our lived experiences impact our perceptions of our engagement in the world.

Some students discovered they had different reactions to being marked as an LGBTQ ally based on their location and context.

*I feel much more comfortable bringing out the lanyard around on campus than I would ever feel bringing it out in my hometown. Since my hometown is made up of a very conservative community, I would be afraid of the type of assumptions, stereotypes, and questions that would be asked of me if people saw me with the lanyard. The experiences I would have in my hometown*

*would be very different than the experiences I would encounter on campus.*

(Alice, 2014, Week 2)

Alice knew that if she were to carry her rainbow lanyard at home, people would think she was a lesbian. In a class discussion Alice shared that she did not believe people in her community would recognize the lanyard as a signifier for an ally but would assume it meant being gay. Other students shared that if they were carrying a rainbow lanyard in their community, it would not matter whether it meant that someone was an ally or someone identified as LGBTQ, as both would be viewed as similarly negative. Thus, the preservice students were learning that context mattered in relationship to identities. The following week, Alice shifted in her response to carrying the lanyard.

*Previously, I was hiding my lanyard, consciously looking around to see who was around me when I pulled it out because I was nervous of what I would say if people asked me my opinions and beliefs regarding homophobia. Recently I have kept my lanyard out in the open for people to see making myself an open target for people to talk to me about it. Although I am still unsure of what I will say, the only way for me to become more comfortable talking about it is having more conversations with people.* (Alice, 2014, Week 3)

Alice and other students made a conscious choice to be uncomfortable because they recognized that the exercise provided the possibility of new learning. After the first week engaging in this exercise, students had the opportunity to share their experiences in class discussions where we were able to deconstruct their experiences. It was following this class discussion that many students who had been quite nervous with the exercise decided to continue with a renewed sense of determination.

The following journal entry from M.L. provides an introduction to the narratives of preservice teachers in addition to Jordan, Alice, and Ella. Throughout the analysis I added additional student experiences to provide multiple voices on identified themes. The numerous narratives call attention to the similarities and uniqueness of experience. The preservice teacher voices beyond Jordan, Alice, and Ella are identified by initials to avoid gendered identification unless the student self-identified.

When students, such as M.L., had the opportunity to listen to the varied experiences of their peers, it provided additional assurance that the learning was worth some temporary discomfort.

*I ashamedly, thought of ways to avoid the assignment. I told myself that because my lanyard normally stays inside my backpack, even if I switched the lanyards, it wouldn't be that visible for most of the time anyway. I found strength in continuing the assignment from my peers. I saw them wearing it in our other classes and vowed to consciously make it visible anytime I leave the house. While it's only been a day since I got the lanyard, I haven't had much interpersonal reactions. No one has said anything to me or looked at me differently. What has been insightful, however, is my personal reaction. For instance, I was biking home with the lanyard around my neck when I ran into an old high school friend. We chatted for a bit and then I continued home. I hadn't realized I was wearing the rainbow lanyard until I came home, and I immediately wondered what he thought. It wasn't like he said anything or acted strangely around me as we talked, but my first reaction was still to wonder how it might have changed their opinion of me. (M.L., 2013, Week 2)*

During each course students experimented with marking themselves as an ally, and the class discussions and journals included reflections on the difference between being marked as an ally and being marked as someone who identifies as LGBTQ. Some students felt comfortable being marked as an ally and became more anxious and fearful in a context in which they would be perceived as LGBTQ. The following excerpt from C.A. offers an example of the emotions and thoughts associated with being perceived as LGBTQ.

*I wore my lanyard from class to my best friend's apartment. When we became friends, he (who I'll refer to as Bob) constantly used the term "faggot" as an insult, jokingly, towards myself and other friends. Whenever he or anyone else used the term I would ask them not to use that word and describe to them the impact it has on people that are homosexual as well as people who support LBGTQ values. I wore the lanyard to Bob's for two reasons. First, I wanted to see the reaction he would have with me wearing the lanyard and secondly I wanted to know how it felt to identify as something other than a heterosexual white male.*

*I found myself feeling nervous opening the door to Bob's apartment because I expected a room full of laughter and questioning. I found myself getting looked at by strangers I passed on the street during my walk to Bob's place, often met by awkward eye contact or a forced smile from some unknown person. Being outside and walking down a busy street impacted my thought process by making me feel uneasy and worried. This experience helped me understand some of the inner feelings and struggles that*

*individuals who identify as LGBTQ deal with on a 24/7 basis. (C.A. 2013, Week 1)*

C.A. does not identify as LGBTQ but experimented with marking himself. He noted feeling nervous and afraid to be in public and to see how his friend would respond. Similar emotions were consistently reported by students as they navigated spaces and relationships, reflecting on what it meant to belong and stay in community with people they care about.

For many students, just the presence of the lanyard in their daily routines evoked an awareness and learning about their identities and experiences moving around in the world.

*Throughout this whole week, I truly saw how much easier my life was since I didn't have this day to day internal battle about how I was expressing my gender or sexual orientation. As a young woman, I still have to worry about my safety as I move around the world, but I was not once ever asked what gender I was. When I did have to think of it, my anxiety heightened and it was really scary. (Ella, 2015, Week 1)*

The students' new consciousness prompted curiosity beyond themselves and those who identify as LGBTQ to a larger community and social awareness. It is these moments of ideological collision that can prompt changes in perception, ourselves, others, and how we behave. With this shift students have a new story to describe their world and their participation in it.



*Just having the lanyard with me is making me aware of homophobia, the privileges I didn't earn, and how it isn't okay for the majority of the people in our society to know very little about it. (Alice, 2014, Week 2)*

Through the marking activity, students were asked to deconstruct their experiences formally in their reflection journals and informally with colleagues outside class and in class discussions. They were able to identify not only the emotional and cognitive responses but their ideas about the source of their responses. The exercise expanded the ability of these future teachers to engage in the Out-sider praxis (Birden, 2005) in which “the teacher is called to identify with the Out LGBTQ person and make an educational commitment to generous dialogue across difference” (p. 25).

The lanyard became a signifier that made present the preservice teachers' identities and how their identities allowed them to see or not see the experience of Others (Moya, 2011). As students had opportunities to survey their experiences of being marked as an LGBTQ ally they began to pay attention to how they perceive others. They began to notice the frequency with which they employed assumptions and stereotypes based on some physical attribute or marking and what meaning they made from their assumptions and stereotypes. These future teachers will be teaching Students whose identities are quite different from their own, so it is critical that they have opportunities to recognize and critically analyze their own positionality as it is socially constructed and what implications their positionality has on their relationship with their Students.

Most of the students continued carrying the lanyard through the term, and many indicated that they will take pride in wearing their lanyards once they become teachers. I often see former students in their school buildings or meetings displaying their lanyards.

There are occasional e-mail requests for new lanyards when old ones wear out, or a former student requests a lanyard for a fellow teacher in the building. Additionally, there are stories that regularly come through e-mail and conversations that describe the engagements these new teachers have had with students, other teachers, and parents because they were wearing the lanyard. In each case, the teachers were perceived to be an LGBTQ ally and specifically approached to provide support, guidance, resources, or information. Former students share how they recognize another colleague also wearing a lanyard, not because they know each other personally but because they recognize the politics of the lanyard.

### **Vocabulary and Discourse Practice**

Public pedagogy creates a context where future teachers have interactions with diverse people in varied contexts, and we begin that practice between the students in the classroom as colleagues. When these future teachers are able to talk about their experiences, those experiences became more common or shared among the group, yet it also developed and expanded the possibilities of how they could think about their ideas and feelings.

*When thinking about this class, it has been a journey for me as a learner first and I believe the journey will turn into teaching in the future. The most important part about this class was the space that was created to talk about a topic that I found hard to discuss and a topic that I know needs to be discussed. (Jordan, 2013, Week 10)*

Jordan made a clear distinction between his identity as a learner and his identity as a teacher. The opportunity to discuss systems of oppression in schools, specifically

homophobia, was a new and challenging experience for Jordan and therefore highlighted his experience as a learner. While each student had a unique experience in the course, the time and space to explore these topics was critical for their learning.

Having the time and space may be significant but is not sufficient for teacher learning. The curriculum was essential in providing preservice teachers access to new vocabulary and language to articulate the experiences of Students in schools. Further, through public pedagogy projects, the students had opportunities to practice this language in a variety of contexts.

*Through participating in all of these events, setting up for pink prom, the ally conference, and the TeachOUT conference we have been able to see in action what we are learning about in class. This has been a great learning experience for my peers and me. It is such a different experience to actually go into the community and participate in a real issue rather than just learning it from a textbook. I hope to continue this work in my own classroom by teaching about all kinds of families and by making my classrooms a welcoming and safe place for all students to be themselves. I think by taking this class it has given me a much better use of language and enlightenment of the issues and how much it is affecting the youth in our schools. (H.H., 2013, Week 9)*

Language provided access to new relationships and communities. These future teachers entered and engaged in spaces that most of them either did not know existed or had never been actively involved in. They gained experience in entering new spaces such as GSA meetings, youth summit, and Pink Prom, where they were not at the center or the

majority. They began to recognize the importance of language to help them not only access relationships and communities that had been unfamiliar to them but also to have challenging conversations about heteronormativity and homophobia. They were building the skills and understanding of the Out-sider praxis (Birden, 2005).

*First of all, I want to say that I feel as though I know this information, but it has never been discussed in a way like this was and I have had to face it and really dissect it. Language is such a powerful thing as is the idea of outsider praxis: who do we put in the middle? This whole idea of once you gain the language necessary for these hard discussions, it is then a choice of what language to use in which space. (S.H., 2013, Week 6)*

S.H. wrote themselves into a more complicated relationship with language where context is critical. S.H. seemed to recognize that language is never neutral, and how, where, and when language is engaged is important, so just learning new vocabulary is not enough. Teachers who advocate and support LGBTQ students must cultivate knowledge and understanding of the political, social, and cultural context for LGBTQ youth.

Petrovic and Rosiek (2007) wrote,

Teachers must understand the significance and language of LGBT issues in education. This will include the experiences of LGBT youth and the perceptions of school ... and demographic facts. It will also include the language to talk about issues including the proper use and definition of terms like queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered. (p. 209)

Practicing vocabulary, discussing issues, and posing questions and challenges continued in the classroom while students also began to explore how to think about gathering donations for the Pink Prom fundraiser.

### **Donation Requests**

Gathering donations for the Pink Prom was the next public pedagogy event. The assignment asked students to identify businesses or individuals they could approach to request a donation for a fundraiser to support Pink Prom. This engagement required students to share information about the Pink Prom and why it is held for LGBTQ youth. These conversations allowed the preservice teachers to position themselves as teacher and learner in an authentic and purposeful exchange.

The preservice teachers had varied responses to the assignment. The following story from J.A. was similar to that of many students; there was great hesitation and discomfort with recognition that practice was useful.

*The first person I approached was the owner of my workplace. They own a local restaurant and I was nervous because I didn't know how they would react. I know they are religious and conservative and that was a little unsettling. I started off the conversation timidly by letting them know about the event. I could tell they were a little uneasy with me but they continued to have the conversation and listen to my cause. After discussing it with them for a few minutes they told me unfortunately they could not because of the financial situation of the business. It is slow during this part of the year and they informed me they wanted to but just didn't think it was best. Regardless of if they were being honest it really gave me the confidence to have a*

*conversation about a topic that might be a little uncomfortable for me. (J.A., 2015, Week 5)*

J.A.'s first donation request was presented to someone they already knew, a strategy many students utilized. The donation assignment was never designed to be about gathering donations, although the donations added some additional components to the BBQQueer; rather, the donation requests were a public pedagogy practice. Students needed to have a real and meaningful reason to be in conversation with the public to create opportunities to learn and teach. Through their conversation with the business owner, J.A. was able to practice and gain confidence. Other students considered approaching their workplace but were very concerned about potential impacts to their work relationship and employment.

*I started thinking about the people I had met in my job, there are several business owners, corporate business men and women, and high-rollers that use this facility. Unfortunately, I have heard a lot of bigotry and discrimination in the short time that I've worked there. I worry that there will be a backlash, almost definitely with the members, and most likely also with management. I'm willing to see what kind of results I get through facilitating conversations around LGBTQ issues and the events that we will be helping to host, but am worried about how it may affect my employment. (A.H., 2015, Week 5)*

Ultimately, A.H. had a conversation with their immediate supervisor and reported that the conversation went fairly well, but A.H. was not willing to take the request any further. It is important to note that the donation exercise was not mandatory, although

most students participated on some level. Students were given other options for supporting the Pink Prom.

The internal conflict students experienced through the donation process provided a cognitive and emotional awareness of LGBTQ experiences in the world. During class conversations these future teachers began to consider the depth of fear and concern an LGBTQ youth may have in being open about their identity to family, teachers, employers, and church community. Schutz (1999) described the risk and uncertainty when he noted, “We take risk when we insert ourselves into the public—never certain ‘who’ we will appear as. Different spaces give us opportunities for different ‘voices’ because different common projects allow us to coalesce into different interpretive positions” (p. 80).

### **Marking Artifacts**

Engaging preservice teachers in creating materials for the course events supported a community discourse and intentional practice in articulating identity and centering LGBT identities in discourse and practice. Students individually and collectively designed and created posters, t-shirts, and activities for Students. Each artifact required the preservice teachers to spend time considering particular elements of the curriculum while keeping Students central.

*Making signs and t-shirts gets me to start thinking about the way in which I want to present myself in the world. Never have I had to really sit and think about what identity I want to present out to the world. I feel as though I have a lot to learn, especially if I want to become a respectful and inclusive teacher. If I want to be a great teacher who is teaching from multiple perspectives and*

*who is culturally and gender inclusive then I need to get over my neurotic need to define people and have solutions and explanations for everything. Everyone's identity is constantly changing and it's a fluid concept. (S.D., 2015, Week 5)*

Making t-shirts required each preservice teacher to mark themselves as an ally for Students. Similar to S.D., most students required time to consider more deeply their own identities before they were ready to decide what visual representation would accurately reflect their commitment to Students. Considering the apprehensions and concerns the students shared about wearing lanyards during the first week of the course, by Week 6 they were more confident and excited to mark themselves as LGBT allies with explicitly queer symbols and language.

Most students wrote about their experience of creating artifacts because the activities were surprisingly more challenging than they had expected. G.K. wrote about the group process of creating a poster for the youth summit.

*When we first started making the outline for the poster, who and what we wanted on there, we were thinking of a title to draw attention. We were having a tough time thinking about what would be inclusive and eye catching for youth. We brainstormed a title, we thought about "You're in good company", but realized it wasn't inclusive. The word "you're" is singling out the individual, which would have the opposite effect we were wanting. We wanted the poster to strike the feel of community for the students at the summit and not distance them further. The word "we" really includes everyone and creates a sense of community. This is something that was very eye-opening*



*about the creation of the poster. Words sometimes seems insignificant, but often holds all the meaning, in this case I was removing myself from the community, because I do not identify as LGBTQ, but really that is where the problem lies. (G.K., 2014, Week 5)*

The specific learning that transpired in these activities was not planned; only the opportunity or possibilities could be considered in the planning. Watching from the outside, it may appear as if the preservice teachers were having fun with arts and crafts, which they were. Unfortunately, that narrative misses the considerable reflections, tensions, and insights taking place in their work. These activities push against the traditional image of what learning is supposed to look like and offer an example of alternative sites and shapes of learning. There are learning activities that cannot be captured on a worksheet, test, or paper because the learning happens in unexpected spaces and moments. The activities are born from public and conflict pedagogy and demonstrate for preservice teachers how advocate/activist teaching might look and how to move theory into practice.

### **Theory to Practice**

The preservice teachers' process of posing their own challenges, questions, and concerns initiated a curriculum of consciousness (Greene, 1997). Greene (1997) described a curriculum of consciousness where the learner develops through concentrated observation, intense reflection, and a willingness to break from traditional subjectivities in order to move beyond what they had been.

The preservice teachers considered their experiences in relation to texts with critical discourse and reflection.

*First of all, this whole experience in the past few weeks has been my first time actively participating in a cause that is directly related to what I am learning about in the classroom. We learn about praxis, Freire, and critical pedagogy, we read stories about teachers who get their students involved in their community. I have my own dreams of doing the same thing in my classroom one day. However, I had yet to actually experience it until now. It's a good thing to experience something from the point of view of a student before I actually employ these practices as a teacher myself. (J.M. 2013, Week 8)*

Modeling and experiencing theory to practice allowed students to begin imagining what is possible in their own teacher identities and practices. The connection between course content and community engagement provided opportunities for students to practice, and for many of the preservice teachers what they imagined as advocacy/activist teaching was much grander and more complicated than the course community engagements. The course activities allowed the future teachers to imagine anti-oppressive teaching not as a social movement but as daily teacher–Student interactions and curriculum that connects to community.

In addition to making connections between theory and practice, the community activities seemed to create more energy from students and ease anxieties about what it means to be a social justice teacher.

*These past few weeks with my involvement in the BBQueer, Pink Prom, and TeachOUT have been some of the most memorable experiences I have had so far in the program. We spend so much time reading in books about people's stories, we watch movies, we read critical pedagogy theory, social justice, and*

*equity that, even though I am still very interested and passionate about the subject, I just get worn out and anxious.... What I am trying to get at was going to the GSA event and being there for Pink Prom takes all those stories and makes them real. It gives a face and a heart and a weight to our readings that would have never been accessible otherwise. (J.M. 2013, Week 9)*

The engagement with Students has been significant, and without actual connections and experiences to the teacher education curriculum the stories and theory can create more anxiety for preservice teachers because of the unknown and uncertainty of being a teacher. Public pedagogy allows students spaces to learn and practice so they get a sense of what their curriculum and pedagogy might look like in the future.

*This class meant different things to different people. For some, it was their first exposure to LGBT issues and students. For others, it was an extension of already-existing queer activism. However, everyone had in common the experience of learning through personal connection and action, which is unique from other courses. (S.C., 2013, Week 9)*

Teachers often work in isolation from their colleagues, school community, and/or the larger community. As the complexities of being an advocate/activist teacher unfolded for them, some students recognized the critical importance of having a community of colleagues and friends working together to build a social justice framework that presses against oppressive educational policy, discourse, and practice. The shared experience of learning through connection and action in the course provided modeling of one strategy to create a teacher community.

## **BBQueer**

In addition to the GSA meetings and youth summit, the annual BBQueer is a larger community space that draws a wide variety of attendees from across the community. The gathering is an intentional space for dialogue across difference, and the preservice teachers are asked to host and be in conversation with attendees. Community is created when people of diverse voices come together as who they are in speech and action, the process of getting to know people through dialogue (Greene, 1982). K.L. wrote about their conversation with a community member attending the BBQueer.

*One person told me they had been a cross dresser for over twenty years and they were so excited about the work we were doing. They said they were from a church that accepts people of any sexual orientation and gender identity and that they host videos every so often about social justice topics. They explained that the next video was about the gay community in their older years and how many people who formally identified as queer can't share their identity when they are put into nursing homes. All of our work has been centered around the young LGBTQ community and it was interesting to consider the LGBTQ elderly populations. It opened up a whole different frame of reference through which to consider homophobia. (K.L., 2013, Week 7)*

The community that most preservice teachers had been considering through the course became much larger through the BBQueer event. K.L. had never considered older people who identified as LGBTQ or their experiences, and for K.L. this conversation provided a significant moment to consider larger implications of homophobia in the community. This event to support the local Pink Prom is important for community

members who identify as LGBTQ. The BBQueer signifies a recognition and support that LGBTQ adults did not have when they were in school. Each year community members show up to support LGBTQ youth and share their stories. This event has become a complicated interplay between individuals, space, knowledge, and time outside the traditional classroom.

*We read stuff in our courses about the positive effects of becoming involved with the community, but it's different when you actually experience it. I know a few other students and I have discussed that this course is truly impactful because we are putting what we have learned into action. We want more of this in our courses—connecting what we learn to relevance outside the classroom.* (A.K., 2014, Week 8)

Each of the constructed public pedagogy events created significant learning opportunities for preservice teachers. Even though each of these spaces were coordinated and planned, there is no avenue (or desire) to plan what specific learning occurs during these engagements. The openness of the public pedagogy assignments also allows for misunderstandings to occur and for preservice teachers to avoid learning. The public pedagogy assignments create an opportunity, but they certainly do not guarantee a student will engage that opportunity. The preservice teachers can also engage in the assignments and not identify learning from their involvement. Public pedagogy is a creative, fluid strategy, and each person's experience is unique and dependent on a plethora of factors such as previous experiences, beliefs, environment, time, space, and identities. Each of these gatherings is a "re-envisioning of schooling as always a part of our real world experience, and our real life" (hooks, 2003, p. 41). The future teachers, as

well as all those who attend the BBQueer, have access to forms of knowledge they would not experience in the classroom or a text.

### **Pink Prom**

The preservice teacher engagement with the Pink Prom occurs at the end of the term after the preservice teachers have had several opportunities to meet and engage with LGBTQ students. The preservice teachers have completed 8 weeks of reading, writing, and practice with queer vocabulary and discourse. The students have developed some confidence, so they show up at the Prom prepared to follow the Students' lead and engage in conversations with Students, parents, school district staff, hotel staff, and the general public.

*I spent several hours helping to decorate for the Pink Prom at the hotel as part of this class. I have to say that through decorating for that prom I learned more about helping this community of students than I ever could have in any classroom lecture or textbook. I was amazed and humbled at the amount of time and effort that everyone had put into making this experience so great for these students. I learned a lot about the teaching community through my interactions with the other volunteers. (M.C. 2013, Week 8)*

M.C. had the opportunity to observe and participate in community activism supporting LGBTQ students. It was the teaching community, school teachers, counselors, administrators, and university instructors that M.C. was referring to in their writing. The teaching community was modeling what it could look and sound like to actively support LGBTQ students. Many students had developed an idea of what advocacy and activism looked like and would refer to activists such as Martin Luther King and Cesar Chavez.

The queer theory and poststructural framing of the course curriculum provided a disruption of the normalized notions of activism and particularly the scale at which activism became visible. So many of the preservice teachers had equated activism with leaders of significant social movements and did not recognize the daily actions of people in their communities as advocacy and activism. We utilized their life experiences and course activities to regularly deconstruct and reconstruct ideas of activism to emphasize the multiple forms of advocacy and activism that are fluid and contextual. The Pink Prom provided a space for M.C. and other students to see advocacy/activism within their community.

The Pink Prom, the GSA meetings, and the youth summit created spaces where LGBTQ identities were the majority, and the spaces were explicitly claimed as queer spaces. In majority claimed spaces, those with dominant identities are perceived as normal, and it is rare for those in dominant identity groups to be in spaces where their identities can be questioned. These queer spaces also changed the relationships and engagements in the classroom for the few LGBTQ preservice teachers in the course. The LGBTQ preservice teachers were visible and centered in the classroom, an experience most had never had.

A public pedagogy provides opportunities for preservice teachers to be in queer spaces. Those with dominant identities are asked to question and reflect on their identities as they navigate the space and follow the lead of LGBTQ students.

*My biggest take away from the prom was to see a space that was welcoming and inclusive of a minority community that often does not get to be in the majority. This was their space. It was amazing to see the confidence that the*

*students had as they moved around the space that they owned. I also really enjoyed seeing the overlap of communities and cross-community engagement. This was a great way to meet and engage with others that you might not otherwise have the chance to meet and interact with. This event allowed me to see what happens to the public when these spaces are created. People walking by become curious and interested in what was going on. Dialogue started and people were provoked to think about the work. (H.M., 2015, Week 8)*

H.M. recognized how the space allowed for connections between groups of people that would not typically engage with each other. The Pink Prom is held in a large first-floor room near the entrance at a popular hotel in a busy downtown area. The location makes the Pink Prom space very visible to the general public moving through the hotel as well as the hotel staff. H.M. along with other students hosted a welcoming table at the front entrance, which put them in direct contact with the public. Throughout the evening, people from the general public would stop and inquire about the event, and preservice teachers practiced their articulation of Pink Prom and why there is a critical need for the event. The students were able to talk about the experiences of LGBTQ students in school, including important statistics related to school outcomes. This complex space produced a text for learning and teaching among all of those attending and those in proximity to the space.

### **Youth Summit**

The youth summit offered a different public pedagogy space. The 2015 youth summit brought together 240 LGBTQ youth from four school districts. The preservice teachers had worked diligently for 6 weeks to prepare materials, schedules, and activities.



During the youth summit, Students attend workshops, network, and have table activities designed by the preservice teachers. The primary responsibility of the preservice teachers on the day of the event was to support the activities for Students: to help direct Students, answer questions, listen deeply, and engage in a critical reflection on the school experiences. The preservice teachers were urged to pay attention to their own learning, unlearning, resistance, and conflicts as they did the work.

*At the Youth Summit students felt comfortable enough to share their personal stories. There were stories about coming out to their parents, rejection from families, support from families and friends, and school experiences. Hearing the students demonstrate such courage while they were laughing and having fun with friends. It was eye-opening to the fact that they just need support and a community that will support them and listen to them. They just want to enjoy being a teenager just like other students. (E.G., 2015, Week 7)*

What are the stereotypes that future teachers hold about LGBTQ youth as they compare them with “normal” students? E.G. had previously believed that LGBTQ youth would need something (she did not indicate what) different from what other students need. The Students at the youth summit did not need anything different than any other student would want at a youth conference. The Students just wanted the space and time to engage with peers, share their stories, and be able to exist.

*During the youth summit, several students shared that their parents either didn't know, didn't want to know, or rejected them because of who they are. One of the students even mentioned getting picked up by the police after he tried to come out to his parents. I was shocked that the parent could do*

*something like that. It leaves me wondering if more education and more public awareness surrounding LGBTQ issues would even help some of these people. For a large part of this class I have been of the opinion that if we were to get the word out a little more, and that if people were more educated about these issues they would be more likely to be accepting of someone especially their own child. However, after hearing some of the experiences of the students, I'm not so certain anymore. (J.B., 2013, Week 8)*

The stories from Students at the youth summit created a conflict for J.B. and challenged their beliefs. Their previous thinking about solutions to address homophobia became more complicated and created a Napanla space, the space where “different perspectives come together in conflict and we begin to question our basic ideas, tenets” (Anzaldúa, 2002, 549). J.B. held a belief that more education and public awareness around LGBTQ student issues would improve experiences the Students were having, and then J.B. heard stories from LGBTQ youth that more education and public awareness had not changed the outcomes for the Students standing right in front of them. These two perspectives had come into conflict for J.B., and they had to struggle to figure out what this meant and how they could think about this issue now that they had more perspectives to consider.

Through both a class and personal conversation with J.B. following the youth summit, J.B. said they knew education alone might not stop homophobia, even within families. Yet, J.B. also believed that education could create change. J.B. experienced an in-between space capturing overlapping and different realities challenging homophobia.

J.B. now had multiple constructions of a problem that might open new ways to consider the issues. A.K. also wrote about the importance of education after the youth summit.

*I was proud of the middle school child who said that we need to be educating people on these issues. Most—if not all—the students who spoke noted that ignorance was a component in bullying. During the conference there was high school students who shared that bringing community into schools would help bring more perspective to the issues. These same high school students also recognized that bullying is harassment, and that it should be recognized by its true nature. Something right is happening, because my roommates and I agreed that when we were in middle and high school we didn't think on that level. (A.K., 2014, Week 8)*

I believe A.K. was proud of the middle school student who said education was important because the student's voice supported what A.K. already believed. Like A.K., J.B., and other students who are committed to becoming teachers, education is central to how they believe change is possible. The youth A.K. wrote about also thought additional perspectives would be helpful in creating change. Education is the purpose of public and conflict pedagogy but not an uncritical or simplified notion of education. The course framework and curriculum prompted preservice teachers to consider education as a multidirectional learning, unlearning, resistance, and conflict.

A.K. and their roommates also concluded that the Students' perspectives highlighted how much had changed since they were in high school. In the class discussion, I did not disagree that change may have occurred, but I wanted the students to consider other possibilities. When they were prompted to consider other reasons for the

perceived difference between themselves and Students at the youth summit, they were fairly quick to offer that they did not consider bullying and harassment as competently as did these Students because they did not need to. The future teachers began to consider how the Students' identities informed how they think and talk about bullying and harassment. Again, the class discourse was not designed to silence their ideas but intended to complicate and expand their ideas and provide an opportunity for students to move theory to practice in multiple contexts.

### **Public Engagement and Conflict Beyond the Curriculum**

Among the multiple contexts of public pedagogy designed in the course, the preservice teachers were also engaging outside the university or school context. They wrote about and discussed engagements in the more intimate spaces of work, friends, and family. T.K. experienced a change in how much they were willing to share their ideas with friends, family, and colleagues.

*The last two weeks have been really impactful in my thinking of public pedagogy and teaching the larger populace about homophobia and the other forms of oppression that manifest themselves in different ways in our community and society. The biggest way that I have been engaging is in my personal conversations with friends/family and classmates. I grew up in a very conservative, right wing community, but my family has always been very liberal and accepting of difference. Growing up, because my opinion was the minority, I kept my mouth shut when I knew that people wouldn't agree with me because I knew the argument wouldn't be productive. While I know that this community is a fairly liberal community, the old habit of keeping my*

*mouth shut has persisted in certain settings. However in the last few weeks I find myself speaking up more. (T.K., 2014, Week 6)*

The idea of public pedagogy compelled T.K. to reconsider her silence and reflect on the tension between her family's and her community's beliefs. T.K. wrote about her change in behavior as if it were less intentional and more spontaneous. Other students pointed to vocabulary practice and increased knowledge of Student issues as catalysts for change. Other students, such as B.D., were uncertain how to read the reactions from others.

*I teach a ten-year-old violin lessons. I have been teaching her for a few months and I knew her mother from my previous work. I had never spoken with her about LGBTQ issues before or my thoughts of them and I never really thought that she would be opposed to them. One day after I finished giving her daughter a lesson I mentioned the BBQ fundraiser to the mother. She seemed very taken aback and not sure what to say. I wasn't really sure how to talk to her about it and I was half afraid that I wouldn't hear from them again for another lesson. While this didn't come true, every time I see her and speak to her now the thought is still crossing my mind that she might not trust me around her daughter because of my support of LGBTQ issues, and it really bothers me. I have wanted to talk to her about it but I don't know how to address it in a comfortable way for both of us. (B.D., 2011, Week 7)*

B.D. not only read the parent's reaction as negative but wondered whether the parent would trust her around her child. I was curious about B.D.'s reference to trust and asked her if we could talk further about her experience. In our conversation, B.D.

explained that there are so many negative stereotypes of LGBT people, including the idea that LGBT people are sexual predators of children and cannot be trusted to be with children. B.D. was quick to emphasize that she certainly does not believe that narrative, yet when she was uncertain of the parent's response, that became her concern. In our conversation she said,

*if I had the reaction just from a pretty casual conversation, I cannot imagine the level of concern or fear that LGBT people have every day, wondering what people are thinking about them. (B.D., 2011, Week 8)*

B.D. was able to utilize her experience to shift to a discourse of the LGBT experience. The experience B.D. was considering was accurate although it was a singular narrative of an LGBT experience. Throughout the course, particularly in the beginning as students were exposed to the troubling data and stories of LGBT youth in schools, it was challenging for them to think about LGBT youth beyond a victim narrative. The course objectives were to consistently complicate the preservice teachers' construction of LGBT identities.

The preservice teachers discussed and wrote consistently about their interactions with friends and family. Some of their stories were positive conversations and engagements, but most of the stories they wrote and really wanted to discuss were the difficult and challenging conversations and insights. These stories emphasize that there is no singular public and that public and conflict pedagogy are a regular part of our human engagements. This course aimed to make planned and unplanned public and conflict pedagogy visible through instructional practices.

*My roommates did not have a positive reaction when I shared with them what I was doing in this course. One couldn't understand and turned it into a joke. What I was saying and doing disrupted what they believe is normal and they didn't know how to handle that so they became very rude and vulgar. There was no reasoning with them when I told them not to say some of the things they were saying and I tried to explain why it was offensive. But because they were just joking, they didn't think it counted. (K.W., 2015, Week 6)*

The challenging conversation K.W. noted in her journal was not her only difficult engagement with her roommates; she had several over the term. The conflict students experienced with family and friends occurred outside the structured public pedagogy activities and became part of the curriculum as students brought their experiences into the classroom. The difficult and often very painful experiences offered differing perspectives, ideas, beliefs, and identities and could be utilized as tools to explore those differences and possibly produce new perspectives, ideas, and beliefs.

*This class is making me think a lot about my husband, and about how I have been put in this gendered role without even knowing I was in a gendered role and now I am pushing back against it and he doesn't like it. The class has made me think about elitists and that my husband is one and I never realized it before, and those kinds of things that I never thought about before. In terms of homophobia, I don't have much experience. I have family members that identify themselves as gay and I have had friends in school who were in the closet and didn't come out until later. I just didn't ever really think about why they were in the closet until taking this class. (K.B., 2011, Week 7)*

Public pedagogy is designed to draw our attention to relations of power and domination that occur in the public sphere and impact our identities and knowledge production (Jaramillo, 2010). K.B. engaged deeply as a preservice teacher, and her identity as a wife and mother of three young children was also significant as she engaged in the course. She considered the curriculum and activities through multiple lenses, which created an opening for her to recognize a new perspective on her identity in her marriage and created conflict with her partner. While becoming knowledgeable about the impacts of homophobia in schools, K.B. was also becoming knowledgeable about the impacts of gender in her family culture.

For C.A., her family culture of antigay language and beliefs created significant conflict for her as she moved through the class. Her parents were not happy she was taking the course, and the family conflict persisted while C.A. was pushing herself to examine her antigay background and current beliefs.

*I was walking around campus today looking at all of the different booths that represent the different clubs on campus. Normally I would avoid the booths that had rainbow colors because I felt uncomfortable with a GSA type group, but today—especially because of this class, I felt more comfortable to walk up and ask them what their group was about and not feel weird inside. I am not sure where those feelings came from except for my background with strict conservatives who are anti-gay, and remembering how my dad would comment about “fags” or “gay pussies”. So I am not sure if my gut feeling about gay people is natural, like I was born with it, or if it was conditioned over my years growing up and that it seems natural. (C.A., 2013, Week 8)*



In week 8, C.A. was still confused about her feelings related to LGBT identities, which created great discomfort for her. C.A. knew her parents would not approve of her taking the course, yet she proceeded. In class, C.A. regularly shared the conflictual conversations she had with her parents and her struggle to try and make sense of her experience. Each year in the course there were future teachers eager and committed to becoming antibias teachers while struggling internally with their histories and relationships. C.A.'s conflict is not only a site of tension or disagreement but a process of transformation where she finds herself considering who she is, where she is, what she knows, and what she does not know, an example of Anzaldúa's (1987) *Nepantla*.

A.H. wrote about her own *Nepantla* experience.

*I come from a very republican religious household which, in my case, means that my folks and I disagree on quite a few hot button topics. I have several friends who have come out over the years and being from a religious community has really shed some negative lights on those people or their lifestyles, which always struck a chord with me. Through the choice of becoming a teacher and a compassionate human being, I have made the choice to stand against all forms of discrimination and injustice that I see in my classroom and in the world which causes some tension in my family and community. (A.H., 2015, week 7)*

Voicing opinions different from those of her parents was not a new experience for A.H. In her writing she shared her multiple communities: a religious community, friends who identify as gay, and the tensions between them. She had been living with this conflict prior to the course, and it would be with her in the classroom.

The following story by K.H. illustrates how her multiple identities as a daughter, student, and future teacher sit in a contentious relationship to her mother who is also a teacher.

*The conversation with my family was especially lengthy because it involved a conversation about why a course such as this one is offered in our program, what I am learning about, how this political issue is relevant to educational issues, and programs that implement snit-bullying. My mom was a teacher for 22 years and predominantly taught middle school science and was surprised that this is part of our coursework. Aside from believing that no student should be targeted or bullied, my parents do not believe that gay and lesbian issues should be discussed at school. They also do not understand the relevancy of this class as part of my coursework because they don't see why it would have a place in curriculum. (K.R., 2013, Week 6)*

C.A., A.H., and K.R. were committed to becoming teachers and navigating challenging and transformative spaces. The tensions in their relationships existed in some form before they came into the course, morphed and persisted through the course, and likely continued in a new form after the course. Watching and listening to them struggle with important relationships and issues highlighted a process of transformation. The transformation was not to any specific end but a transformation of their language, knowledge, and identities. As preservice teachers engaged over 10 weeks, many of them became more comfortable with new vocabulary, better at understanding and articulating issues, and more confident exploring their identities.

One of the most painful and destabilizing moments occurred when a student recognized that his parents or other loved ones were racist, classist, sexist, and homophobic.

*My eyes have been opened to all kinds of injustices which managed to remain invisible during my childhood and adolescence. Now that they have been uncovered, I realize that they can never be unseen, my luxury of obliviousness will never return. I have noticed that my reaction and feelings towards these realities alternate between rage, frustration, empathy, hope, inspiration, guilt, and numbness. Above anything else, I am emotionally exhausted. Then to my horror, I recognized the face of racism and classism in that of my own parents. (C.L., 2013, Week 4)*

The exhaustion and insights C.L. wrote about exemplifies the “crisis” Kumashiro (2004) describes and conflict pedagogy through Anzaldúa’s (2002) *Nepantla*. C.L. held beliefs about how he thought the world worked and how people engage in that world—including his family. C.L. now has new information that sits in conflict with his previous beliefs. Kumashiro (2004) explains the space of crisis as the “emotional discomfort and disorientation that calls on students to make some change” (p. 30). Anzaldúa (2002) explains *Nepantla* as the space where perspectives come into conflict and “allows you to examine the way you construct knowledge, identity, and reality, and explore how some of your/others’ constructions violate other people’s ways of knowing” (p. 544). Both Kumashiro (2004, 2015) and Anzaldúa (2002) theorize about the possibilities of change through crisis and conflict.

By the middle of the term after readings, discussions, and public pedagogy practice, many students found themselves sharing a similar experience to that of C.L.

*I have felt the impact of the “creation of a crisis” and the educational paradigm shift it produces. I now often recognize the heteronormative behavior myself and my peers often engage in. However, I am much more prepared to intervene in this behavior. For example, I almost daily say to myself, “wow that was sexist.” I then think meta-cognitively about reconstructing my thoughts in order to reflect my beliefs in equality. I see other’s homophobic remarks not as simply that they just don’t understand homosexuality and LGBTQ issues, but as invitations to dialogue and engage.*

(L.G., 2011, Week 8)

For some students their conflict took place in the context of family, for others it was an educational or emotional conflict, and for some the conflict lived in multiple contexts.

*It’s not that the information was presented in a horrific or intense type of way; it’s just that I had never been asked to think about such complex ideas like structural social and political oppression. It’s crushing to find out about all the injustices and the true concept of inequality. It distances us from those who we thought knew everything. It makes us question people we are supposed to get advice and unconditional love from. (K.L., 2013, Week 3)*

The course is structured and scaffolded to support students through this learning process. For example, the course readings were scaffolded to provide language, information, and resources for each of the public pedagogy events. The classroom

discussions before and after each event offered additional space for students to ask questions, share concerns, and debrief their experiences. Both the instructor and I were present and fully engaged with the preservice teachers throughout the events.

By the middle of the term students have had some public pedagogy engagements, but the second half of the course includes large public pedagogy projects such as the BBQueer, Youth Summit, and Pink Prom. These events offer future teachers more opportunities to observe and practice strategies that speak back to or respond to the conflict. The public pedagogy events are intended to demonstrate what educators can do to engage and support Students. In other words, the public pedagogy events can provide a path for future teachers to shift from a gaze on the conflict to a vision of new possibilities and an attitude of hope that teachers can change Student outcomes. In the following journal entry, H.M. made this shift where she still acknowledged the discomfort and challenges, but she began to build a vision of what is possible.

*A lot of our work this term has been to center the Other and the struggle or push back when trying to de-center the norm or dominant group. This work is challenging because it asks of us to be uncomfortable and navigate unfamiliar spaces. We have talked about these feelings in terms of hesitation in the beginning of the term and how those feelings have progressed into seeking out moments of what initially was unknown or caused fear. However, this is not to say that these instances of seeking our conversations are not still uncomfortable or automatically and easily navigated. These are still contested, unfamiliar areas of work and I think they always will be. I see more possibility now, which gives my work so much more meaning as I think [of]*

*the way in which these practices and instances of learning will map onto my teaching. (H.M., 2015, Week 9)*

H.M. recognized the possibilities that live in uncomfortable and contested spaces, and by the end of the term was seeking out unfamiliar or uncomfortable spaces for their learning as a future teacher. This writing highlights the larger goal in utilizing conflict pedagogy to “produce social knowledge that is helpful in the struggle for a more equitable world” (Lather, 1986, p. 67). Intentionally utilizing the conflict that lives between differing perspectives, ideas, beliefs, and identities as a tool to deeply explore those differences has the potential to produce new perspectives, ideas, beliefs, and identities.

By week 4, M.H. seemed to recognize the value in the discomfort of exploring different perspectives and the learning it offers for them now and in the future when they are teaching. Not all of the preservice teachers recognized or believed in the value of being challenged or exploring different perspectives. Some of the students came into the course with this philosophy of learning while others, like M.H., came to it early in the term, some later in the term, and some students never did.

*Every day that I come to this class, I know that my way of thinking will be challenged and that I will be asked to move outside of my comfort zone. This is something I really appreciate, as I believe that we all learn best outside of our comfort zones. In order to be excellent teachers who reach and see every single one of our students, we must be willing to do things that we wouldn't normally do and talk about things that we wouldn't want to talk about. (M.H., 2014, Week 4)*

M.H. was able to write explicitly about the goal of this course and its target of preparing teachers to disrupt the norms of schooling. The pedagogical and curricular strategies in the course are designed to develop and support an advocate/activist teacher identity. We need to have teachers who “will work to expose problems in the status quo and help us imagine and create more socially just alternatives” (Kumashiro, 2015, p. 53). To create positive outcomes for Students, our classrooms, and schools we need to reconsider the traditional pedagogical assumptions of the role of teachers (Lather, 1991).

When we teach our students that there is safety in learning to cope with conflict, with differences of thought and opinion, we prepare their minds for radical openness. We teach them that it is possible to learn in diverse teaching settings. And in the long run, by teaching students to value dissent and to treasure critical exchange, we prepare them to face reality. In the classroom and beyond they will face many situations where learning must take place in circumstances in which they may or may not feel in control, feel good, or feel that the mood will always be harmonious. (hooks, 2010, p. 88)

We critically need teachers who are not only not neutral but can challenge the ideas and practices that have become normalized in our schools. When teachers push against the status quo to create more socially just alternatives there will be tension and conflict. Therefore, it is critical for teachers to recognize the benefits of conflict and develop skills to move in and around conflictual spaces.

### **Identities**

The course curriculum asked students to not only examine and reflect on systems of oppression but to actively explore how those systems are engaged and supported in

schools and the specific impacts on Students. The three case studies of Jordan, Alice, and Ella illustrated how the preservice teachers engaged in this curriculum.

The curriculum was designed to disrupt the common frameworks we use to make sense of ourselves and the world (Kumashiro, 2002). The curriculum provided an opening for future teachers to question and struggle with their identities. They wrestled not only with how they saw themselves but also with how they were seen by others. Although the course content centered on the construction and engagement of homophobia in schools, the curriculum, materials, and activities were designed and implemented as an intersectional examination of oppressions. The learning for these future teachers occurs across the classroom and public engagements where they are involved in activities that create connections between their prior knowledge and experiences and new information and experiences (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014).

As these future teachers explored their identities, they grappled with their privilege. Prior to considering the identities and experiences of LGBTQ youth, it is necessary for students to have an understanding of privilege and oppression in their own lives. Their reflections were amplified by their multiple identities and complex histories, such as White male students who had lived with poverty or middle class White female students who experienced sexism. Most students initially held a framework of identities as binaries such as being male or female, middle class or poor, African American or White, Latino or White, etc. Therefore, in their efforts to understand their identities, they experienced the tensions and conflicts of being both privileged and oppressed. In the quote below, J.B. tried to reconcile his White male privilege with his past challenges. He had begun to recognize that both were true, and yet he was not sure how to accept both.



*These issues are difficult for me to ... accept (I'm not sure that's the right word for it), because I am the white male that is always referred to as having the privileges. I understand how this is true, and I also understand the way these things have affected me, but I've experienced a lot of adversity in my life so it's hard for me to whole heartedly accept these things. (J.B., 2013, Week 2)*

J.B. found himself unable to reject or accept his privilege and challenging life experience. He found himself in a Nepantla space, “The place where different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures” (Anzaldúa, 2002, pp. 548–549).

In Chapter V, the case study about Jordan revealed the tensions he experienced while developing his advocacy skills and fearing the loss of his scouting community. Jordan had begun to imagine the possibility of being an advocate for LGBT students, yet he believed that advocating for these youth would mean he would lose access to his scouting community.

*If I was to support the LGBT group openly with my scouting group and they said I was gay and could no longer be part of the scouting group that would be very hard for me and my family. I AM AWARE that the position the scouting group is taking is wrong and discriminatory but making a choice between the two groups, scouting have given more to me over my life than the LGBT community and I have to make that choice. (Jordan, 2013, Week 3)*

Like J.B., Jordan was considering his identities as separate and incompatible. He was in a Nepantla space, feeling tensions between identities. Additionally, Jordan was thinking about his family and implications for their experiences. I would offer that Jordan's identity as a parent and partner is present within these tensions. Jordan's capital letters signal additional tensions about a community he is attached to and also disagrees with their policy and practice.

The zone between changes where you struggle to find equilibrium between the outer expression of change and your inner relationship to it. Living between cultures results in "seeing" culture, first from the perspective of one culture, then from the perspective of another. Seeing from two or more perspectives simultaneously renders those cultures transparent. (Anzaldúa, 2002, pp. 548–549).

Jordan had been engaged in the scouting culture and now he recognized an LGBT ally community was available to him. His ability to recognize both perspectives at the same time created a new opportunity for him to examine and question his own identities and communities.

As the preservice teachers built their capacity to recognize and hold multiple perspectives, they also developed greater capacity to explore their own identities.

*When people look at me, they don't just see me as a woman or white. I am seen as a white, middle-class, heterosexual woman. By not looking at the different affects and relationships the different categories have on one another is like looking at me as just a woman, and nothing else. (Alice, 2014, Week 3)*

The questioning and tensions around their identities was experienced with varying degrees across all cohorts and students. For the preservice teachers that were able to hold a more complicated understanding of their multiple and complex identities, they were more prepared to recognize and support the Students' identities and experiences.

In the following journal segment, S.C. noted how her identity as a White, able-bodied lesbian impacted which Students she knew how to engage and support in the classroom and where she would need more knowledge and skills to be able to support other Students. She also recognized that her identity as a lesbian did not make her knowledgeable or skilled at teaching students with other identities.

*It is easy for me to be aware of LGBT issues in the classroom and how to make the space safe for people of all gender and sexual identities. However, it will require more effort for me as a white, able-bodied person to find ways to make the classroom a safe space for students of other racial/ethnic backgrounds and students with disabilities. (S.C., 2013, Week 9)*

Although this course centered on gender, S.C.'s journal highlights how students were able to utilize their learning about homophobia in schools to help them understand other forms of oppression and the intersectionality of those identities. In the 2015 course, UOTeachOUT contracted with Julio Salgado, a visual artist who identifies as a queer, Latino, and undocumented immigrant, to provide workshops at the youth summit. Julio's art centers on the intersection of marginalized identities, and both Julio and his work provided a model for preservice teachers to think about identity and support Student identities in their classrooms.

*We need to be thinking about the intersections of identities. The intersections of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and social class complicate student identity. Making these intersections a part of the discussion that happen in these LGBTQ spaces can transform the space to bring students together, but also to celebrate their own uniqueness and individuality. (I.V., 2015, Week 7)*

I.V. was thinking about her classroom not only to support the unique identities of their Students but also as a space to create community and celebration. Her vision of a classroom, its purpose, and its possibilities had become so much more expansive. In the following, N.D. wrote about their commitment to support future students and welcome their multiple identities after having spent time watching and listening as Julio worked with Students.

*I spent a lot of time in the room where Julio Salgado was speaking. He has a really interesting story and his art is really powerful and moving. He said two of his identities, being undocumented and queer, are two identities that people often have to hide, and can only tell people they know they can trust. The people in his art, however, claimed both of those titles and were proud of them. By embracing who they really were instead of hiding it, there was a clear sense of empowerment they gained. As a future teacher, I think this is something really important to show my students. They should be proud of who they are, and when they embrace themselves can be empowered through that experience. (N.D., 2015, Week 9)*

N.D. made a shift from writing about Julio's identity to considering Student identity. It was significant to N.D. that Julio is proud of his identities and how pride is conveyed in Julio's artwork. When I read N.D.'s journal, I wondered whether they had ever met anyone, prior to Julio, who said they were proud of being queer and of being an immigrant. I suspected that Julio's perspective was new for N.D. and sat in conflict with how society, particularly media, talks about queer and undocumented people.

N.D. recognized the power this gave Julio and his art, and N.D. wanted this type of power for their future students. Further, N.D. identified that in their role as a teacher they could provide this recognition and power to their Students.

At various points in the term, many preservice teachers were able to generalize learning about other's identities and their own identities to consider more critically Student identities.

*On a daily basis, I face sexism, and because of it, a small amount of discomfort. It is hard for me to imagine what other people encounter who are on the "wrong" side of racism, heterosexism, and classism. Although I feel some discomfort for being a woman, I can't imagine it is anywhere near what others encounter even more frequently. (Alice, 2014, Week 2)*

Alice's writing captured a common struggle as students were trying to make sense of systemic oppression and the impacts. With their primarily binary framework, they initially set up marginalized identities as working against each other and then created hierarchies of privilege and marginalization. The other way students thought about these issues was to flatten all marginalized or privileged identities and make the experiences

and impact the same. Over the course of a week, the subsequent journal showed a shift in Alice's thinking about identities.

*We simply cannot measure which privilege is better to have or what form of privilege you don't want to end up with. They are all different and coexist with themselves differently. What one person may experience as a lack of race privilege isn't the same as a person's experience as a gay male ... I always assumed that African Americans and homosexuals or low-income people had the same experiences and discrimination because they both lacked some privilege. It was uncomfortable to see how narrow minded I am to think that everyone has the same experience. (Alice, 2014, Week 3)*

Alice had shifted to consider a more expansive and complicated notion of identities. Her writing recognized we all have more than one identity and those multiple identities engage together in different ways across multiple contexts. This change in Alice's thinking created the possibility for her to develop a more complex understanding of her own identities and those of her future Students.

The course readings and discussions presented the preservice teachers with data on the school experiences of LGBTQ students. The students responded to the texts by reflecting and writing about their own K-12 school experiences. Grappling with their identities through their K-12 experiences allowed them multiple access points to engage the course, specifically the school experiences of Students. They were no longer just graduate students and future teachers; they were able to access their identities as daughters, sons, siblings, friends, and teenagers, bringing those identities into their

learning. The following quote is from a student who has lesbian parents and had painful school experiences trying to hide her parents from her school relationships.

*After this term and looking at the way homophobia affected me as a learner and teacher, I am surprised that I felt such a strong connection to my schools. After all, they were the reason I felt ashamed of my family and tried to hide them from the very place I loved the most. It is interesting to me, now, that I loved school and my mothers so passionately, but couldn't bring myself to share the two with each other. I think this is part of the reason it took me so long to identify teaching as my career path. I felt some sort of underlying hostility towards school and my teachers, despite how much I adored them and wanted to spend time with them. I always knew I loved kids, but didn't think I could handle being a teacher. After some serious evaluation and introspection, I think that neither I nor my teachers made any efforts to include my family. (H.G., 2013, Week 8)*

H.G.'s schooling experience had been present for her the entire term, and she shared several memories of working hard to keep her parents away from school because she was so afraid of anyone finding out she had two moms. H.G.'s story became a shared story in the class. The fear of a little girl with two moms was no longer a story of the Other, but a story everyone shared with H.G. These future teachers could access H.G.'s experience as they engaged with Students and families in their classroom.

Jordan also shared some of his painful school experiences with his course colleagues.

*When I went to school as a straight student who was homeless I was called gay and a fag. I was also beat up for not having nice clothing and told I was smelly. (Jordan, 2013, Week 3)*

The planned curriculum of LGBTQ Student school experiences and the emergent curriculum shared by students disrupted the belief that schools were a welcoming space for all Students. This new perspective of schooling prompted students to experience what Kumashiro (2004) calls crisis. Crisis in teacher education is the “emotional discomfort and disorientation that calls on students to make some change” (p. 30). The students began to think about peers from their K-12 classrooms, those Students they had not noticed or thought about very much. They quickly recognized these were the very Students we were discussing in class. Almost every preservice teacher across the five courses has been able to share stories of students in school who were bullied due to their gender expression, gender identity (perceived/real), and sexual orientation (perceived/real).

*When I was in high school, there was a homosexual who was openly gay. Although I never thought much about it back then, looking back on the situation, it is sad how much he was bullied and teased because of that aspect of his identity. I wish I would have had the knowledge and discourse back then to have done something about it. (Alice, 2014, Week 2)*

The students frequently articulated a desire to “go back” and do something different: tell a teacher or a parent, walk away from jokes, or be a friend. The students’ “crisis” in learning and desire to do something offered the opportunity for these future teachers to consider how they will disrupt oppressive practices and make their classrooms



supportive for Students. According to Kumashiro (2004) when students experience crisis they need an avenue to develop hope and opportunities for action. The course provided modeling so students could witness teacher educators working and supporting change for positive Student outcomes.

Amidst their memories of schooling, the students consistently recognized the lack of access to information regarding topics of gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality.

*Throughout sixteen years of education, I cannot remember even one teacher bringing up any topic related to the LGBTQ community. It shocks me that a topic that affects so many students can be ignored by so many educators.*

(A.H., 2015, Week 2)

Class conversations allowed many students to share their frustration and anger that such important information had not been discussed in their K-12 experiences. They compared this frustration and anger to their reactions when they first learned that many historical events they had been taught in school were inaccurate or very partial. Examples they offered were the colonization of America and the Civil Rights movement and how the “facts” they had been taught in school were not accurate and very one sided. These conversations about colonized school curriculum led to discussions on what knowledge is considered important in K-12 education and who makes those decisions. These dialogues emphasized for students how heteronormativity is engaged at all levels of schooling to reinforce the status quo.

*I have never before this education program designed discussions on homosexuality or homophobia. The only discussion I have had in my 35 years*

*from a teacher was way back in middle school when I learned about the word 'homosexuality' when talking about AIDS in the classroom. (Jordan, 2013, final paper)*

Jordan's small exposure to LGBTQ issues was echoed by many students in the course depending on the geographic location, the dates they went through high school, and whether they were required to take a health course for graduation. The topic of sexual orientation was covered briefly, but only through a health framework of disease and fear, but gender and gender identity were never discussed. The preservice teachers began to articulate the importance of all Student and family identities being acknowledged and supported while recognizing that implementing that level of inclusion requires them to be prepared to engage as advocates/activists for Students and families.

The Education as Homophobia course engages sociocultural practices that support future teachers to experience themselves in new ways and considers new possibilities for teaching. Through sociocultural practices, preservice teachers not only learn the specific methodologies of teaching, but they also need to learn how to be members of the social and cultural communities where they are teaching and experience themselves in new and distinct ways (Coll & Falsafi, 2010; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The students participating in the course had an interest in education and teaching. They all began the course with a vision or idea of teaching and of being a teacher that developed from their histories. A goal of the course is to disrupt any normative ideas about teaching and teacher identity, which includes guiding preservice teachers to examine how their personal identities are consistently engaged with their professional identity.

*The parts of my personal identity that are also parts of my teaching identity include me being Latina, have a growth mindset, survived child abuse, was undocumented, bilingual, an immigrant, understanding of stereotype threat, understanding of gender identity, and acknowledge where I hold privilege.*

(Ella, 2015, Week 10)

Ella's identities inform her teaching practices, and she often shared in class how her identities and experiences are constantly informing how she thinks of herself as a teacher. She knows that her personal and professional identities and beliefs cannot be separated and that they guide her practice as a teacher.

In the following excerpt, S.C. continued to consider what it means to share with students that she is a lesbian. She wrestled with her personal and professional identity throughout the course.

*The best part of the day for me was when the students lined up to leave, and several of them asked me for a hug. One of them told me that I was the first queer college student she had ever met, and another told me I was the only queer with long blonde hair she had ever met. This made me laugh, but also led me to reconsider yet again what coming out to students could mean as a teacher in terms of challenging stereotypes and providing positive role models. I realize I have mentioned this in almost all of my field journals. Will I ever come to a conclusion about this?* (S.C., 2013, Week 7)

S.C. is wrestling with her own queer identity as well as considering her future Students. She knows there are significant benefits for some students if she were to be “out” in her teacher role. She recognizes the significance of how she might be able to

challenge stereotypes and be a role model for Students. S.C. also understands the potential negative consequences of being an out teacher and what that could mean for her personally and professionally. Her past experiences have reinforced that being out as a student or teacher can have challenging and negative consequences. Through this course she has also identified the importance of students and teachers being able to claim their identities in schools. S.C. is living in a Nepantla (Anzaldúa, 2002) space as she considers different perspectives that seem to be in conflict, and she must question her basic ideas, tenets, and identities.

Ella has been contending with multiple and challenging identities her whole life. Her K-12 experience taught her what it meant to hide pieces of yourself to be able to survive.

*As a teacher, I am someone who believes that in order to teach successfully, there should be trust, love, and understanding towards all students. I understand that every student who comes into my classroom will bring pieces of themselves with them, to add to the collage that will shape our classroom community. This is why I also understand that I too will be bringing my own pieces to add to that collage. I say pieces, because we rarely show ourselves completely. My personal goal would be to create a classroom environment where students can show themselves wholly. (Ella, 2015, Week 10)*

Ella was beginning to vision a classroom where both she and her students can bring all of their identities to school to engage academically and socially. Beyond creating a vision, the course aims to model possibilities for Ella so she can begin thinking about how she might create the classroom she dreams about for herself and Students.

I.V. offered significant insights about LGBTQ youth through her own lens as a Latina. She did not have access to her own Latina history until she started college and continues to wrestle with navigating her own identity.

*In many ways I am not surprised that I am not as aware as I thought I was on LGBTQ issues because I sometimes even struggle to grasp ideas within my own Latina history. I find it very sad and frustrating because I feel that if students were exposed to all kinds of histories within the curriculum, by the time they got to college they would already have a deep understanding of their place in the larger, complex social structures, which could bring about more powerful conversations. I also understand that such hidden histories are meant to stay hidden because every time they are discovered and re-discovered they slowly chip away at the social structures that are currently in place; so, in this sense I am glad that I have the privilege to have such conversations even if it is later in my schooling experience. (I.V., 2014, Week 7)*

I.V. understands how important it is for LGBTQ youth to have access to their history with support to locate themselves in a larger social context and the opportunity to be in conversation about their identities. I.V. also has a younger sister in high school that identifies as queer, which provides her an intimate view of how youth might be struggling to navigate multiple identities that are historically oppressed.

J.M. made a link between student identities and teacher as advocate. As a teacher, J.M. believes they are responsible for supporting all student identities and educating students about bullying and harassment.

*I think exposing students to different types of identities from an early age is very important. Recently, I read an article, I cannot remember what it was, but it said that teachers have the second most influence on a child, right after the child's parents. That idea makes a lot of sense to me, and I think that shows how much power teachers can have. I want my students to know that I will be their ally regardless of their identities, and I think part of that is addressing issues that come up. Even just someone calling someone else a sissy can be damaging, so I want to be the type of teacher who confronts those issues and helps children to become more aware of what they are saying. I definitely do not want to be a teacher who ignores bullying because that would be neglecting my duty as an educator to create a space where students feel welcomed and safe. (J.M., 2012, Week 5)*

J.M. recognizes that their roles and responsibilities as a teacher are more than engaging students in academic content. They acknowledge the power and influence teachers have in the lives of students, and this power comes with significant responsibilities. J.M. is already planning the kind of relationships they would like to create with Students and how they can make the classroom welcoming for all Students. J.M.'s writing was similar to that of many preservice teachers across the courses. By Week 5, most students recognized their responsibility in supporting Students beyond academic content and began to consider how to become an advocate/activist teacher.

Like J.M., S.C. had come to understand that her responsibility as a teacher was much more than providing academic material. In the following journal entry, S.C.

reflected on how she has developed her identity and what implication that has for her as a teacher.

*What I have learned and how I have learned it have shaped the person I have become. When I think about the amount of time that people spend in school throughout their lives, I realize that as an educator, you are responsible not only for imparting knowledge but for creating citizens of the world. (S.C., 2013, Week 8)*

S.C. reflected on her own learning and the spaces where that learning happened and how her identity is intricately tied to what and how she has learned. As S.C. takes on the identity and roll of teacher, that identity and role has begun to take on different meanings. S.C. is beginning to realize that ideally school is a space for learning, and leaning is how we create meaning in our lives.

When preservice teachers are able to recognize that their identity and role as a teacher is to be more than someone who “imparts knowledge,” then maybe they will look at and listen to their Students to build meaningful relationships. Creating citizens of the world requires teachers to know their students and their community.

Teachers need to know more than their subject matter. They need to know more than generic pedagogical theory. And they need to have more than a general inclination to reflect critically on their practice. They need to understand something about the specific cultures of their students and how it relates to the cultural assumptions in the curriculum they are teaching. (Chang & Rosiek, 2003, p. 264)

Many of the preservice teachers had developed a commitment to support all Students and began to have a conceptual understanding of teaching in a more complex political framework. The commitment to becoming a teacher advocate/activist is critical, and preservice teachers also need to be able to vision how they are going to create the relationships with Students and a welcoming and engaging classroom.

A 10-week course is not enough time for future teachers to wrestle with all of their questions and concerns. By week 8, J.B. had begun to develop a desire to be an advocate for Students, but their vision was to engage in even bigger and more sustainable ways.

*A lot of what I have been thinking about lately is how I can help make a difference. I know that I can continue to support events like the BBQueer fundraiser from Monday, but I have been thinking about a larger scale. I've been wondering what kinds of things I may be able to do in the long run. This pertains both to LGBTQ issues and teaching in general. The more I've been learning about these issues the more I want to become an advocate for equity.*

(J.B., 2013, Week 8)

J.B. captured a sentiment many students articulated. Through the public engagements and witnessing models of Student support, the preservice teachers began to articulate other possibilities. Individually, in groups, and as a class, they began to design activities, interventions, and programs to address the needs of LGBTQ Students, Students of color, and Students with disabilities.



In the midst of their discussions and visions of their future classrooms, there were also concerns, such as not being able to facilitate challenging classroom conversations and being fired. R.G.'s writing captures what many students were thinking and writing.

*The idea of causing a disruption or confronting issues of race, sex, gender, class, or disability in a classroom is intimidating to many teachers. I think many teachers are too scared to take risks. Teachers are afraid of being fired, or of losing control of the discussion with students and having it lead somewhere unintended. It is easy to just say we all promote understanding and accept different, instead of talking about "isms". (R.G., 2011, Week 5)*

R.G. identified very real issues of concern to preservice and in-service teachers. Spread throughout the course, the curriculum included local and national stories of teachers, classrooms, and schools experiencing consequences related to their work in supporting Students. Developing an advocate/activist teacher identity includes understanding the social, cultural, and political context of your work. Teacher education that supports anti-oppressive schools has a responsibility to engage in active discussions and provide students with experiences working in this conflict laden space. Rather than silencing the dialogue around oppression, future teachers must open up to possibilities of discomfort, conflict, and uncertainty to best prepare for their work.

In this chapter I provided a series of student narratives that helped illustrate the effects of public and conflict pedagogy on preservice teacher identity. The examples I used closely tracked the momentary articulations and shifts in identity of several preservice teachers in order to highlight the overall themes prevalent across the courses. I focused on the specific pedagogical events and curricular elements that appeared to

stimulate transformations in how students considered their current and future identities. This broader analysis in relationship to the analysis of three individual narratives is offered as a response to the question, “How do conflict and public pedagogy in an anti-oppressive education course impact preservice teacher identity?”

The final excerpts, one each from the last 3 years of the Education as Homophobia course, captured the language preservice teachers used to describe their future roles as anti-oppressive teachers.

*During the TeachOUT I wrote this down as a reflection and I think it sums up my feeling about the event and the class. Once you are an ally, it is a lie to be anything else because you have already seen the oppression, the hurt, and the need. Working from afar is safe, but working within is powerful. I don't gain anything new from playing it safe; I'm already privileged to feel that way. An ally is right and an ally is right now. (K.L., 2013, Week 8)*

K.L. had acquired new knowledge and experiences of heteronormativity and homophobia in schools and the impact on Students. They also recognize a teacher's work does not live in a singular context but can vary in relation to their Students, and teachers must consciously make decisions to work within the community of their Students and families. K.L. also acknowledged their privilege and how it impacts teacher identity and practice. Finally, in K.L.'s writing there is a sense of urgency in attending to Students.

L.G. also highlighted teacher responsibility in his writing.

*I understand the impact of homophobic discourse, that I may entice people to become defensive or more homophobic. The idea of controlling homophobic bullying is extremely challenging. However, I understand more clearly that*

*this is not “their issue” (referring to LGBTQ students/people). It is my issue- my responsibility as a teacher to not just protect LGBTQ students, but to fight for them. (L.G., 2014, Week 7)*

L.G. learned about the harmful impacts of homophobic discourse and how changing the discourse is likely to cause conflict. He also understands that efforts to eliminate homophobic bullying will be a significant effort, and it is not the responsibility of LGBTQ youth to take on this task. L.G. claimed that teachers need to not only advocate for LGBTQ Students, but it is a teacher’s responsibility to fight for Students’ academic and social success at school and in the community.

N.D. continued the theme of teacher responsibility to support LGBTQ youth with a focus on curriculum and critical thinking.

*This course has really opened my eyes to the importance of support and advocacy. If I want to see change, I need to make it happen. Ways that I can attempt to change the community I teach in is by giving my students every side of the story. I can’t just teach out of the history books given to me. I have to provide additional readings for my students so they understand there are more sides to every story. I hope that one-day it won’t be separated into US history and LGBTQ history. One saying we discuss a lot in class is whatever side you decide to teach, you are also deciding on what side not to teach. Teaching is not neutral. (N.D., 2015, Week 9)*

N.D. captured key concepts and learning from the course. She understands why teacher advocacy is so critical to Student success and why taking responsibility for creating change belongs to each of us. N.D. offered that improving curriculum and

encouraging critical thinking for Students are strategies to address homophobia and heteronormativity in schools. And finally, teaching is not neutral but is a complex political project.

In this particular, located, and situated project, some preservice teachers and I came together in our fluid, unstable, and perpetually becoming identities to consider the possibilities of how future teachers could be better prepared to teach Students. With no certainty available, the future teachers in this work provided me with a vision of possibilities in teacher education.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION

I close this dissertation with a brief summary of the purpose and scope of my work, outline several limitations of my research, offer some implications for teacher education programs, and end with a preservice teacher narrative.

#### **Purpose and Scope**

In this dissertation I provided case studies as a methodology to track the experiences of students in a preservice teacher education course. “Equal Opportunity: Education as Homophobia” is an anti-oppressive education course aimed at preparing preservice teachers to work with LGBTQ students and to support an advocate/activist teacher identity and practice. Public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy were curricular strategies implemented to achieve these goals. The case study method allowed me to surface the interactions of significant factors in a real life complex social phenomenon (Yin, 1994) to answer the following question: “How do public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy in an anti-oppressive curriculum impact preservice teacher identity?”

There are a multitude of research possibilities for exploring how to improve Student outcomes, and at the risk of contributing to the invisibility of larger systemic oppression in the education system, this research focused on creating change at the classroom level through teacher agency. I examined preservice teacher identity as a site of change based on the significant research that emphasizes the strong influence of teacher behavior and practices on Student success, because teachers are ideally situated to impact Student experiences and academic outcomes (Freire, 1970; Gilpin & Liston, 2014; hooks, 1994; Wright et al., 1997). In considering Student outcomes, we know that

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Students, Students of color, and Students with disabilities are failing school and being pushed out at much higher rates than majority population students while also experiencing high rates of bullying, harassment, and physical violence in school (Kena et al., 2014; Kosciw et al., 2014). Therefore, teacher beliefs and attitudes that drive meaning and decision making in the classroom are significant factors to consider in any attempt to improve outcomes for Students.

This dissertation is constructed on the idea that preservice teacher education is a complex political project.

Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. The development of an education methodology that facilitates the process will inevitably lead to tension and conflict within our system. (Shaul, 2010, p. 34)

Therefore, teacher education is a project to support students to become advocates and social change agents. Becoming a teacher is also a complicated process that engages personal and professional identities as they influence each other and continue to develop and change across time and context (Alsup, 2003; Beijaard et al., 2004; Ben-Peretz et al., 2003; Chang & Rosiek, 2003; Korthage & Vasalos, 2005; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Sconiers & Rosiek, 2000).

Further, the work assumes multiple, often conflicting identities that exist in unstable conditions of construction and reconstruction, formation and reformation, and erosion and expansion (Danielewicz, 2001). “The reconceptualization of identity as an effect, that is as produced or generated, opens up possibilities of ‘agency’ that are insidiously foreclosed by positions that take identity categories as foundational or fixed” (Butler, 1999, p. 187). With teacher agency central to creating more positive outcomes for Students, it is critical that preservice teacher have opportunities to develop and support an advocate/activist teacher identity and practice.

This dissertation follows the work of scholars such as Petrovic and Rosiek (2007) who emphasize that teachers need to know how to implement an anti-oppressive teaching practice and put their critical consciousness into action. “It is not enough for teacher educators to turn out teachers with a critical conception of heteronormativity; they must also be able to envision ways, both small and large, to act on that critical consciousness” (p. 226).

Public and conflict pedagogy are used in the Education as Homophobia course to develop and support advocate/activist teacher identity and practice. The first concept central to this course is that anti-oppressive education takes place both within and far beyond the classroom. As I have attempted to show, public pedagogy uses people and systems such as schools, media, and larger community as a text for learning. Situated in these alternative texts are the behaviors, discourse, and structures of oppression that became elements of the curriculum. Preservice teachers were provided some critical lenses with which to see the world and then were assigned tasks that engaged these

students outside of the classroom in the world. The students were asked to observe, reflect, and interact with their critical insights in these alternative texts.

The complicated interplay between individuals, space, knowledge, and time provided preservice teachers explicit multidirectional teaching, learning, unlearning, resistance, and conflict between themselves and their public. The resulting response of the world outside the classroom, and sometimes just the anticipation of this response, then served a pedagogical function. It became a part of the learning process for the students in a way that has the potential of continuing long after the course has been completed.

The second central concept is that personal, social, and cultural conflict is a part of our human experience, including educational contexts. Public pedagogy depends on identifying places, spaces, and circumstances outside the classroom that place students self-consciously in situations that surface social conflicts that are often sublimated or suppressed. In addition to conflict that arose in the public pedagogy events, the curriculum paired with the students' critical lenses also surfaced conflict with family, friends, and workplace.

I employed and analyzed conflict pedagogy to highlight how sites of conflict in preservice teacher education can be utilized for vital sites of learning, teaching, and possibilities for change. The narratives in this dissertation illustrated how future teachers explored conflict with two distinct frames: the cause of the conflict and their response to the conflict. This conflict and developing assignments where future teacher will be asked to sit in that conflict and explore the differing perspectives and the way the conflict shapes their feelings and behavior are learning experiences. The conflict itself teaches us.



Poststructuralism, feminist pragmatism, and queer theory were used to theorize teacher identity. As these future teachers move through an antibias curriculum that intentionally disrupts and destabilizes a normative understanding of identity, curriculum, and pedagogy, I explored how this curriculum engages their current understanding of teacher identity and practice. I studied how they engaged with their multiple identities and curriculum as well as the tensions between their lived experience, theoretical applications, and public engagements.

Poststructuralism required deconstruction of the preservice teacher narratives, resisting and working against accepted truths and oppositions, while creating options for multiple perspectives. It was critical to include multiple preservice teacher narratives in the analysis to explore the complex, multiple, and intersecting identities of the preservice teachers and how those identities informed their experience.

Feminist pragmatism was employed in the process of choosing and analyzing the preservice teacher narratives because this approach emphasizes the preservice teacher's relationship between theory and praxis. This theoretical framework underscores the view that preservice teacher knowing and experience are in constant relationship with each other, and I used the teachers' stories to explore how they have tried to make sense of their experiences in the course.

Queer methodology guided how I gathered stories from fluid, unstable, and perpetually becoming students. It required utilizing an anti-normative frame as I considered preservice teachers, curriculum, pedagogy, and data. Queer theory compelled me to question what I might actually come to know from this research (Browne & Nash, 2010).

The three case studies of Jordan, Alice, and Ella offered analysis of individual preservice teacher stories, and the analysis chapter provided a second level of analysis across course events with multiple preservice teacher narratives. The narratives highlighted particular moments, events, or conversations when preservice teachers and the public engaged with ideas and practice, and it emphasized sites and moments of conflict. The analysis made visible the distinct shifts or changes in language, perceptions, or beliefs that informed the preservice teachers' identities and/or practice.

In part, the conclusions for this dissertation are not reducible to a bulleted list of assertions. This dissertation's design was in large part performative. The practice of public and conflict pedagogy is highly context dependent, as are its effects. The case studies of Jordan, Alice, and Ella therefore are portraits of the operation and efficacy of public and conflict pedagogy in specific contexts. The point of the case studies is the whole case study, and these case studies do not boil down to any one claim or assertion. The thematic analysis of student responses to particular classroom activities has a similar contextual and performative premise. These modes of representation attempt to holistically sensitize the reader to the premises and practice of public and conflict pedagogy.

That being said, the analysis presented in the previous chapters does constitute a demonstration of the capacity—though not guaranteed—of the effects of public and conflict pedagogy on preservice teacher personal and professional identity. Although this work is open, contextual, partial, and unresolved, I offer my conclusions from this work for the field of teacher education. My conclusions are framed with respect to the impacts of public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy.

## Conclusion

**Public and conflict pedagogy preparation and support.** There were critical concepts and curricular strategies that students needed in their preparation for their engagements in public pedagogy activities. The student narratives indicated that the concepts and curricular strategies impacted the effectiveness of public and conflict pedagogy strategies.

Examples of key concepts students identified as anchors in their learning were theoretical identity frameworks and gender and sexuality vocabulary. The curricular strategies explicitly impacting the public pedagogy assignments were the scaffolded readings and course discussions each week. Although I focused this dissertation on public and conflict pedagogy as curriculum, it is critical to acknowledge that the classroom curriculum is intricately embedded and supports the alternative sites of learning.

**Public pedagogy.** Through their narratives, the preservice teachers identified how public pedagogy impacted how they were considering their identity and the identity of Students. I propose that each of the following concepts were significant in supporting the potential development of an advocate/activist identity for these future teachers.

***Spaces as political.*** The public pedagogy events through the course drew attention to issues of power and politics in public spaces and provided alternative sites of learning. The preservice teachers had opportunities to learn about the importance of context in learning. They explored what space means, who claims space, and what space means to different people not just through texts but with their own bodies. The public engagements helped students recognize schools as “politics as space” (Stovall, 2010). Understanding school spaces as political and not neutral made visible how difficult the school

experience can be for Students. The preservice teachers recognized which groups have historically and currently held power in schools and what this means for those who do not.

The public pedagogy spaces in this course recentered LGBTQ youth and decentered the mythical norm, providing preservice teachers examples of how to disrupt and challenge how space can be used to support Students. Beyond reading about the importance of recentering Students in education, these spaces of engagement helped the future teacher to envision pedagogical practices that could challenge, resist, and disrupt heteronormative gendered assumptions about their own identity and Student identity in the context of space.

***Oppression as schooling.*** Similar to other multicultural or anti-oppressive courses in education, the students in the Education as Homophobia course explored how systemic oppression works in schools. What public pedagogy provided in this course were alternative texts to explore oppression from different perspectives. These future teachers were able to learn about, recognize, and observe oppressive systems from a variety of perspectives (events, Students, parents, teachers, and community members) through the critical pedagogy learning project.

***Discourse as access.*** Preservice teachers were provided definitions and vocabulary to make distinctions between gender, gender expression, gender identity, and sexual orientation. It is critical for students to have access to a new vocabulary and discourse, but access is not sufficient. The preservice teachers needed opportunities to practice, particularly for those students who were accessing this discourse for the first time. For most future teachers, using the gender vocabulary is not comfortable. Through

their hesitation, discomfort, and practice, the preservice teachers had opportunities to experience the power in and around language. Through their discourse practice the students experienced individuals that responded to them with hostility, anger, silence, and disapproval while in other spaces, and these students were able to identify allies and access new communities, including LGBTQ youth.

*The Other as us.* It was important for the preservice teachers to move closer to a deeper understanding of the Other. They needed examples of youth and families who hold different gender identities and orientations in order to make those identities real and not just someone in a book or the media. It was critical for the preservice teachers to have authentic engagements with Students and families who are different from them. It was through authentic engagements that future teachers had the opportunity to disrupt their stereotypes and assumptions. The public pedagogy events allowed them to envision Students as more than victims of oppression but to see them as scholars, artists, musicians, and leaders in their community.

*Teacher as learner.* A critical component of public pedagogy in this course was engagements with Students, not on Students. As instructors, we needed to ensure that the preservice teacher engagements with Students were authentic rather any type of voyeurism or zoo effect. Building in components of advocacy such as requesting donations for the Pink Prom and taking materials and projects to GSA meetings gave purpose to the Student engagements and attempted to create collaborative projects between Students and preservice teachers. The preservice teachers benefited from the reciprocal relationships of teaching and learning outside the classroom, opportunities to practice listening to Students and following their lead. The alternative learning sites were

able to disrupt a normalized idea of teaching that places the teacher in the front of the room guiding instruction.

***Activism as community.*** Through interviews and writing, the students identified that having a community to engage discourse and collective engagement was important to their learning. Being an advocate/activist teacher requires a community for support and to bring different voices and perspectives. The course challenged the normative idea of community held by students that centered on family, close friends, and colleagues. Although those intimate communities are very important, the future teachers had the opportunity to consider other types of communities that would support their work. They explored Student communities, parent communities, research communities, social service communities, online communities, and activist communities. It was important for these future teachers to place themselves in larger communities engaged in the work of advocate/activist teaching to continue to be challenged and motivated with networking and resources.

***Conflict pedagogy.*** It is common and understandable for students to recoil or push back when they are uncomfortable with new ideas or materials, particularly when those ideas and materials come into conflict with deeply held beliefs and values. Conflict pedagogy was utilized as a teaching strategy and resource for students and instructors to access new ideas and perspectives and potential transformations.

***Conflict as partial and contradicting truths.*** Engaging conflict pedagogy asks preservice teachers to acknowledge conflict, tensions, and discomfort and seize those experiences, even if only momentarily, to explore beliefs and insights. Within a normalized binary construct, a common response to conflict is that someone must be

wrong and someone must be right. Just as the course disrupts a binary construct of gender, gender identity, sexual attraction, and sexual orientation, the course also disrupts a binary notion of conflict. Within a conflict, instead of right and wrong there are contradicting truths and partial truths.

The case studies of Jordan, Alice, and Ella revealed some moments or situations in which they struggled with ideas and beliefs that were in conflict. The preservice teachers were offered an explicit theory and framework of discomfort and conflict as an experience that was expected and could be a learning opportunity. Over the five course years, the students were often willing to not only engage and explore the tensions but to sometimes push themselves into learning opportunities with curiosity rather than fear of conflict.

Making conflict a central framework in the curriculum, with intentional scaffolding and supports, offered preservice teachers multiple paths to access their learning. For the future teacher who is working toward an advocate/activist teacher identity, understanding how to navigate through conflict and recognizing the possibilities within sites of tension are crucial skills.

*Discomfort as loss.* It is important to note that students experienced a variety of emotional and intellectual losses throughout the course. As these preservice teachers came to hold a deeper knowledge about inequality and bias, they experienced tensions within their family and peer relationships. This experience was expressed through Jordan and Ella's writings and has been an experience of several students over the years. Because the course called for a public pedagogy and urged students to engage the world, it was critical to have supports and resources available for students.

**Limitations.** There are several limitations in this research. My focus on teacher identity and practice as the site of intervention to change the outcomes for Students comes at the expense of teachers by focusing the responsibility of change on them while not addressing the larger systems of oppression in the education system.

I believe this research provides teacher educators with strategies to consider in their work preparing future teachers to work with Students. The fact that this study was conducted in a specific course (focused primarily on one particular group of K-12 preservice teachers) over 10 weeks in a particular university and community influences the generalizability of the implications. However, in terms of transferability, I would suggest the implications are theoretically and practically applicable to other teacher education programs.

Students self-select into this course, which populates the course with preservice teachers choosing to engage in the topic of homophobia in schools. This course was offered as one of five choices within an Equal Opportunity Seminar Series. Students were required to take a minimum of two equal opportunity seminars, and they were offered content focus areas including homophobia, poverty, gender inequality, environmental degradation, genocide, racism, and nationalism. Therefore, although students were required to take courses on social inequality and education they were allowed to opt into any of the five topics. Although mandating the course properly elevates the topic as an abiding professional concern, the window of choice allowed for some self-selection on the part of students within this class. We could insinuate from student responses to other mandated courses that there would be more resistance and hostility toward the topics



addressed in this course if it were a mandated course. This is an important consideration to keep in mind when considering the data.

Preservice teachers in their senior year of college are the focus in this research. To receive their teaching license they are required to take one more year of course work and student teaching. Therefore, this research does not offer any data on teacher identity and practice once these students are in their own classrooms. My future research could benefit from research with in-service teachers who had taken this course and from determining how these teachers articulate their identities.

### **Implications**

There are a variety of implications that emerge from this study. I will frame those implications with respect to preparation for teachers, preparation for teacher educators, and future research. With each of these categories I recommend supportive strategies in the development of an advocate/activist teacher identity in anti-oppressive teacher education. It is important to note that although the development of this course grew out of a unique set of circumstances, the implications from this research are not unique to those circumstances. The following implications and strategies are rooted in an anti-oppressive ideology and practice.

**Implications for preparation for teachers.** The following implications for teacher preparation highlights the most significant strategies identified in this research to support advocate/activist teacher identity development.

*Access to alternative sites of learning.* Traditional methods of teacher education have not demonstrated that they adequately prepare preservice teachers to work with LGBTQ Students. Disrupting the traditional classroom practices can be helpful in

providing alternative texts for learning. Using public pedagogy can provide preservice teachers the opportunities to engage in activities with LGBTQ Students outside the classroom. These engagements have tremendous potential for future teachers to learn about their Students' capacities, strengths, and interests while disrupting stereotypes and assumptions about LGBTQ Students.

***Access to Students.*** Public pedagogy engagements can disrupt the normalized roles of teaching and learning, i.e., teacher as authority. Preservice teachers practice being in a teacher/learner role as LGBTQ youth take up the role of Student/teacher. Preservice teachers have the opportunity to listen and follow the lead of Students. This shared teaching and learning model provides an example of how future teachers can think about engaging and building relationships with Students in their classrooms.

***Access to reflection protocols.*** Using public and conflict pedagogy as curriculum strategies benefits from a consistent reflection cycle between students and instructors. Preservice teachers wrote weekly based on instructor prompts that encouraged a critical lens and a forum for students to share their experiences, ideas, and questions. There were weekly opportunities for students to bring their writing back into the classroom as part of the curriculum. This reflection cycle created communication between students and instructors and among students in which their writing was a valued and relevant part of the curriculum.

***Access to vocabulary and discourse.*** Preservice teachers must have the appropriate vocabulary to have conversations about the nuances and multiplicity of gender identity and sexual orientation. They need to understand the historical and current political and social context for LGBTQ youth to develop a gender and sexuality

discourse. Preservice teachers need multiple opportunities and contexts to practice vocabulary and discourse so they develop skills to talk about Student experiences. Many preservice teachers have a narrow story of LGBTQ Students, and with a new vocabulary and gender and sexuality discourse they have the potential to renarrate their story of LGBTQ Students.

*Access to identity theory.* A significant barrier for preservice teachers as they consider their work with LGBTQ youth is thinking about these youth within a binary identity framework. Preservice teachers require a more complex understanding of identities as socially constructed and intersectional. They need to first consider their own identities within this new framework and have opportunities to observe and reflect on how their identities impact their beliefs, ideas, and behavior. Having a more complex understanding of their own identities can create a pathway for them to reconsider the identities of Students and how those identities may impact their beliefs, ideas, and behavior.

*Access to conflict as curriculum.* Conflict and discomfort are not common curricular elements in a teacher education program, yet they are common experiences of future teachers considering anti-oppressive teaching. I recommend an explicit recognition of conflict as a natural part of becoming an anti-oppressive teacher and utilizing the experiences of conflict and discomfort as central curricular strategies. When future teachers have the supported opportunities to explore their experiences of conflict and discomfort they have access to new layers of beliefs, assumptions, and feelings that can inform their personal and professional identity development.

*Access to multiple models of advocacy and activism.* The preservice teachers often think of activism in relation to significant social movements such as the Civil Rights movement or Black Lives Matter movement as a more current example. Most of the preservice teachers had not considered the power in small ongoing disruptions or thought of those day-to-day engagements as activism. When future teachers have access to multiple models of activism and opportunities to observe educators engaged in different types of activities, it creates openings for future teachers to see themselves as advocates and activists.

**Implications for teacher educators.** Consistent with the scope and purpose of this research, the following implications are related to curriculum and pedagogical implications for teacher educators. Specifically, the implications highlight strategies teacher educators can consider in their anti-oppressive teaching to support an advocate/activist teacher identity in preservice teachers.

*Disrupt normalized teaching and learning models.* Teacher educators can open up so many possibilities in preservice teachers' identity development by providing multiple models of teaching and learning. The models should consider who does the teaching and learning, where does teaching and learning happen, and how teaching and learning happen. With access to multiple teaching models, future teachers can begin to imagine themselves and their students with more complexity and options for teaching and learning.

*Disrupt concepts of curriculum.* Curriculum can create barriers to access, opportunities, and relationships for teachers and students. Teacher educators should consider curriculum beyond the normalized ideas of curriculum. Alternative texts such as

nature and the public can be used to expand preservice teachers' thinking about what counts as knowledge, who has access to knowledge, and how individuals access knowledge. These alternative texts provide models for preservice teachers to consider the identities and experiences of their Students and pathways for building relationships.

Teacher educators should use curriculum that centers the Other, highlights Students of color, Students with disabilities, and LGBTQ Students, and reflects these identities in the school and community. Multiple and alternative texts that center the Other makes more room for both Students and teachers to access the curriculum and each other.

Embedding conflict and discomfort as a natural and regular part of anti-oppressive curriculum provides a legitimate space where preservice teachers can explore and question their experiences. Conflict as curriculum models for preservice teachers how they might consider the conflict and discomfort that is inevitable with their future Students.

*Disrupt and expand models of advocacy and activism.* Teacher educators should include multiple and specific examples (local, national, and historical) of advocacy and activism. Preservice teachers need to see themselves as advocates and activists supporting Students, and when the only models they have are glorified heroic models, these teachers are not likely to claim that identity for themselves. This is particularly important for preservice teachers as they become new teachers navigating their teacher role. It is important for teacher educators to think carefully about how they narrate the realities of challenging power.

**Implications for further research.** There are many future research possibilities stemming from this dissertation, and I have identified three, context, longevity, and generalization, that could impact the findings in this study.

**Context.** This study explored advocate/activist identity development with preservice teachers in the same college course over 5 years. Public and conflict pedagogy are highly contextual, so it would be necessary to research public and conflict pedagogy in additional anti-oppressive courses.

**Longevity.** Changing the experiences and outcomes for Students is the ultimate goal of this work, so it is critical to research how many, if any, of the changes identified by the preservice teachers through this course continue when they become teachers. Are teachers able to maintain an advocate/activist teacher identity when they move into a normalized school community?

**Generalizing.** This course focused primarily on LGBTQ Students, and some of the preservice teachers were able to generalize their commitment to advocacy and activism to Students of color and Students with disabilities. Additional research could examine whether the preservice teachers were able to generalize their advocacy across Student identities once they became in-service teachers.

### **Closure as New Possibilities**

This dissertation contributes to a body of research on curriculum theory in teacher education. Specifically, I believe that presenting the preservice teacher experiences in this course can generate more creative possibilities for teacher education as educators and researchers consider how to address the challenge of preparing preservice teachers to work with Students—Students who desperately need us to respond now. There is a

plethora of research that tells us what teachers need to know to meet the needs of our Students, so I offer curricular and pedagogical strategies as possibilities of how a teacher education program might better prepare their future teachers.

In a constantly shifting and evolving educational context, the importance of adaptiveness is critical. Public pedagogy and conflict pedagogy as curriculum are contextual and adaptive. Preservice teachers need a curriculum that will help them learn about themselves and then provoke them to reach past themselves and become a teacher that has the knowledge and skills to see, reach, teach, and advocate for Students.

This work is not a blueprint; it is partial and problematic, and it certainly did not meet the needs of all of the preservice teachers. Kumashiro (2002) said, “If we can shift our desire for certainty and control to be uncomfortable, there is a possibility that we can imagine and engage in ways of teaching that allow us to escape the oppressive relations that have seemed inescapable in education” (p. 115). I do not offer certainty in my work, but this dissertation does present possibilities and perspectives in teacher education from which to reconsider, rework, and rethink our myriad of situated educational efforts.

I began this dissertation with a commitment to keep Students at the center of this work, so in closing I offer the narrative of Helen, a future teacher conceptualizing theory to action. Her narrative illustrates the developing advocacy and activism of a preservice teacher.

*A lot of our work this term has been to center the Other and the struggle or push back when trying to de-center the norm or dominant group. This work is challenging because it asks of us to be uncomfortable and navigate unfamiliar spaces. We have talked about these feelings in terms of hesitation in the*

*beginning of the term and how those feelings have progressed into seeking out moments of what initially was unknown or caused fear. However, this is not to say that these instances of seeking out conversations are not still uncomfortable or automatically and easily navigated. These are still contested, unfamiliar areas of work and I think they always will be. I see more possibility now, which gives my work so much more meaning, as I think about the ways in which these practices and instances of learning will map onto my teaching. There is a greater urgency to do this work after learning about the ways in which people are treated unfairly historically, currently, systematically.*

*Kevin Kumashiro's work really inspires me because he is constantly questioning his own work and assumptions. He works within his own framework of research to re-read and question what he has already "determined." I think that this is a really important aspect of our work as advocates for students and our work as future teachers. Being an activist doesn't mean that everything I'm going to do is going to feel comfortable. If activism work is about social change and disrupting status quo and challenging my own privileges, my work is not just going to make me uncomfortable but the people around me as well and we have to be open to that as a mindset. Once we open up to the possibility within this work then we can begin to see activism as a process. I love what Kevin said about activism work in terms of seeing it as process, "activism is never going to be a sentence that is already concluded. Activism is always something in the*



*making, just like identity.” It is always in the process and we therefore have to embrace uncertainties. Anti-oppressive change happens when we are working through oppressive contexts. Activism is taking seriously the idea that we are always addressing the troubled contexts that we find ourselves in. This work is never going to end, it will be hard, but it will always go on. I am dedicated to this. (Helen, 2014)*

Helen’s explanation of her identity model (see Figure 5) is below.

*Some of the words that are wrapped around my model explain my identity markers, both those that I choose to take up, and those that I was born with, which impact my experiences and shape my identity. Other words that are wrapped around my body explain my experiences, which impact my identity and influence how I experience life. My experiences and my identity are tied up and intertwined. The string wrapped around my model symbolizes this relationship. My experiences matter; my identity matters. (Helen, 2014)*



*Figure 5. Helen’s identity model.*

Maxine Greene (1982) wrote that “Education has to do with new beginnings, reaching toward what is not yet” (p. 4). We are not yet meeting the academic and social

needs of our Students, and although there is no certainty in this work, there is a critical sense of urgency. Helen will soon be in her own classroom with Students, and for me she represents new possibilities and hope for all of our Students.

APPENDIX A  
COURSE IMAGES AND DESCRIPTION



Lanyards



Donations



BBQueer



Youth Summit



Pink Prom



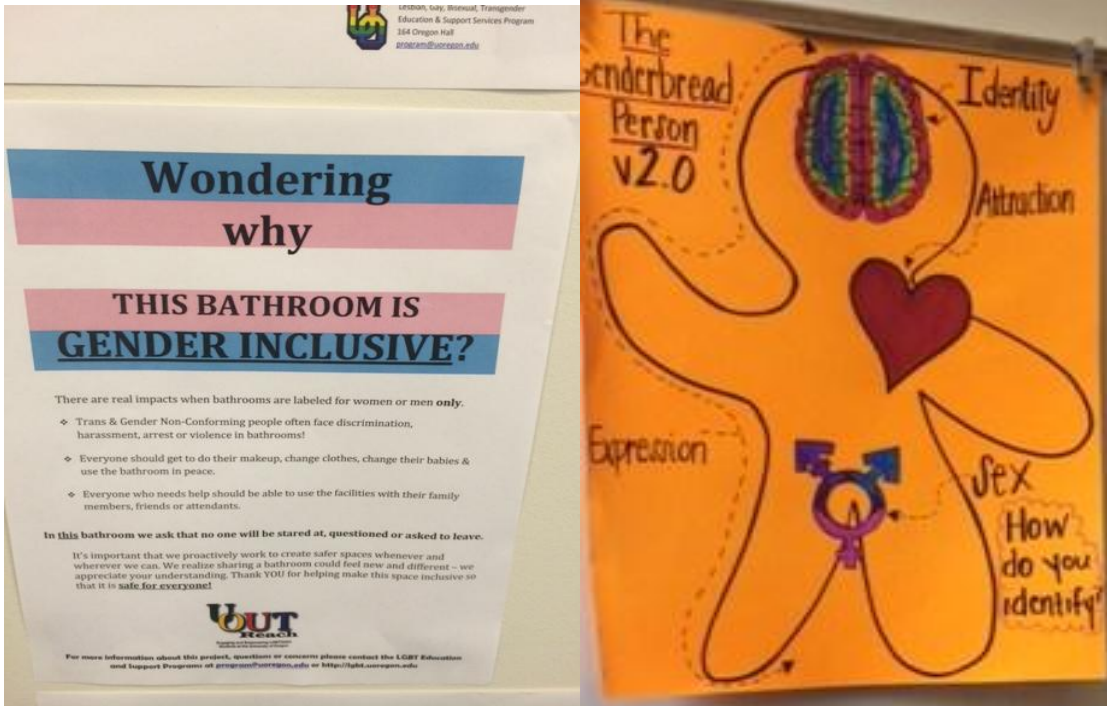
Poster Display



T-Shirts for BBQueer

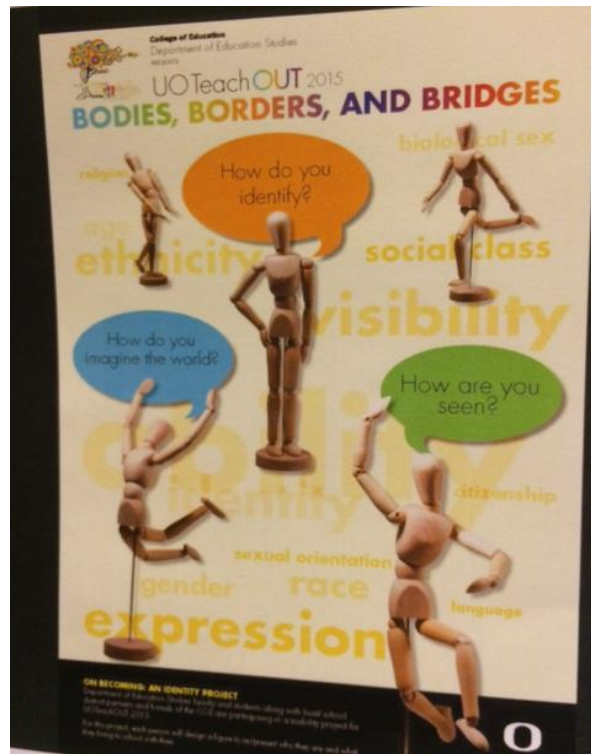


Engagement Activities for Youth Summit



Public Pedagogy Signs





Identity Project



Identity Project

### Instructional Topics by Week, 2014

Week	Date	Topic	Readings to be discussed	Assignment Due
1	4/1	Heteronormativity and Homophobia	Course Overview	
	4/3	Defining the Center Against the 'Other'	<p><b>EDST 455:</b> <i>Privilege, Power, and Difference</i>, Ch. 1–2 (Johnson, 2001)</p> <p><b>EDST 555:</b> <i>Troubling Education</i>, Vignette 1 and Ch. 2 (Kumashiro, 2002a)</p>	<b>Field Observation Journal 1</b>
2	4/8	Discourse and the Reproduction of Oppression	<p><b>EDST 455:</b> <i>Beyond Diversity Day</i>, Intro and Ch. 1–2 (Lipkin, 2003)</p> <p><b>EDST 555:</b> <i>Troubling Education</i>, Vignette 2 and Ch. 3 (Kumashiro, 2002a)</p>	<b>Reading Response 1</b>
	4/10		<p><b>EDST 455:</b> <i>Privilege, Power, and Difference</i>, Ch. 3–4 (Johnson, 2001)</p> <p><b>EDST 555:</b> <i>Troubling Education</i>, Vignette 3 and Ch. 4–5 (Kumashiro, 2002a)</p>	<b>Field Observation Journal 2</b>
3	4/15	Evidence of Institutional Invisibility and Systematic Homophobia: SCHOOL AS A HOMOPHOBIC SITE	<p><b>EDST 455:</b> <i>Beyond Diversity Day</i>, Ch. 3–4 (Lipkin, 2003)</p> <p><b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> 2 short reports posted to BB  <i>2007 National School Climate Survey</i> (GLSEN, 2009)            AND  <i>Harsh Realities: The Experiences of Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools</i> (Greytak et al., 2009)</p> <p><b>EDST 555:</b> <i>Dude You're a Fag</i>, Ch. 1–3 (Pascoe, 2007)</p>	<b>Reading Response 2</b>
	4/17		<p><b>EDST 455:</b> <i>Privilege, Power, and Difference</i>, Ch. 5–7 (Johnson, 2001)</p> <p><b>EDST 555:</b> <i>Dude You're a Fag</i>, Ch. 4–6 (Pascoe, 2007)</p>	<b>Field Observation Journal 3</b>
	4/19		<i>GLSEN National Day of Silence—Observed in COE</i>	

4	4/22	Schooling as Homophobia: CURRICULUM	<p><b>EDST 455:</b> <i>Beyond Diversity Day</i>, Ch. 5–6 (Lipkin, 2003)</p> <p><b>EDST 555:</b> “But No One in the Class Is Gay” (Straut &amp; Sapon-Shevin, 2002)</p>	<b>Reading Response 3</b>
	4/24		<p><b>EDST 455:</b> <i>Beyond Diversity Day</i>, Ch. 7 (Lipkin, 2003)</p> <p><b>EDST 555:</b> “Talking About Inclusion Like It’s for Everyone,” pp. 105–118 (Kissen, 2002)</p>	<b>Field Observation Journal 4</b>
5	4/29, 5/1	COMMITTEE MEETINGS WEEK and FIELD INTERVIEW WEEK	<p>No class meetings this week. Three key tasks for this week:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Please meet with your public pedagogy committee and get mighty organized.</li> <li>2. Please schedule a field interview, student shadowing, teacher shadowing, activist shadowing, experience for this week.</li> <li>3. Please plan your Assignment 4 group poster or other visual educational piece for TeachOUT.</li> </ol>	<p>1. Committee plan of action—signup sheets etc. <u>Posted to BB</u></p> <p>2. Begin making visual project for ASSIGNMENT 4</p>
6	5/6	TeachOUT BBQ	<p><b>Fundraiser for TeachOUT</b> <b>Location: South Eugene High School</b> <b>Time: 3:30+</b></p>	<b>Public Pedagogy Event</b>
	5/6	Bodies Marked for Invisibility, Abuse, Harassment, and Rejection:	<b>NO CLASS - due to afternoon BBQ</b>	<b>Field Observation Journal 5</b>
	5/8	STUDENTS	<p><b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> <i>Queer 13: Lesbian and Gay Writers Recall Seventh Grade</i> (Chase, 1998)</p>	<b>Reading Response 4</b>

7	5/13		<b>NO CLASS (Please read and prepare reading reflections to be turned in during TeachOUT)</b>  <b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> <i>Unleashing the Unpopular</i> , Section 1, pp. 15–52 (Killoran & Jiménez, 2007) *RR5	ASSIGNMENT 4 Group Visual Project DUE Deliver to my office for TeachOUT display
	5/15		<b>NO CLASS (Please read and prepare reading reflections to be turned in during TeachOUT)</b>  <b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> <i>Unleashing the Unpopular</i> , Section 3, pp. 75–148 (Killoran & Jiménez, 2007) *RR6	
	5/16		<b>TeachOUT Campus Events</b>	<b>*Reading Response 5 from 5/13</b>
	5/17		<b>TeachOUT K-12 GSA Day</b>	<b>*Reading Response 6 from 5/15</b>
8	5/20	Bodies Marked for Invisibility, Abuse, Harassment, and Rejection: FAMILIES	<b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> <i>Involved, Invisible, Ignored</i> (Kosciw & Diaz, 2008)	<b>Field Observation Journal 6</b>
	5/22		<b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> “Doing the Difficult” (Kroeger, 2008)	<b>Field Observation Journal 7</b>
9	5/27	Bodies Marked For Invisibility, Abuse, Harassment, and Rejection: TEACHERS	<b>EDST 455:</b> “I Was Afraid He Would Label Me Gay If I Stood Up for Gays” (Rofes, 2002)  <b>EDST 555:</b> “The historical Regulation of Sexuality and Gender of Students and Teachers” (Blount & Anahita, 2004)	<b>Reading Response 7</b>
	5/29		<b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> <i>One Teacher in Ten</i> (Jennings, 1994)  <b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> <i>Unleashing the Unpopular</i> , Section 2, pp. 53–74 (Killoran & Jiménez, 2007)	<b>ASSIGNMENT 4 ESSAY DUE</b>

10	6/3	Toward an Anti-oppressive: Anti-homophobic Education Settings and Systems	<b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> <i>Gender Bullying and Harassment</i> (Meyer, 2009)	<b>Reading Response 8</b>
	6/5		<b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> <i>Beyond Diversity Day</i> , Ch. 7, pp. 195–225 (Lipkin, 2003)  <b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> OSCC Safe Schools  <b>EDST 455 and 555:</b> HRC Welcoming Schools	<b>Field Observation Journal 8</b>
Finals Week		FINAL CLASS MEETING	<b>This course final is scheduled for Friday at 10:15am. We will be holding a mandatory Final meeting that week, but I would like to negotiate with the class an earlier meeting day for our Final.</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT 5 DUE</b>  <b>Final Field Observation</b>  <b>Course Synthesis Paper</b>

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APPENDIX B  
INFORMED CONSENT

**University of Oregon: College of Education-*Qualitative Data Analysis and Collection Course***

**Informed Consent for Participation in a Study: *Student Experiences with Equal Opportunity Course: Homophobia***

**Investigator: *Tina Gutierrez-Schmich***

**Introduction and Purpose of Study**

- You are being asked to participate in data collection project for a College of Education Course titled “Qualitative Data Analysis and Collection.” As a doctoral student in this course I am conducting interviews which will be collected and analyzed as my course of study as well as future educational conference paper or presentation.
- You were selected as a possible participant because you are a student in the College of Education Equal Opportunity Course: Homophobia, Spring term 2011. All students enrolled and participating in the course who volunteer will be interviewed.
- I ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to participate in the interview.
- The purpose of this study is to better understand the experiences of students engaged with the curriculum in the College of Education Equal Opportunity course: Homophobia.

**Description of the Project Procedures:**

- If you agree to be in this project, we would ask you to do the following things: Be willing to meet at a time and place that is convenient for you, for approximately 45-60 minutes. There would be one interview with the opportunity for a second interview at the end of the course. The interviews will occur over the 10 weeks in the course.

**Risks/Discomforts of Being in the Project:**

- The project may have risks such as discomfort or emotional response in sharing experiences related to the curriculum. There could also be a risk connected to participant concerns about confidentiality.
- This project has no direct connection to the Homophobia course. Whether a student does or does not participate in the interview does not impact, in any way, your participation or evaluation in the course.



**Confidentiality and Benefits of Project:**

- The recorded interviews from this project will only be accessed by the interviewer. The written record of the interview will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. While the interviews are being transcribed, the tapes will be kept in a locked file and erased after transcription.
- The instructor for the course will have access to the transcribed data, only after all identifying information has been removed. The instructor will not have access to the transcribed data until the course has been completed and grades submitted.
- The instructor for the interviewer's course—Dr. Deborah Olson (Qualitative Data analysis and collection course) will have access to at least 4 of the transcribed interviews, only after all identifying information has been removed. The transcribed interviews will be read by Dr. Olson and returned to the interviewer. Four of the transcribed interviews will also be shared with other students in the course.
- There may be benefits in participating for students such as extended opportunity to discuss course material or opportunity to clarify thoughts and ideas. For some students there may be no expected benefits.

**Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:**

- Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect your current or future relations with this course, instructor, College of Education, or any faculty or instructors.

**Contacts and Questions:**

- The researcher conducting this project is: Tina Gutierrez-Schmich. For questions or more information concerning this project you may contact her at [tschmich@uoregon.edu](mailto:tschmich@uoregon.edu) or 541-221-9167 of [dlolson@uoregon.edu](mailto:dlolson@uoregon.edu)

**Statement of Consent:**

- I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to participate in this project. I have received (or will receive) a copy of this form.

**Study Participant (Print Name):****Date:**

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**Sign Name:**

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UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

**Office for Protection of Human Subjects**

1800 Millrace Dr., Suite 105  
Eugene, OR 97401

August 22, 2011

IRB Protocol No: 04262011.088

Tina Gutierrez-Schmich, Principal Investigator  
Center on Diversity and Community  
University of Oregon

RE: Protocol entitled, "Examining Student Experience in the College of Education Equal Opportunity Course"

**Notice of IRB Review and Exempt Determination  
as per Title 45 CFR Part 46.101 (b)(2)**

The above protocol has been reviewed by the University of Oregon Institutional Review Board and the Office for Protection of Human Subjects (OPHS). This is a minimal risk research protocol that qualifies for an exemption from IRB review under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) for research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior.

Please note that you will not be required to submit continuing reviews for this protocol, however, you must submit any changes to the protocol to OPHS for assessment to verify that the protocol continues to qualify for exemption. Should your research continue beyond five years you will need to submit a new protocol.

If you have any questions regarding your protocol or the review process, please contact OPHS at [human\\_subjects@orc.uoregon.edu](mailto:human_subjects@orc.uoregon.edu) or (541)348-2510.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Alcorn, IRB Analyst  
Office for Protection of Human Subjects  
University of Oregon

CC: Deborah Olson, Faculty Advisor

COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS • OFFICE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS  
1800 Millrace Drive, Suite 105, 5207 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97401-6257  
T 541-348-2510 F 541-348-4224 <http://humansubjects.uoregon.edu>

An electronic copy of this document is available to you at <http://humansubjects.uoregon.edu>

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