

Gender, Language, and Power:
Exploring Elementary Teacher Candidates' Ideologies and Pedagogical Approaches

by
Brittany M. Vescio

A thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Education

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY
THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO**

2021

Abstract

Using a single-case study design, this research aims to understand the ideologies of pre-service teachers pertaining to the equity issues of gender and sexual diversity (GSD). In the US, GLSEN school climate surveys (Kosciw et al., 2020, 2019), along with Canada's first national school study, *Every Class in Every School* (Taylor & Peter, 2011), have consistently shown that GSD students face daily adversity in Canadian schools from both peers and teachers. While the Ontario Ministry of Education has created various policy and training frameworks to focus on this concern, previous research has found a gap between teachers' beliefs and practices in addressing topics of GSD with students and colleagues. Primarily, this study concentrates on the context of the language learning classroom and the anti-discrimination framework on which the Ontario Language Curriculum is founded. Investigating how preservice teachers approach their selection of language literature and discussion with students can illuminate how they perceive GSD as an equity issue and how they might use their future roles as teachers to perpetuate or combat social differences. This study also elucidates how Bachelor of Education programs play a role in equipping teachers with evidence-based practices and knowledge to be prepared to face such issues in their future classrooms.

Acknowledgements

Throughout the writing of this thesis, I have received the immense support and assistance of many.

I would first wish to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Gerald Walton. You have opened up multiple possible doors in my future that were previously inconceivable to me. Thank you for encouraging me to take on the yet wholly unknown territory of research thesis and for your endless support and guidance throughout every step of the process. Your patience, care, in-depth knowledge of GSD, and numerous reviews, comments, and invaluable suggestions have greatly contributed to the success of this work. I am privileged to have had the opportunity to work with such an exceptional educator as yourself. You inspire me each time I am in a classroom.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Jenny Roth, for her intensive review of my proposal, and Dr. Joan Chambers for her methodological expertise and feedback. To my internal examiner, Dr. Chris Sanders, and external examiner, Dr. Caroline T. Clark, for their time, insights, expertise, and impeccable feedback.

To my participants, thank you for volunteering to speak so frankly to me about GSD issues and your experiences. Without your open discussion, this work would have ended before it began.

Finally, I'd like to dedicate a few words to my family who've supported me throughout my degree. To my parents, thank you for your love and encouragement especially through this last year when it was hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel. To my younger brother, Ryan, thank you for reviewing my writing, for listening to my ideas, and putting up with my moods and messy desk; you have no idea how valuable it was to me.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Purpose and Significance of the Study	4
Important Terms.....	6
Research Questions.....	11
My Positionality.....	12
Structure of Thesis	15
Chapter Two: Literature Review	16
Gender and Sexuality as a Social Construct	16
Queering Gender.....	21
Socialization Through Literature: Hidden and Null Curriculum.....	25
Gender Constructions in Literature.....	28
Constructions of Men and Women	28
LGBTQ+ Representations	33
Implications for Education.....	34
Gender and Language Teaching in Schools.....	36
In-Service Teachers	36
Pre-Service Teachers	38
Conclusion	41
Chapter Three: Methodology	42

Methodological Framework: Case Study.....	42
Theoretical Framework of Analysis.....	48
Limitations of Case Study Methodology	50
Participants, Recruitment and Ethics	52
Data Collection	54
Data Analysis	57
Chapter Four: Analysis.....	59
Participant Overview	59
TC's Ideologies about GSD and Education	60
Understanding of GSD.....	60
Conceptualization of GSD in Education.....	61
The Role of an Educator	63
Inclusive Pedagogical Frameworks	65
Critical Frameworks.....	66
Superficial Approaches	70
Concerns and Considerations.....	74
Administrative Support.....	74
Curricular Connections and Supports	76
Parental Backlash.....	77
Student Reactions.....	79
Teacher Education Programs	82
Lack of Learning Opportunities.....	83
Lack of GSD-Focused Content.....	84

Lack of Practical Pedagogical Applications 85

Intensive Curricular Instruction and Exploration 86

Suggestions for Improvement..... 88

Chapter Five: Discussion..... 90

 Research Limitations and Future Directions..... 92

 Conclusion..... 94

References..... 96

Appendix A: Letter of Information..... 117

Appendix B: Consent Form 119

Appendix C: Interview Protocol Guide 120

Chapter One: Introduction

Within Ontario schools, a strong emphasis is placed on developing students' skills within the area of literacy and the language arts curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education [OME], 2013b). It is also recommended in teacher's manuals that teachers create a classroom library complete with various genres and titles that discuss a wide variety of topics in order to attend to students' needs and interests (Tompkins et al., 2018). Along with this type of everyday access to literature in the classroom and the school, students also encounter literature, specifically fiction books, through the pieces of writing selected by their teachers as learning material (Tompkins et al., 2018). From read-alouds in primary grades to intensive literature analysis in high schools, authentic texts and books have become the basis of language learning and teaching in today's classrooms (Tompkins et al., 2018). Authentic texts refer to writings that are created and published for general consumption by any person as opposed to texts created solely for pedagogical purposes within classroom settings (Tompkins et al., 2018).

How teachers select specific texts to use in language teaching lessons can depend on various factors, but the Ontario Ministry of Education (2006) provides some guidelines for program planning that are written into the elementary Language Curriculum document. These considerations are based on anti-discrimination and inclusive education principles (OME, 2006).

The curriculum specifically states:

Learning resources that reflect the broad range of students' interests, backgrounds, cultures, and experiences are an important aspect of an inclusive language program. In such a program, stories contain heroes and protagonists of both sexes from a wide variety of racial and cultural backgrounds. Students are made aware of the historical, social, and cultural contexts for both the traditional and non-traditional gender and social roles

represented in the materials they are studying. [...] In the context of antidiscrimination, critical literacy involves asking questions and challenging the status quo, and leads students to look at issues of power and justice in society. The language program empowers students by enabling them to express themselves and to speak out about issues that strongly affect them. In the language program, students develop the ability to detect negative bias and stereotypes in literary texts and informational materials. (pp. 28–29)

Thus, it is clear that at least one underpinning belief that guides the language curriculum within the context of literature learning resource selection is the consideration of student interests, needs and identity along with the promotion of an understanding of social justice concepts relating to race, culture, gender and “challenging the status quo” (OME, 2006, p. 29).

Numerous documents created (OME, 2009a, 2009b, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2013a, 2015) or published (Dionne, 2010; Murphy, 2013; Roberge, 2013) by the Ontario Ministry of Education further support teachers in translating such beliefs found in the Language Curriculum into daily classroom practice and instructional strategies. Both *A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, K–3* (OME, 2003) and *A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4–6* (OME, 2008) are the most comprehensive frameworks developed from evidence-based classroom research to help teachers meet the expectations laid out in all strands of the Language Curriculum (OME, 2006). Importantly, both guides affirm that when selecting learning resources, teachers should not only address the diversity of the students in the classroom but also the diversity of people and perspectives that exist outside the classroom within the larger global and societal context (OME, 2003, 2008). Moreover, both guides advise teachers to act as critical thinkers in assessing the types of learning resources they choose to include in their classrooms, which the *Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4–6* (OME, 2008) links to student

learning and achievement in reading. Specifically, the *Guide* (OME, 2008) states that in order “to create effective conditions for learning, teachers must take care to avoid all forms of bias and stereotyping in resources and learning activities, which can quickly alienate students and limit their learning” (p. 3). Thus, a teacher’s choice of language learning resources effectively has consequences on student learning and achievement as well as students’ overall sense of well-being and engagement with their education.

Nonetheless, understanding the above mandates alongside the practical resources developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education and taking the next step to transfer this knowledge into the classroom is where this process becomes infinitely more complex. The expectation for teachers to be critical of materials when selecting learning resources and to avoid bias and stereotypes presupposes three assumptions that are not necessarily a given. First, it relies on the idea that teachers have resources widely available to them that do not contain bias and stereotypes since it is advised to choose resources that do not contain such portrayals. Second, it assumes that teachers have the previous skill and knowledge of various diversity factors like race, class, gender, and sexuality to be able to identify resources that contain related biases and stereotypes. Lastly, it presupposes that teachers are prepared and comfortable to discuss such topics of social diversity with students through chosen learning resources in order to develop students’ critical literacy skills.

It is these three assumptions that form the context of investigation for the current study that will focus specifically on the social justice perspective of gender and sexual diversity (GSD). In the following sections, I outline the purpose of the study and its significance to, not only the current body of research knowledge, but the wider impact this investigation has on the education system and students. I will then address the specific research questions this study aims

to answer, my own positionality in relation to the topic and an overview of the chapters constituting this thesis.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Based within the context outlined above, the purpose of my thesis research is to understand the relationships between elementary teacher candidates' (TCs) ideologies, attitudes, and preparedness in GSD and their choice of literature as language learning resources. TCs are students within a professional program at a faculty of education who are training to become teachers. Within many programs, TCs usually participate in theoretical, practical, and experiential-based courses along with in-school practice teaching placements. Though universities may differ in the approach to teacher training and certain course offerings, most programming focuses on curriculum knowledge and instruction, planning and evaluation, classroom management, and inclusive and differentiated learning. Thus, as a group, TCs have shared experiences and knowledge gained through their programs. As well, they are beginning to develop their professional identities while also precariously meeting the expectations of their in-school mentors while on placement. This area of tension between what TCs may want to do and what they think they are able to do provides a fertile dynamic to explore further.

The rationale in focusing on TCs' beliefs surrounding gender and language curricula resource choice is that if TCs are not even aware of gender biases in texts, or do not have enough background knowledge to comfortably address gender issues with students through language learning materials, then the classroom can become a site for the reproduction of gender inequities and injustices. In this way, language resource choice becomes a political choice that TCs, as future teachers, can make either consciously or unconsciously. Being unconscious of the power one holds as a teacher and the political implications inherent in pedagogical choices is a privilege

afforded to those who can be ignorant of the issues others face as well as the social-power dynamics that permeate institutions. Following Code's (1991, 2007, 2014) conceptualization of ignorance and Malewski and Jaramillo's (2011) application to education, teachers are in a unique and powerful position to help define what is deemed worthy of knowing. Additionally, teachers can disrupt epistemologies of ignorance produced in schools, which limit the types of perspectives available to students to make meaning of their own realities (Malewski & Jaramillo, 2011). Thus, pedagogical choices, even those bred from willful or unconscious ignorance, can impact students and the type of environment in which they learn and develop.

Numerous reports on today's student well-being and identity development within the school setting (such as Greytak et al., 2016; Kosciw et al., 2020, 2019; Palmer, 2016; Taylor & Peter, 2011) have found that those whose gender or sexual identity does not align or is perceived not to align with traditional and hegemonic gender norms face significant adversity. In the Canadian context, the most recent high-school student survey on GSD found that, on a daily basis, gender and sexual minority youth are exposed to language used by peers and teachers that denies their right to personal dignity (Taylor & Peter, 2011). Furthermore, in comparison to other students, gender and sexual minority youth experience increased occurrences of verbal, physical, and sexual harassment and abuse (Taylor & Peter, 2011). These experiences ultimately lead to 64% of LGBTQ students feeling unsafe within their schools (Taylor & Peter, 2011). Such experiences have deep-seated impacts for each individual including greater emotional distress, social isolation, suicidal ideation or attempts as well as increases in truancy, and a lowered sense of belonging in school (Taylor & Peter, 2011). Thus, although the scope of this study is narrowed to language curricula and the language classroom, understanding how TCs as future teachers will address this current and pertinent educational issue can potentially be translated to

influence the overall sense of belonging and dignity felt by students. It will also be key to understanding how teacher education programs prepare student teachers, or not, to positively change the current school climate for gender and sexually diverse students.

Important Terms

In this section, I outline the important terms that I use throughout this study.

Acknowledging that language and meaning are both context-specific and ever-evolving, the description of terms below functions as a guide for readers to understand my research thesis and not as fixed and all-encompassing definitions.

1. Ideology: Gee (2012) claims that often the term *ideology* is pejoratively invoked to indicate that an individual is making claims about the world based on their own personal perspectives and beliefs and not on true facts. However, many theorists argue that all individuals understand and learn about reality through ideologies; essentially, what people count as truth, fact, and knowledge are ideological theories about the world (Darder, 2012; Gee, 2012; Rogers, 1981). Thus, ideology is a framework of thought shaped through language and experience that creates meaning and gives direction to all human experiences (Darder, 2012; Rogers, 1981). Importantly, Gee (2012) adds that such ideological frameworks guide individuals “to see the world the way they need or want to in order to sustain their desires, power, status, or influence” (p. 5). As a whole, this understanding of reality as ideology opposes then the claims stemming from supposed commonsensical human innateness or dominant authority systems like religion, biology and the state, as being foundational to all knowledge and belief (Gee, 2012). This is the case because as Gee (2012) argues, “societies have often been set up to ensure that only elites and more privileged people produce ideas and knowledge, while

the masses are supposed to primarily follow, work, and consume” (p. 8). Ultimately, what this means is that how humans interpret reality and what counts as truth and knowledge in our minds is often controlled and legitimized by dominant social groups made up of elite and privileged people wielding social power. Thus, although each individual, through their own experiences and upbringing, may view the world uniquely or draw on diverse ideological frameworks, only certain ideologies that align with those of the dominant and powerful are perceived as legitimate and privileged.

Within the context of my research thesis and the topic of gender and sexual diversity, the dominant ideological framework of thinking of gender is one that privileges people born biologically male who display traditional masculinity and heterosexual preferences (Butler, 1990; Marinucci, 2010). Moreover, in the dominant ideological framework, there is only one other counterpart to the privileged male form, which is people who are born biologically female who display traditional femininity and heterosexual preferences (Butler, 1990; Marinucci, 2010). Within this ideological theory of what counts as gender and sexuality, there is no legitimized or privileged space for those whose experiences and realities do not align with this ideological framework (Marinucci, 2010). Additionally, understanding the gender binary within Western ideologies becomes infinitely more complex when considering *intersectionality* (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991), wherein gender and sexuality are interdependent on one another as well as on race, class, and ability, among other social factors. These layers and intersections of social positionality transform the gender binary into a systemic social hierarchy in which racialized bodies are gendered, sexualized, perceived, and oppressed in diverse ways that limit their agency (Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz, 2013;

Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). An intersectional lens problematizes gender ideologies by acknowledging that the experiences of being man or woman are not singular but dependent on the social factors of race, class, and ability (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

2. Gender and sexual diversity (GSD): As recommended by Airton and Koecher (2019), I have chosen to use the term GSD to signal that a discussion of gender and sexual diversity does not only apply to people who identify as LGBTQ2S+ but also “extends to the affinities, practices and experiences of everyone” (p. 201). Focusing solely on LGBTQ2S+ identities, though important, can also exclude those who may feel that they do not belong to any of these specific identity communities but experience the influences of hegemonic gender and sexual orientation ideologies. Furthermore, by using this term, I hope to bring together research between both gender and sexuality in education. Airton and Koecher (2010) found in their meta-analysis review that most studies focusing on gender in education solely focused on equity for women and girls whereas scholarship that concentrated on sexuality mainly revolved around LGBTQ+ communities and the health curriculum. In choosing the term “gender and sexual diversity,” I am explicitly referring to women and girls, boys and men, the members of the LGBTQ2S+ community as well as anyone who finds that there is not space within dominant ideologies for their own gender and/or sexuality identity. Similar to Airton and Koecher (2019), my goal in using this term is “to open up space for however and whoever gender and sexual diversity may be” (p. 200).
3. Gender: This term will be used from a sociological perspective that views gender as a social construct. Acknowledgement of gender as being based outside of biological and anatomical factors first began in the 1970s with feminist movements (Johnson, 2014;

Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). Shifting the understanding of gender from one of biological and sex differences also challenged the legitimization of differential treatment between men and women, wherein some men reserve privileges for themselves at the expense of oppressing women (Johnson, 2014), and by extension anyone who is not born biologically male and displays traditional masculinity and heterosexuality (Marinucci, 2010). Referring to gender as a social construct illuminates how culture, ideology, and discourses set certain standards for what counts as being *real* men and women and who deserves and does not deserve to fall into each categorical and all-encompassing box (Johnson, 2014). As the three social factors of culture, ideology, and discourse change over time and depending on the context, so too does the legitimized norms of gender. Lastly, gender is also a term that indicates each individual's mental experiences and their own personal sense of being that can fit comfortably into the distinct boxes of man and woman or that trouble the boundaries of these categories, and thus, the collective understanding of what gender means and looks like (Marinucci, 2010).

4. Heteronormativity: This term refers to the pervasive and institutionalized legitimacy given to heterosexuality (Ferber et al., 2013; Rossi, 2011). Since heterosexuality is given this status it also becomes the expected norm or unspoken standard for everyone (Ferber et al., 2013; Rossi, 2011).
5. Heterosexism: Connecting to heteronormativity, heterosexism refers to the belief that heterosexual people and relations are inherently superior to other relations, specifically LGBTQ2S+ people (Ferber et al., 2013). Since heteronormativity creates a standard or norm of heterosexuality, any deviation from the norm is pathologized or perceived as less natural or normal (Ferber et al., 2013). Thus, heterosexism is the privileging of

heterosexuality “through everyday practices, attitudes, behaviours, and institutional rules” (Ferber et al., 2013, p. xxv).

6. Sexism: Similar to heterosexism, which focuses on oppression based on sexuality, sexism refers to the daily and institutionalized privileges granted to men over women (Ferber et al., 2013). Again, such privileges can be found in “practices, attitudes, assumptions, behaviours, institutional rules, and structures” (Ferber et al., 2013, p. xxvii).
7. Hegemonic Masculinity: As opposed to the idea of diverse ways of being masculine, hegemonic masculinity is the dominant idealized ideology of traits, attitudes and behaviours that guide and can constrain boys' and men's lives (Connell, 1995, 2000; Kimmel, 2012). In this sense, hegemonic masculinity sets the masculine ideal as a man who is strong, athletic, stoic, and rough-and-tumble (Connell, 1995, 2000; Kimmel, 2012).
8. Stereotype: This term refers to an over-simplified characteristic or description that is generalized to a whole group of people (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). A stereotype can also be a specific stand-out trait that some people of the group have that is then applied to all members (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). For example, a stereotype, within the realm of gender and sexual diversity, may be that all women like to cook, or that all gay men speak in a more high-pitched voice. However, the hallmark characteristic of a stereotype as opposed to a socially constructed and learned behaviour is that it is deemed to apply to all members of the given group.
9. Bias: This term is closely linked with the explanation of a stereotype. Bias occurs when an individual adds a positive or negative value to a stereotype they have attributed to a

group (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Thus, if the stereotype is that all women like to cook and someone meets a woman who does not cook, they may wonder what is wrong with her. This then creates a bias or prejudice against that woman simply based upon a false and overgeneralized stereotype. This evaluation of individuals against stereotyped expectations creates binaries of normal/not normal, good/bad, right/wrong that influence how we all perceive and interact with each other (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Research Questions

As I have noted in the outline of the research problem and the purpose of this study, teachers have a curricular mandate of choosing language learning resources that are not only free of gender bias and stereotypes but also allow students to challenge the status quo and think critically of their own realities (OME, 2003, 2006, 2008). However, as I have argued, the fulfillment of this goal relies on the assumption that teachers can challenge and have the will or desire to discuss gender and sexual diversity in a classroom with their students. In order to further interrogate these assumptions, the primary guiding research question of this thesis is: *How do elementary TCs describe their GSD ideologies based on an equity framework of education within the context of selecting picture books as language learning resources?* I have chosen the word *ideologies* to represent an investigation of both the thought framework(s) of TCs and the connection this way of thinking and viewing GSD informs their teaching practices. McLaren (1988) defines ideology as “the production and representation of ideas, values, and beliefs and the manner in which they are *expressed* and *lived out* by both individuals and groups” (p. 176, emphasis added). Thus, the term *ideology* allows me to combine an analysis of TCs’ perceptions of GSD in education with how they express those perceptions and act on them in their teaching.

As a secondary or sub-question that is used to extend the resulting answer from the primary research question, I also seek to understand: *How prepared or comfortable do elementary TCs feel in potentially addressing and/or discussing the topic of GSD in their future classrooms with students?* Specifically, my thesis describes:

- TCs' dominant ideologies of gender and sexuality and how they express what counts as gender and sexual identity;
- TCs' level of self-described knowledge of gender and sexual diversity as an equity issue in education and how their experiences in the teacher education program have aided in the development of their understanding of GSD; and
- The factors that would hold TCs back or motivate them to use a rich picture book that addresses GSD with students as a learning resource.

The focus of these research questions is to uncover the layers of knowledge, experience, and the professional choices of TCs. However, before illuminating their lived experiences, I will first shine a light on my own, as research and researcher are intrinsically tied to one another.

My Positionality

As this study employs a qualitative approach to its research design, my role as a researcher becomes more complex. Creswell (2003) notes that, in such an approach, the researcher can become intensively involved in the experiences of the participants and in interpreting the data that are collected. Due to this type of relationship demanded by qualitative research, it is a matter of research integrity that I, as the researcher, identify myself in relation to the research topic and the participants of this study. If I am one of the main research instruments in this study, then as Locke et al. (1993) suggest, my previous experiences, values, and biases, or

my subjectivity that I will undoubtedly bring to my interpretations, need to be addressed. In this spirit, I outline my positionality and make clear the waters in which I swim daily.

I am a passionate advocate for social justice, and I believe that education and teachers play an integral role in this advocacy. I grew up and have lived in Thunder Bay, Ontario for my entire life. I come from a working-class and immigrant family background, which has allowed me to witness the ways in which the education system has been designed to advantage some students and disadvantage others. I have long had the goal of becoming a teacher in Ontario public schools and was able to achieve this a few years ago when I graduated from Lakehead University as a first-generation student with both an HBA in French and a Bachelor of Education. The fact that I am currently pursuing a master's degree is beyond my own and my family's most daring dreams. However, I recognize that this was possible because I had teachers throughout my educational career that did not simply view me as a sum of the various parts of my family and background. They are the role models I hope to emulate one day.

I graduated in 2018 from my role as a student and teacher candidate, and thus, my placement experiences are still fresh in my mind. These experiences were the impetus for my more concentrated focus on social justice education and critical pedagogy. In my placements at both the elementary and intermediate levels, many of my lessons dealt with language and literacy learning. I recognized that I was neither always prepared to navigate the diversity of my classrooms in this teaching, nor did I have the tools to confront colleagues or the system in general when I witnessed or experienced situations that I did not think were right. Being aware of these feelings, and not wanting to propagate the same issues that my grandparents, my parents, and myself have dealt with in the current education system, I knew that I needed to learn more about myself and the structures of my society in order to enact change.

Along this learning journey in my graduate studies, I encountered the area of gender studies and became aware of how fundamental gender structures are to the social structure of society and how much of an impact it has on my own life of which I was shockingly unaware. As a cisgender woman who does not always conform to ideals of femininity and whose sexuality vacillates along a spectrum, the theory and body of scholarship developing from gender studies allowed me to re-evaluate and understand past experiences that have shaped who I am today and who I can be as a teacher for my future students.

Based on these past experiences and my personal passion for social justice, my own ideologies surrounding GSD and education are as follows:

- It is a teacher's duty to address the identities and rights of all people that make up a democratic society, regardless of whether students represent those identities in a specific classroom.
- It is a teacher's duty to encourage students and teach the necessary skills to evaluate their own perspectives and the perspectives of their family, the media, and the texts they read so that their beliefs are autonomous decisions.
- Educational success should be based on the success and well-being of *all* students and not just the majority. In this way, the education system should disrupt the status quo instead of propagating and reinforcing it.
- Teacher education programs should be conducted through a lens of critical pedagogy and social justice education for the above goals and teacher preparedness to be achieved especially in the context of increasingly diverse classrooms.

Although these are my own beliefs and ideologies for education that I hope to continually grow in my career and teaching practice, they can also act as a springboard for one potential approach

to disrupting the social order in education and the minds of student-teachers (Apple, 2002a; 2002b; hooks, 1994; Tupper, 2005). If presented as one good option among other good options, teacher candidates then can make a conscious and informed choice in how they will form their beliefs surrounding their teaching philosophy and pedagogical practices.

Structure of Thesis

In the following section, I provide an in-depth review of the previous literature that forms the foundation for this current study. I also identify the theories and gaps in the previous body of scholarship upon which my thesis hopes to build. Afterwards, I outline the case study methodology of my qualitative research design. In this section, I primarily focus on who my participants are, why they were chosen, and the methods of data collection that were used along with the ethical considerations of these decisions. Specifically, I detail how the interviews were conducted and the theoretical and analytical concepts that were used to interpret and analyze the participants' written and oral responses. From my data collection and analysis, I present in Chapter 4 the findings followed, in Chapter 5, by a discussion of the significance of the study's findings and analysis within the context of the greater body of scholarship of GSD. I also highlight implications of this study for general education studies and more narrowly, teacher education programming.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This section of my thesis focuses on a presentation of the previous body of scholarship that is connected to this study's research questions which are: *How do elementary TCs describe their GSD ideologies based in an equity framework of education within the context of selecting rich picture books as language learning resources;* and *How prepared or comfortable do elementary TCs feel in potentially addressing and/or discussing the topic of GSD in their future classrooms with students?* As Locke et al. (1993) describe, research is a conversational process and the way that a new researcher, like me, can enter that conversation is first by listening to what has already been discussed. This chapter is dedicated to presenting that conversation and how my study hopes to fulfill gaps in our understanding to advance the conversation further.

Gender and Sexuality as a Social Construct

Gender and sexuality are a social reality that composes and influences an individual's life just as the realities of race, class, ethnicity, and regionality have an impact on who a person is and how society and others perceive them (Butler, 1990). Within societal consciousness, the most prevalent way of thinking of gender is within a framework of dichotomous categories that for any individual are stable and non-changing from birth till death (Johnson, 2014). Belonging to either the category of male or female is assigned at birth and is based on the observation of biological body parts (Johnson, 2014; Kramer, 2011). Thus, in this way, gender is the presumption of an essential characteristic (Kramer, 2011).

However, understanding gender as socially constructed necessitates an analysis of the concepts surrounding culture and ideology as all beliefs of a society that employ a binary sex-gender system anchored in these two concepts (Darder, 2012; Kramer, 2011). Culture, in its simplest definition, encompasses established beliefs and practices of a people that are transmitted

through generations and are anchored in political and economic structures of power (Darder, 2012; Kramer, 2011; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Far from being completely deterministic, culture also allows for a range of acceptable behaviours through a specific worldview, or ideologies, which often include the construction of what is moral or immoral and what must inevitably be (Kramer, 2011). However, because culture, and by extension ideologies, are mired in power structures that influence day to day life, not all cultures and ideologies are held equally; those who hold power can legitimize their own ideologies while also forcing it upon other groups (Darder, 2012).

Within the Western cultures that have been studied by anthropologists and sociologists, gender and sexuality are featured in each culture's ideologies as a prominent method of organizing the social world (Johnson, 2014; Kramer, 2011). These ideologies for gender and sexuality provide a framework for its members as to what counts and are constructed as norms and appropriate behaviours based on one's sex (Johnson, 2014; Kramer, 2011). Across these studied cultures, patriarchy, or the belief of the superiority of men, is a commonality but functions in various ways for each culture and through time (Johnson, 2014; Kramer, 2011). Nevertheless, this distinction between genders is seemingly derived from the biological differences in males and females and acts as a type of essentialist explanation for the different social treatment each gender receives (Johnson, 2014). Essentialism works to create a naturalness or inevitability that justifies the separation of genders and the domination of one gender over others solely based on the sex assigned at birth (Johnson, 2014; Kramer, 2016). Just as patriarchy functions differently across culture and time, the conceptualization of gender and sex, as well as the range of appropriate behaviours for each gender, vary as well. These changes and differences

help form the conclusion that instead of an essentialist description of gender deriving from biological anatomy, it is more appropriately understood as being socially constructed.

Nonetheless, dominant ideologies of gender anchored in essentialism and the biological differences between men and women continue to permeate consciousness and justify patriarchy (Johnson, 2014). The continued acceptance of dominant GSD ideologies raises the question of what mechanisms are at play to make this continual oppression possible. Domination created and maintained through the wielding of ideas is what has been termed by Antonio Gramsci as hegemony (Gramsci, 1971, 1973; see also Boggs, 1976; Femia, 1981; Sassoon, 1980). Boggs explains (1976) that Gramsci's theory of hegemony is characterized by the consistent infiltration into daily life "of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs, morality, etc. that is in one way or another supportive of the established order and the interests that dominate it" (p. 39). Moreover, this form of social control through ideas was primarily diffused through the socialization effects of institutions like education, religion, the family, and other associational organizations (Boggs, 1976; Femia, 1981, Gramsci, 1971, 1973). Gramsci (1971, 1973) also argues that socialization into ideologies that support the dominant group creates a façade of freedom and allows individuals to consent to their own domination, becoming complicit by learning and practicing the ideologies of the dominant group (Boggs, 1976; Femia, 1981). Thus, through what is an unconscious process, hegemonic ideologies of gender that support patriarchy can infiltrate the collective consciousness of all members of society (Johnson, 2014). In turn, individuals internalize and enforce such ideologies, which perpetuates the system (Johnson, 2014).

Just as ideas work to create the current status quo, ideas are also the beginning seeds for change. For Gramsci (1971, 1973), change or revolution cannot be achieved without first being preceded by a shift in the thinking of members of society (Boggs, 1976; Femia, 1981). In short,

the masses need to have consciousness of their position within the systems of society and then have the means to diffuse ideas to contradict, penetrate and shift dominant ideologies (Boggs, 1976; Fermia, 1981; Gramsci, 1971, 1973). Thus, there have also been shifts in the hegemonic ideology of gender and sexuality as essential characteristics stemming from biological anatomy.

The shift from essentialism to social constructionism has predominantly occurred through the differentiation between the concept of gender and the concept of sex (West & Zimmerman, 1991). The term *sex* is widely considered as a reference to the biological makeup of an individual that is observed and assigned at birth, whereas gender is an achieved performance (Butler, 1990). In contrast to the binary construct of anatomical sex, gender identity refers to the individualized feeling of being male, female, neither, both, and any other identity (Marinucci, 2010). Gender identity differs from gender expression, which instead denotes the way someone chooses to dress, act, or talk that has been assigned to any given gender identity (Marinucci, 2010). Thus, gender expression does not necessarily stem from gender identity, just as gender identity does not necessarily align with the sex assigned at birth (Butler, 1990). To add to these nuances, the concept of sexuality, or the types of people an individual finds sexually and/or romantically attractive, also does not follow, as though automatically, from the way a person identifies and expresses their gender (Butler, 1990).

Despite these conceptualizations, it remains the case that, in contemporary society, sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality are seen to align together and are regulated through frameworks of power (Butler, 1990). Although such visions or gender ideologies differ between diverse cultures and over time, all cultures have certain language, posture, dress, and tasks that are acceptable and distinct between the genders (Kramer, 2016). Such patterns are

anchored in cultural practices and perpetuated through socialization. They are also in flux (Kramer, 2011).

In many societies, if a baby is born anatomically male, they are assigned the sex of male and are taught from birth onward what it means to be masculine, to be a boy and to be a man (Johnson, 2014). Social norms and expectations in most cultures shape how boys understand and practice their masculinity, usually as playing rough, being loud, aggressive, and non-emotional, and being strong and athletic (Connell, 1995, 2000; Johnson, 2014; Kimmel 2012). For others, having a lack of a penis means being assigned to the female sex and learning lessons in femininity such as being passive and silent, being beautiful and not overly intelligent, being able to nurture and take care of others (Johnson, 2014). These expectations and constructs of masculinity and femininity are oppositional binaries so that in valuing one construct it is, in turn, a devaluation of the opposite construct (Johnson, 2014). In other words, within patriarchal societies, traits associated with masculinity are highly valued to preserve and justify the privileges given to men, while, in turn devaluing those gendered as being feminine (Johnson, 2014). In this way, the gendering of basic human traits works to divide men and women and distance them from one another (Johnson, 2014).

In other words, children learn from birth what it means to be a woman or a man, a boy or a girl. In this way, gender identity is dictated by sex, which also dictates gender expression and sexuality (Butler, 1990; Marinucci, 2010). Most boys are expected to grow up and be attracted to and romantically involved with women and the same is expected for girls to be attracted to men (Johnson, 2014; Marinucci, 2010). Thus, heterosexuality is seen as the default or most “natural” sexual orientation as a part of this hegemonic and androcentric ideology (Johnson, 2014). Implicit in this hegemonic idea are the concepts of heteronormativity and heterosexism. The

former concept refers to the institutionalized and expected standard of heterosexuality so that it becomes an automatic and widespread assumption (Ferber et al., 2017; Johnson, 2014). When institutions promote and legitimize this heterosexual standard by privileging heterosexual people over members of other sexual orientations, the institution is actively participating in acts of heterosexism (Ferber et al., 2017).

Queering Gender

Up until recently, conversations about gender and sexual diversity have mostly been based on a constant oppositional binary, whether it be between men and women, straight and gay or lesbian, or cisgender people and transgender people. Some researchers have argued that relying on this type of either-or philosophy of classification perpetuates the idea of essentialism, that each of these categories reflects innate characteristics that are fundamental to all members of a given category (Butler, 1990; Marinucci, 2010). Essentialism, as a concept, stems from the hegemonic binary of gender and sexuality and exists to justify the privileges accorded to members of dominant social groups (Johnson, 2014; Kramer, 2011).

The hegemonic binary, as previously addressed, is the coalescence of sex, gender, and sexuality so that one is seen to flow naturally from the other in a distinct and specific direction (Butler, 1990). Thus, based on the hegemonic binary, there are only two “natural” kinds of people into which the human world can be divided: heterosexual, dominantly masculine men born anatomically male, and heterosexual, passively feminine women born anatomically female (Johnson, 2014; Marinucci, 2010). Anyone falling outside of these two natural-seeming categories or not exemplifying these distinct characteristics is perceived as being defective or as being some unknown *other* (Marinucci, 2010).

However, there is a ‘catch’ with essentialist categories and the hegemonic binary. Namely, such descriptions of what constitutes being a man or a woman – as these are seemingly the only options available – are idealized and unclear characteristics (Johnson, 2014; Marinucci, 2010). Marinucci (2010) draws on Platonic Forms to explain how the hegemonic binary constitutes two Forms, which are perfect abstractions of real, everyday life. In this way, the hegemonic binary is an idealized concept of gender and sexuality that most people have difficulty actually achieving in average life (Johnson, 2014; Marinucci, 2010). Marinucci (2010) says, in short, that “the average member of contemporary Western culture is a similarly flawed representative of the idealized category of womanhood and manhood” (p. 77). Similarly, Butler (1990, 1993) likens gender to a performance that seeks to imitate other performances of gender. Referring to a cycle of imitation through repetition, Butler (1993) also stipulates that these imitated performances of gender have “no original; in fact, it is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an effect and consequence of the imitation itself” (p. 313). Lacking an origin of gender suggests that the idea of an individual fully encompassing the ideals of man or woman becomes an impossible goal to achieve as gender ideals do not exist on their own but are an act in continual construction (Butler, 1990, 1993).

Moreover, the essentialist characteristics of the hegemonic binary do not always provide a stable set of criteria that allows for the delineation of what does or does not belong in the categories of manhood and womanhood as each person may fall short of the ideal in diverse ways (Johnson, 2014; Marinucci, 2010). The lack of stable criteria supports Johnson’s (2014) argument that the hegemonic gender ideal and the concept of essentialism is harmful to *all* people as, he argues, “it backs us into a tight little corner where we are just a step or two away from having to defend against challenges to our legitimacy as men and women” (p. 91). Despite

the logic of Johnson's (2014) argument, instead of disrupting the ideal, underachievement of the hegemonic ideals is used to signal alterity or deviancy in a person (Johnson, 2014; Marinucci, 2010). Nonetheless, those who can maintain what Butler (1990) terms as "intelligible genders," which maintains the continuity from sex to gender to sexuality and enforces the hegemonic binary, can mostly avoid experiences of alterity (Johnson, 2014).

With all these nuances about gender in mind, the begging question is: Can the hegemonic binary be recognized and changed? The resulting area of queer studies and queer theory offer a response. *Queer* as a term can mean unexpected or unusual and has also been used as a pejorative to designate people who challenge the boundaries of the hegemonic binary, namely people of the LGBTQ2S+ community (Johnson, 2014, Marinucci, 2010; Sullivan, 2003). However, in the context of queer studies and queer theory, *queer* refers to an area of scholarship that seeks to challenge the hegemonic binary ideal through the acknowledgement that gender identity, expression and sexuality are unique to each individual (Marinucci, 2010; Sullivan, 2003). This uniqueness often means that everyone's gender and sexuality is most often unexpected, unusual, or queer in one way or another from another's gender and sexuality (Marinucci, 2010). By extension, Halperin (1995) argues that instead of denoting a state of being, *queer* is a position that exists in relation to the normative and hegemonic binary. In this way, queer theory presents a conceptualization of gender and sexuality in all its diversity and multiplicity as applying to *all* people – those who live comfortably and uncomfortably within the hegemonic binary (Halperin, 1995; Marinucci, 2010; Sullivan, 2003).

Butler (1990) describes the process as "troubling" the binary when there is an acknowledgment of the limits of categories. Recognizing and actively demonstrating that there are often discontinuities and incoherencies in the hegemonic binary is a goal of queer theory

(Marinucci, 2010). By drawing attention to how the hegemonic binary does not work and breaks down, it also disrupts normalized constructions of sex, gender, and sexuality and the ways that the hegemonic binary legitimizes such constructions (Marinucci, 2010). If the expectations for gender and sexuality, as constructed in the hegemonic binary, were as innate as they are widely believed to be, then there would not be instances where an individual's lived experiences do not align with these expectations (Johnson, 2014; Marinucci, 2010; Sullivan, 2003). Yet, as Butler (1990) and Marinucci (2010) have demonstrated, fully achieving the idealized gender expectations is an impossible goal, which calls into question the legitimacy of the hegemonic binary as a framework for normalized gender performance. Emphasizing such breaks in the binary and thus *queering* the binary opens space in gender and sexuality ideologies for multiple and varied ways of being (Marinucci, 2010; Sullivan, 2003). Through reconstructing and expanding the binary from the current two-category concept that is dominant in Western ideologies, it is then possible to challenge hegemonic stereotypes and discourses that work to *other* those who test the boundaries of the binary (Marinucci, 2010; Sullivan, 2003).

One way in which the *othering* of people and the perpetuation of the hegemonic binary in Western ideologies is maintained is through, as Gramsci (1971, 1973) theorized, institutions like education and the socialization process that occurs within them. More specifically, and in the context of this thesis, literature that children encounter both within the institution of education and outside of it have an influence over their socialization into hegemonic gender and sexuality ideologies. In the following section, I delve deeper into this area and the body of scholarship that supports it.

Socialization Through Literature: Hidden and Null Curriculum

Viewing gender as a performance that is continually negotiated throughout life and cultural contexts means that individuals come to learn their gender. Learning gender is accomplished through a process termed by sociologists as socialization (Johnson, 2014). The term “gender socialization” connotes that gender is both individual but ingrained in broader societal definitions, which creates differences and inequalities that obscure more substantial gender similarities (Johnson, 2014; Kramer, 2011; Nelson, 2006). Namely, the social communities and agents of socialization in which children learn their gender are the family, peer groups, schools, and media (Johnson, 2014; Kramer, 2011, Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Specifically delving into the area of media, there is a history of scholarship investigating children’s and young adult’s literature in connection to socialization. Stephen and Watson (1994) eloquently state that “no text is innocent” (p. 14) as texts construct ideologies. Through the language, images, and discourses that make up curricular texts, the educational space legitimizes certain beliefs, values, and experiences (Dyches & Boyd, 2017). The omnipresence of certain discourses becomes normalized throughout educational experiences that teachers and students do not realize the ideological hegemony present in curricular texts (Dyches, 2017; King & Woodson, 2017). Bainbridge et al. (2005) reiterate the ideological nature of children’s literature and add that “children’s books play an important role in integrating new generations of children into society” (p. 1) through an exploration of different cultural topics and meanings like relationships, morality, and history (Bainbridge et al., 2005). In other words, each text carries its own set of specific gender ideologies constituted through the language, discourses, and images used to create the story.

The implicit gender ideologies embedded into texts also relates to the varying levels of curriculum present within schooling. Within education theory and research, much discussion has revolved around the concepts of an explicit, hidden, and null curriculum. There is continual debate over the meanings of each of these terms with little consensus on exact and universal definitions (Walton, 2005). Nonetheless, since the late 1960s, curricular scholars have contended that the explicit or formal curriculum created by state agencies is not the only learning that occurs within schooling (such as Dreben, 1968; Jackson, 1968; Vallance, 1973). Rahman (2013) cogently articulates how students are socialized into certain rules, behaviours and expectations that are embedded or hidden within learning and other school processes. The term hidden curriculum denotes the socialization process whereby students receive certain messages that align with mainstream culture reflecting predominantly white and heterosexual practices and worldviews (Rahman, 2013; Walton, 2005).

Furthermore, the messages of the hidden curriculum do not solely occur in a specific grade or content area but span the entire education system. From the social relationships between peers and teachers to the content in texts and even the organization of school time, students are consistently socialized into dominant norms (Donnelly, 2015). Through the hidden curriculum, some scholars assert schools are a site of social reproduction; specifically, Ringrose (2012) highlights the hidden curriculum as a contributing factor to the learning and reproduction of gender role norms.

As the hidden curriculum and its messages are embedded into schooling, Donnelly (2014) argues that classrooms cannot be perceived as neutral sites of knowledge. In fact, some scholars would claim that the hidden curriculum harms students who do not conform to dominant norms and expectations. Particularly, De Lissovoy (2012) constitutes the hidden curriculum as a

“continuous process of assault” (p. 463) on marginalized students whose subjectivities are disciplined in favour of enforcing dominant ideologies. In similar terms, Walton (2005) also illustrates how the hidden curriculum enforces heterosexuality and can harm LGBT students’ self-concept regardless if such an outcome is intended or not by various educational stakeholders. Thus, as Rahman (2013) observes, marginalized students often have to take on another identity that aligns with dominant norms and expectations of society in order to survive in their education.

In conjunction with the hidden curriculum, and arguably a part of it, is the null curriculum. Though not all scholars use this term, the null curriculum refers to a type of teaching by omission. To take a case in point, Rahman (2013) provides an example of how a teacher selecting resources that exclude minority groups sends a message to students that such groups are less valued in society. Students are taught what perspectives are valued or not in society, which works to reinforce the knowledge, values, beliefs, and norms of dominant groups (Eisner, 2002). Thus, the null and the hidden curriculum play a role in legitimizing certain ideologies and then socializing students into such ideas and beliefs (De Lissovoy, 2012; Donnelly, 2015; Eisner, 2002; Rahman, 2013; Walton, 2005).

Furthermore, schools and teachers that view books that thematically deal with GSD as “controversial” (Misco & Patterson, 2007; Oulton et al., 2004), can participate in the avoidance or censorship of them (Lycke & Lucey, 2018; Phillips & Larson, 2012). According to Lycke and Lucey (2018), the act of censorship “represents a process of the dominant culture and its members to control the availability of dissemination of information about counter narratives from marginalized social groups” (p. 8). In short, censorship acts in much of the same way as

scholars (e.g., Eisner, 2002; Rahman, 2013; Walton, 2005) have conceptualized the hidden and null curriculum.

Gender Constructions in Literature

Many researchers in literature studies have taken a cross-disciplinary approach to investigate how conceptions of gender are created and maintained through the language, discourse, and images used in children and young adult literature. Such investigations also have implications within educational studies where literature is used in the classroom for language and literacy teaching. Understanding the implicit messages of gender and sexuality presented, or not, in literary texts aimed at children illuminates messages in which students are socialized during their time in schools. As the majority of literature contains representations of men and women, it is only recently that scholars have offered critiques of LGBTQ+ representations in literature studies.

Constructions of Men and Women

Beginning in the 1970s and spanning another two decades, an influx of studies began to investigate how gender is constructed in children's literature and school reading material (LaDow, 1976; Baker & Freebody, 1989; Peterson & Lach, 1990; Swann, 1992; Weitzman et al., 1972). These early studies focused primarily on the balance of representation between males and females in a variety of texts, including picture books, fiction, non-fiction, and textbooks. Most of these studies used content analysis as their method of understanding the types of representations offered and how language and images portrayed men and women. Offering an overview of the findings of the foundational work on gender representation from the 70s, 80s and 90s reveals connections to current scholarship. Many of the findings demonstrated through these early

literature studies are similar to what scholars continue to analyze, critique, and find in current literature studies, which I overview shortly.

Due to the multiplicity of such studies, significant trends in portrayal and representations of males and females have been found across different texts and different genres. First, there is a disproportionate number of male protagonists and reference to males, which contrasts the limited references to and portrayals of females even when characters are not human (LaDow, 1976; Baker & Freebody, 1989; Peterson & Lach, 1990, Swann, 1992; Weitzman et al., 1972). In a much more recent review of Caldecott award-winning literature from 1938 to 2011, Crisp and Hiller (2011) found that the ratio of male to female characters averages at 5.3:1. Thus, gender representation imbalance in award-winning children's literature is still a pertinent issue (Crisp & Hiller, 2011).

Secondly, how both male and female characters are portrayed re-inscribe traditional gender stereotypes (LaDow, 1976; Baker & Freebody, 1989; Peterson & Lach, 1990, Swann, 1992; Weitzman et al., 1972). Male characters are often given a wider range of activities as opposed to females (Swann, 1992; Weitzman et al., 1972). Most often, boys are presented in adventurous and exciting pursuits that require depictions of active independence (LaDow, 1979; Baker & Freebody, 1989; Peterson & Lach, 1990, Swann, 1992; Weitzman et al., 1972). On the other hand, portrayals of girls show more passive characterizations and being restricted by their clothing, namely skirts and dresses (Swann, 1992; Weitzman et al., 1972). A more recent review of literature conducted by Crisp and Hiller (2011) found that even when leading female characters countered traditional characterizations, "remnants of these modes of thought remained, with active females often ultimately relying on males to satisfy the conflict" (p. 203).

The studies from the 20th century commonly used content analysis to focus on a balance of representation and the characterization of males and females in literature. Conversely, Jackson and Gee (2005) note that such a research approach does not allow for a more nuanced analysis that can consider the gender meanings constructed in specific contexts of a text. Thus, recent research employs a critical discourse analysis (CDA) or a post-structuralist theoretical framework to understand how gender is constructed within the text (Cherland, 2009; Cordova, 2015; Shoefler, 2000; Suico, 2017; Taber and Woloshyn, 2011a, 2011b, 2013; Thompson, 2001).

Drawing upon post-structuralist theories and CDA, within the Canadian context, Taber and Woloshyn (2011b) explored children's literature recipients of the Governor-General awards. They also found similar trends to those of the previous body of scholarship despite focusing on more recent publications and Canadian-created and -awarded literature. The delineation between men and women was maintained in depictions of women in the household while men sought out adventure or triumphed over danger (Taber & Woloshyn, 2011b). Despite female characters being represented in more complexity, being portrayed as smart and determined, they only took on non-traditional or adventurous roles when male characters were unable to do so (Taber & Woloshyn, 2011b).

Recent studies have also demonstrated how contemporary and sometimes highly popular children's and young adult literature may, on the surface, rectify gender bias and issues, while continuing to represent traditional gender constructions. Several studies have investigated the beloved and bestselling series by J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter*. Turning a critical eye to this series due to its extreme popularity and consumption by millions of children and adults alike, scholars have generally found a tendency towards traditional and stereotypical gendered discourses (Cherland, 2009; Cordova, 2015; Shoefler, 2000; Thompson, 2001).

Through research studies, many discourses have been found that continue to support and reify the hegemonic binary. For instance, Cherland (2009) found that Rowling uses a discourse of rationality regarding the male protagonists and discourse of irrationality towards Hermione, the main female character. Another discourse exemplifies the dynamic between good and beautiful versus evil and unattractive. Shoefer (2000) found that the girls from Slytherin, typified as the evil or sinister house, are also characterized by Harry in unflattering ways. In opposition, Harry is positioned as the “chosen one” to triumph over evil through independent actions and choices that are guided by reason and not simple temptations or desires (Cherland, 2009).

Similar types of discourses are found in other contemporary examples of children’s and young adult literature. Namely, literature aimed at girls has particularly salient discourses that work to perpetuate stereotyped gender preoccupations. For instance, *The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants*, *Because I’m Worth it: A Gossip Girl Novel*, *Twilight*, *Dear Dumb Diary* and *Dork Diaries* are all popular books aimed at a female audience and are dominated by female characters (Suico, 2017, Taber & Woloshyn, 2011a). Despite the greater female representation, the stereotypical discourses of emphasizing the importance of physical beauty in appearances and the pursuit of popularity (Taber & Woloshyn, 2011a), of dichotomizing good girls and mean girls (Suico, 2017; Taber & Woloshyn, 2011a), and of portraying female friendships in terms of competition are still underlying structures of these storylines (Suico, 2017). Aiming literature specifically at girls allows them to take up a subjective position and identify with characters more easily; however, creating easily accessible positions that are continually mired in stereotypical and sexist discourses also allows for easier internalization (Suico, 2017; Taber & Woloshyn, 2011a).

Additionally, while Woloshyn et al. (2013) find that the depictions and positions of females in children's and young adult literature are expanding, there remains a more rigid construct of masculinity available to boys. The dominant and privileged form of masculinity, or hegemonic masculinity, according to Connell (1995, 2000) is typified by depictions of men as strong protectors or providers who can lead others while holding authority over all others. In their analysis of *The Hunger Games* trilogy, Woloshyn et al. (2013) found that the two main male characters of Gale and Peeta, and their respective embodiment of either hegemonic masculinity or marginalized masculinity, are shown in opposition to each other. While discourses of protection and war characterize Gale, Peeta is depicted in terms of inadequacy and altruism, which, in Katniss' eyes, are perceived as less than Gale's attributes (Woloshyn et al., 2013). According to Brozo (2002), emphasizing literature that contains a variety of positive male archetypes can work to dispel such hegemonic constructions of masculinity and instead normalize different masculinities or ways of being masculine.

In each of these studies, there is an unspoken yet perceived concept that is recognized by some scholars in their analyses, which is the way that heteronormativity is an essential characteristic across the various character portrayals. In both *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*, characters assume heteronormative attraction, which, at the end of both series, results in the creation of nuclear families (Cordova, 2015; Woloshyn et al., 2013). In *The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants*, *Dear Dumb Diary* and *Dork Diaries*, the thoughts and experiences of the female characters are often related to a need to attract boys (Suico, 2017; Taber & Woloshyn, 2011a). Within constructions of masculinity, Greg, the main male character of the popular graphic novels, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, attempts to avoid anything that makes him look "sissy" while also firmly declaring his heterosexuality (Taber & Woloshyn, 2011a). The wide-spread

preoccupation and assumption of heteronormativity across texts and genres is an undeniable part of many of literature's gender ideologies.

LGBTQ+ Representations

Along with analyses of heteronormativity as it is portrayed in children's and young adult literature, gender theorists have examined such content for representations of LGBTQ+ characters. The first text to represent a lesbian or gay character appeared in 1979 with *When Megan Went Away* by Jane Severance, while the first unambiguous transgender character was featured in Marcus Ewert's *10,000 Dresses* in 2008 (Naidoo, 2012). Despite such texts, there has yet to be a clear portrayal of bisexual characters (Bickford, 2018; Droog et al., 2019; Epstein, 2013, 2014). The representation of LGBTQ+ characters in a variety of texts has been growing in recent years (Möller, 2014; Naidoo, 2012; Sapp, 2010). However, many scholars (such as Crawley, 2017; Crisp et al., 2018; Lester, 2014; Scirba, 2017) have taken issue with how many of these representations re-inscribe heteronormativity, stereotypes, and gender and sexuality binaries.

Focusing on an analysis of Orbis Pictus Award-winning non-fiction children's literature, Crisp et al., (2018) found that there were no queer "focal subjects." Furthermore, only 3 out of the studied 143 books referred to the existence of LGBTQ+ people, which only included 4 passing references to lesbian and gay groups of people and not particular individuals (Crisp et al., 2018). They also identified queer erasure committed by the authors through how they placed certain known LGBTQ+ individuals within a framework of heteronormativity where they focused on either the individual's heterosexuality or avoided any discussion of sexuality altogether (Crisp et al., 2018).

A similar trend in which creators are placing LGBTQ+ characters in a heteronormative framework is also found across queer-themed children's fiction books. In 68 children's books, queer characters were depicted as being accepted only through normative terms, meaning when they "seem less queer and more 'normal,' which is read as heterosexual, gender conforming, monogamous, White, upper middle class, and reproductive" (Lester, 2014, p. 247). At the beginning of each of the storylines, the main characters' queerness or gender non-conformity is problematized (Lester, 2014; Scieurba, 2017). It is only in each story's conclusion where the character either proves their worth to others or conforms to gender norms that they can gain acceptance from the other characters surrounding them (Lester, 2014; Scieurba, 2017). Moreover, although LGBTQ-identified characters are the focus of queer-themed children's fiction books, some studies have also found that supporting characters are often depicted in traditional gender roles as well (Crawley, 2017; Scieurba, 2017).

Implications for Education

Of the scholarship I have discussed that examines gender representation and construction in children's and young adult's literature, many are concerned with how such literature is brought into and used in the educational context (such as Cherland, 2009; Crisp & Hiller, 2011; Sunderland, 2000; Taber & Woloshyn, 2011a, 2011b). These concerns span from issues of censorship to questioning teacher pedagogies to address identified gender biases and stereotypes (Cherland, 2009; Crisp & Hiller, 2011; Lycke & Lucey, 2018; Sunderland, 2000; Taber & Woloshyn, 2011a, 2011b). Additionally, a focus on the talk about GSD texts in which liberatory and oppressive discourses are drawn upon by both teachers and students in simultaneous and dynamic ways offers a potential for change (Blackburn & Clark, 2011). Taber and Woloshyn (2011b) urge educators to "assist students in becoming aware of these messages,

discussing their meanings, and deconstructing their hegemonic ideals” (p. 900). At the same time, Blackburn et al. (2015) recognize that in order to guide students in productive discussions of GSD, teachers first need to grasp what ideologies are at play in the texts they are reading. Furthermore, within GSD-inclusive literature, scholars advise teachers to use critical reflection to choose stories that offer students a wide variety of GSD expression and identity as well as ensuring GSD characters are not always positioned as victims of violence but are also agentic in forming positive and loving relationships (Clark & Blackburn, 2016).

As Davies (1993) states, not only do humans read and write stories, but we also live them. Silko (2012) reminds us that everything that we tell one another is founded on story. Our own storylines are discursively created and constructed, but they are dependent upon the storylines that we have learned and are made available to each of us (Davies, 1993; Dyches, 2018a, 2018b). Within the realm of education, the concepts of the hidden and null curriculum are especially apt to link the messages found in children’s literature, its transmission of particular gender ideologies or gendered storylines, and the ways in which education can work to perpetuate or to trouble such stories.

The nexus of certain gender ideologies privileged through depictions in children’s literature and transmitted by the hidden and null curriculum in educational contexts comes to fruition in the research outlined in the following section. I focus on studies dedicated to understanding teachers’ pedagogical approaches to critical literacy and teacher candidates’ training and development in approaches to inclusive education. These studies address the questions posed by gender and literature scholars who are concerned if a GSD-inclusive curriculum is even taught, merely mentioned, or non-existent.

Gender and Language Teaching in Schools

Meyer et al. (2015) expressly state that “teachers’ personal values and beliefs have a strong impact on what content they will include in their classrooms through the official and hidden curriculum” (p. 229). Their statement is at the heart of a variety of scholarship that investigates the beliefs of currently practicing teachers and pre-service teachers surrounding GSD and LGBTQ-affirming students while tying such beliefs to teachers’ practices. Often these both qualitative and quantitative studies rely on human rights and equity-based frameworks of education (Athanasos & Larrabee, 2003), critical theory and pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2011) and the principles of anti-oppressive education (Kumashiro, 2002, 2004). The following section provides a snapshot of such scholarly endeavours.

In-Service Teachers

All teachers act in some capacity as gatekeepers to certain kinds of knowledge and, in this context, to certain discourses in literature that can be deemed either appropriate or inappropriate for certain student age-groups (Kimmel & Hartsfield, 2019). Stemming from their beliefs surrounding the construction of “the child” (Kimmel & Hartsfield, 2019) and constructing GSD as a controversial topic, most teachers are very hesitant to provide GSD-inclusive curricula (Kimmel & Hartsfield, 2019; Meyer et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2016; Schneider & Domito, 2008). While Canadian-wide large-scale quantitative research indicates that the majority of teachers across all grade levels are dedicated in their belief to creating GSD-inclusive education, “fewer teachers would be comfortable practicing it, and fewer still are actually doing it” (Taylor et al., 2016 p. 130; Meyer et al., 2015; Schneider & Domito, 2008). Although educators take steps to be more GSD-inclusive in curriculum planning, it is often a tokenistic approach to inclusion (Meyer et al., 2015). Few teachers in Canada use GSD-inclusive curriculum in ways

that can challenge inequities and transform education through discussions, critiques, and questions of the systems of privilege and oppression within GSD (Meyer et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2016).

Barriers that teachers have identified as influencing their hesitancy to incorporate GSD-inclusive curricula into their practice are many. Meyer et al. (2015) and Taylor et al. (2016) both found that, despite a majority of educators approving of GSD-inclusive education, far fewer thought that they would have support from their colleagues and administrators to address GSD issues in their practice. Other frequently cited barriers were fear of parents' protests (Kimmel & Hartsfield, 2019; Malins, 2016; Cumming-Potvin & Martino, 2018; Meyer et al., 2015; Schneider & Dimito, 2008; Taylor et al., 2016), a lack of pre-service training and professional development regarding GSD issues and strategies for inclusive curricula (Malins, 2016; Meyer et al., 2015; Schneider & Dimito, 2008; Taylor et al., 2016), teachers' and parents' religious beliefs (Malins, 2016; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2011, 2014; Peter et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2016), the notion that it is not an educator's job to address topics of GSD (Malins, 2016; Taylor et al., 2016), and particularly in younger grades, the concept of childhood innocence (Kimmel & Hartsfield, 2019; Malins, 2016; Schmidt, Armstrong, & Everett, 2007; Wollman-Bonilla, 1998).

Researchers also identified a lack of GSD resources available to both teachers and students as a barrier to including GSD curricula and having comfort in discussing it with students (Schneider & Dimito, 2008). A lack of accessible resources could stem from pre-emptive censorship at both the administrative and individual teacher levels (Kimmel & Hartsfield, 2019) or a lack of teacher advocacy (Meyer & Leonardi, 2017). Nonetheless, researchers stress that GSD-inclusive curricula should be ongoing and across curricula (Clark & Blackburn, 2017; Meyer & Leonardi, 2017).

Stemming from these research findings, scholars have advocated for necessary professional development and greater pre-service training that will enable new teachers to have the ability and comfort to address GSD in curricula (Kimmel & Hartsfield, 2019; Malins, 2016; Meyer & Leonardi, 2017; Taylor et al., 2016). Due to such calls, the following section reviews studies focusing on teacher education programs.

Pre-Service Teachers

As was mentioned in the data collected from currently practicing teachers, researchers have corroborated that teacher education programs and textbooks lack explicit content regarding GSD-inclusive education both in Canada (Eyre, 1993; Grace & Wells, 2006; Kitchen & Bellini, 2012; Schneider & Dimito, 2008) and the United States (Jennings, 2014; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008; Sherwin & Jennings, 2006). Despite commitments made by teacher educator programs, when knowledge and awareness of GSD are taught, it is often relegated to a beginning foundational education course or a diversity course wherein multiple topics vie for time (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008; Robinson & Ferfolja, 2008). Instead, Kitchen and Bellini (2012) advocate for teacher education programs to include topics of GSD across all courses with “explicit attention in areas such as equity and diversity, education law, psychology, and classroom management, as well as the inclusion of queer content in all subject areas” (p. 458).

Such calls for comprehensive GSD training in teacher education also come from research that investigates pre-service teachers’ attitudes towards GSD students and inclusive curricula. Studies have found that teacher candidates assume various positions regarding GSD pedagogical inclusivity (Clark, 2010; Knotts, 2012; Larrabee & Morehead, 2010; Mudrey & Medina-Adams, 2006). Clark (2010) found that out of 19 student reflections, only four students positioned themselves as GSD allies, while eight took up neutral positions and seven expressed anti-

positions. Both neutral and anti-positions are those in which pre-service teachers are ambivalent about taking concrete action to teach against oppressive structures like sexism, heterosexism, and heteronormativity (Clark, 2010). Larrabee and Morehead (2010) and Knotts (2012) similarly found that, although pre-service teachers acknowledge the injustices being faced by GSD students, they have more difficulty “accepting personal responsibility for redressing them” (Larrabee & Morehead, 2010, p. 44) and “mov[ing] toward implementation of instruction” (Knotts, 2012, p. 52). This is also shared with findings demonstrating a resistance by teacher candidates to act as agents in curricular and diversity inclusion (Jennings & Sherwin, 2008; Robinson & Ferfolja, 2002, 2008; Wright-Maley et al., 2016).

From this body of scholarship, researchers have found various factors influencing pre-service teachers’ attitudes and sense of self-efficacy to include GSD curricula. Many of the barriers to teach GSD literature or create GSD-inclusive lessons were similar to those cited by in-service teachers. Namely, this includes a perceived lack of administrative support (Clark, 2010; Darvin, 2011; Larrabee & Morehead, 2010; Wright-Maley et al., 2016), apprehension of parents’ potentially negative protests (Clark, 2010; Darvin, 2011; Hermann-Wilmarth, 2010; Larrabee & Morehead, 2010), a lack of understanding of legislation and policy (Larrabee & Morehead, 2010), and issues surrounding the integration of GSD advocacy with personal faith and faith-based teaching (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003; Larrabee & Morehead, 2010; Robinson & Ferfolja, 2002; Wright-Maley et al., 2016). Factors specific to pre-service teachers and the unique positions they hold as new teachers were cited as being the challenge of negotiating classroom management with subject knowledge demands (Larrabee & Morehead, 2010), fear and lack of comfort resulting in less confidence in addressing GSD with students (Darvin, 2011; Knotts, 2012), mediating mentor teacher’s own biases and politics (Clark, 2010), a lack of

appropriate knowledge (Clark, 2010; Wright-Maley et al., 2016), and a fear of being perceived as queer-identifying by students and colleagues when advocating for GSD-inclusion (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2002).

Many of the identified challenges and barriers also directly impact pre-service teachers' responses to literature dealing with GSD themes (Dedeoglu et al., 2012; Hermann-Wilmarth, 2010; Phillips & Larson, 2012; Schieble, 2012). For instance, Phillips and Larson (2012) found that pre-service teachers' responses to the picture book *And Tango Makes Three* constituted three subject positions. There was a dichotomy of a "martyred" or "unemployed" teacher that directly opposed the "silent" or "employed" teacher position. The former position consisted of teachers who would potentially risk their employment to support GSD-based activities or speak out against instances of injustice (Phillips & Larson, 2012). Conversely, the latter position referred to teachers who would prefer silence and obedience to the status quo to maintain their employment (Phillips & Larson, 2012). These positions left pre-service teachers with the sense that any discussion of GSD is better left in the family, that there are other ways to address diversity, and that they are not free to use GSD literature, but it instead necessitates conditions and warnings.

For the pre-service teachers in Hermann-Wilmarth's (2010) study, some participants hesitant to include queer-themed literature found that teaching about racial or cultural diversity is more self-comforting, as GSD was related to sex and morality, which contradicted a perceived need to protect childhood innocence. Particularly, instead of using GSD literature, participants described how they would express to students that everyone is different, and everyone deserves respect (Hermann-Wilmarth, 2010). A similar type of discourse was also noted by Schieble (2012) in a pre-service teacher's response to LGBT literature wherein the participant drew upon discourses of harmony to maintain a perception of objectivity and neutrality. Nonetheless,

Schieble (2012) outlines how such discourses of harmony extinguish important and necessary dialogues surrounding GSD, which, they argue, allows oppressive structures to “remain unchallenged, and therefore normalized and powerful” (p. 219).

Conclusion

Though there are over forty years of continued research dedicated to understanding gender constructions in texts and their influence over children’s and youth’s development of identity, the inquiry into education’s role and teachers’ beliefs surrounding such texts are quite recent. While the few previously cited studies have sought to understand teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, and positions towards GSD-inclusive curricula, fewer have investigated how GSD-inclusive texts are actually used in the classroom or how teachers subvert the biased messages researchers have found in other literature resources (Sunderland et al., 2001). Though this current literature review was not exhaustive, there were no studies outlined that explored teacher candidates’ selection of teaching resources or the ways they may approach them in a GSD-inclusive manner. This is one lacuna that the current study is hoping to fill in an attempt to answer the implicative questions for education posed by earlier gender and literature scholars. To that purpose, my thesis research adds to the current knowledge base of teacher candidates’ understandings of GSD and equity-based or inclusive education. In what follows, I describe the methodology and the steps I undertook to conduct the research.

Chapter Three: Methodology

To reiterate, the guiding research questions of my thesis are: *How do elementary TCs describe their GSD ideologies based in an equity framework of education within the context of selecting picture books as language learning resources? And How prepared or comfortable do elementary TCs feel in potentially addressing an/or discussing the topic of GSD in their future classrooms with students?* Both questions aim to understand the perceptions and thinking of certain individuals, in this case, pre-service teachers. These questions both also begin with asking *how* teacher candidates describe themselves and their own perceptions and thinking that may guide their future action.

According to Leavy (2017), qualitative research approaches allow researchers to conduct an in-depth exploration to gain “a robust understanding of a topic [and] the meaning people ascribe to their lives [... through their] subjective experiences” (p. 124). This approach values the subjective meaning-making process of individuals that is based on ontological and epistemological paradigms that view reality as being relative to individual subjective experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Nonetheless, within the general qualitative approach, multiple methodological frameworks can underpin any given research design. Case study provided the tool by which I was able to design the research to investigate my guiding questions.

Methodological Framework: Case Study

Most people may have encountered a case study typified as a description of a real or created scenario for the purposes of teaching. However, Caulley and Dowdy (1987), as well as Yin (2009), emphasize that the design and use of case studies in teaching or record-keeping are vastly different than those used in methodology-based research. Because case study has different purposes beyond research methodology and is used across a variety of disciplines, there are

arguments that question its legitimacy as a research methodology. Yin (2009) argues that such a critique is especially salient in comparison to the longstanding research traditions that are anchored in a history of methodological texts and procedures. Flyvberg (2013) agrees and points out that certain oversimplified definitions of *case study* augment the perception of case study as not being its own methodology, which both Yin (2009) and Flyvberg (2013) argue is a mistaken view.

Instead, Yin (2009), Stake (2003), Creswell (2003), and Flyvberg (2013) all provide a framework for case study research design that flows from the conception of research questions through to data analysis and reporting. Creswell (2003) characterizes case study as an in-depth analysis of individuals and processes among other areas that are based on a variety of data collection methods. Similarly, Flyvberg (2013) remarks on the intensive quality of case study, which he argues also enables researchers to focus on context and the relationships that the case has to its environment. Despite the ability to understand context and phenomenon through case study, Stake (2003) tempers this ability with the need to define the boundaries of the case that will be studied; this need is to find essentially what features are part of the system of the case that will be studied and what is beyond it and will be left out of the study.

However, the rationale of using case study over other methodologies depends on the research context. Yin (2009) provides a framework of when to use case study as a methodological approach to conducting research. They argue that there are three factors to be considered in this decision-making process, namely, the research question(s), the control a researcher has on events, and the contemporaneity of the event. Considering and combining all of these factors, Yin claims that case study should be chosen over other methodologies when “a

‘how’ or ‘why’ question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control” (p. 13).

Thus, the case study framework fits my research thesis as I am asking *how*-based research questions to investigate the current context of education and teacher preparation as well as the contemporary issues of GSD in educational contexts. Furthermore, as an individual or a researcher, I do not have any definitive control over the types of cultural and ideological discourses teacher candidates have been exposed to, have internalized, and may draw on in their teaching practices and choices. My inquiry is not solely an exploration of teacher candidates’ ideologies and teaching practices because both of these factors are mired in the contexts of their learning and living. Namely, the context of their teacher preparation courses, and the larger Ontarian education context and cultural discourses play a role in teaching choices and practice.

Adding to the definition of case study, Yin (2009) further qualifies that this methodology “[...] 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” (p. 18). Baxter and Jack (2008) explain that case study enables a researcher to uncover the grey areas of relationship that exist between the phenomenon under study and the context in which it is developed and found. Due to the nature of my research questions and the purpose of my inquiry, research designed within the case study methodology will enable me to tease out these complex and potentially hidden relationships between the educational and cultural context and the perceptions teachers have of GSD that can influence their professional teaching choices.

Identifying the boundaries of the case that will be studied depends on the research context and questions. Without such boundaries, Yin (2009) cautions that the study then has the potential to become all-encompassing and impossible to analyze fully. They additionally explain that well-

developed research questions will help to define the boundaries of the case (Yin, 2009). Other methodologists contend that the boundaries of a case can also be based on the specific time and place of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2003), the time and activity under study (Stake, 2003), or the subject and object of the study (Thomas, 2011).

My case study will be bounded using the subject/object framework proposed by Thomas (2011) in which a *subject* is the someone or group of individuals that make up the case as an instance of the *object* or the phenomenon of interest that is being studied. In this framework and the context of my research questions, the elementary teacher candidates and their literacy teaching choices are chosen as the subject because it illuminates and provides an analytic framework for teacher candidates' ideologies of GSD in education (the object). In other words, teacher candidates and their choices are the case under study, which speaks to the broader research question of exploring their GSD ideologies in their role as teachers. To further bind the case and add specificity that will guide my data collection and analysis, the elementary teachers will all (a) belong to a teacher education program in a university in North America, (b) have taken courses that focus on inclusive education and literacy teaching, and (c) have practical experiences of teaching in a classroom that is based in a publicly-funded school setting. This additional specificity also allows me to focus my analysis on the relationships among TCs, their choices, and their perceptions of GSD within the context of their teacher education program and their professional setting of Ontario classrooms.

Selecting the type of case study that best suits my research design is supported by descriptions from Yin (2009) and Stake (2003). Yin (2009) conceptualizes three such types: explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive; conversely, Stake (2003) describes how case studies can either be intrinsic, instrumental, or collective. My study could be categorized through all

three of Yin's (2009) concepts as my research thesis seeks to explore and describe TCs' ideologies as well as explain how this is reflected in their professional choices. I am thus unable to delineate between these three case study types proposed by Yin (2009). Instead, I chose to subscribe my research design under Stake's (2003) category of an instrumental case study. An instrumental study is one in which "a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw generalizations" (Stake, 2003, p. 137). In-depth analysis generates insights into an external interest, which contrasts intrinsic studies that are interested in the uniqueness and particularities of the case in and of itself (Stake, 2003). Applying Stake's arguments to my research, I seek to uncover what GSD perceptions and ideologies teacher candidates draw on that inform their teaching practices and choices and how their teacher education program has prepared them to make such choices.

Within the boundaries and intentions of the case study, a researcher then decides between the various ways in which to design their research that will be the most useful to understanding the phenomenon under study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Yin (2009) provides a four-quadrant construct of case study design that allows researchers to choose between single-case and multiple-case designs that also function with either a holistic or embedded analysis. I chose to focus on one specific context and one specific case, so my research would be categorized as a single-case study. Though it is perceived to be more rigorous to use a multiple-case design, Yin (2009) argues that a single-case study is appropriate under five different circumstances or rationales. The rationale of being a representative or typical case applies to my decision of using a single-case design. This rationale is when the case is thought "to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation" (Yin, 2009, p. 48), and can potentially give insights into the experiences of an average individual, program, or institution (Yin, 2009). I

propose that the elementary TCs who participated in this study and their perceptions of GSD may be typical of other TCs in an education program and could be representative of the literacy teaching practices and discourses prevalent in Ontario similar to what has been found in the previous body of scholarship.

In addition to the single-case design, my analysis of the case is embedded rather than holistic. While a holistic analysis of the case focuses on the entirety of the case as a whole unit throughout the study, an embedded design allows for multiple units of analysis to be investigated separately, which will then be analyzed in relation to the whole case (Yin, 2009). Moreover, an embedded design allows for more rigorous analysis as it examines specific phenomena in relation to a more abstract whole (Yin, 2009). Additionally, it aids in the avoidance of what Yin (2009) terms as *slippage* (p. 52) wherein the data that begins to be collected no longer reflects the research questions.

Due to the complexity of my research questions, I broke down my units of analysis into three main sections: (1) TCs' perceptions of GSD in education and the ideologies that influence them, (2) the potential literacy teaching choices TCs make concerning GSD-inclusive pedagogy, and (3) the level of preparation and comfort TCs have to lead GSD-based discussions with students. These three units of analysis, developed from my research questions, allowed me to target each specific phenomenon, while also relating this understanding to the broader context of teacher education programs and the education system.

I also gave considerable attention to the influence and dynamics of power that shape the data that are collected. At the heart of my research is the recognition that all teachers hold a position of power in the way they approach their teaching practice, which accordingly shapes student identity development. Nonetheless, there are extraneous power factors that apply

specifically to new teachers as has been noted in previous studies (Clark, 2010; Darvin, 2011; Knotts, 2012; Larrabee & Morehead, 2010). As most of the TCs who participated in this study begin to establish their professional identity and enter the teaching community, this unique position may influence their responses. An analysis of how this position affects their teaching choices can potentially provide fertile ground as to how teacher education programs can prepare TCs to address issues of contention.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

Within single-case studies and in addition to an embedded analysis, Yin (2009) advises the use of theory to frame data collection and analysis to emphasize the rigour of the study. Although the theories underpinning the conceptualization of my research thesis have been mostly implicitly understood until this point, I briefly make such theoretical assumptions transparent. The theoretical framework upon which my research thesis is based includes both critical theory, whose practical extension in education is critical pedagogy, as well as the conceptualization of queer theory as outlined in the previous chapter. The area of queer theory and critical theory/pedagogy has sometimes been combined by scholars to create the concept of queer pedagogy (Blackburn & Clark, 2011; Britzman, 1995; Luhmann, 1998; Sumara, 2001; Sumara & Davis, 1999; Winans, 2006; Zeikowitz, 2002).

Stemming from critical theory, critical pedagogy is a view of education and teaching as being inherently politicized rather than the neutral or acultural environment it is perceived as being (Giroux, 2011). Giroux (2011) emphasizes that critical pedagogy critiques classrooms as being a site of struggle wherein many aspects of schooling “function as modes of social, political, and cultural reproduction” (p. 5). One of the main goals of critical pedagogy in these educational sites of struggle is for its members to become conscious of how practices and

structures have normalized or denied certain subjectivities, knowledges, and agencies (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2011). Critical pedagogy also offers a goal of hope. Giroux (2011) argues that the sense of hope stems from the empowerment provided to students “to unsettle commonsense assumption, theorize matters of self and social agency, and engage the ever-changing demands and promises of a democratic polity” (p. 3). Critical pedagogy allows for the ultimate path towards democracy wherein teachers and students can mobilize against dominant practices through the questioning of inequalities of power, authority, and agency in the classroom. Giroux (2011) suggests that classrooms engaged in critical pedagogy enable students to gain “the knowledge and skills necessary to address the limits of justice in democratic societies” (p. 6).

Combining critical pedagogy with that of queer theory means that queer pedagogy works towards disrupting the normative patterns of thinking, and in the literacy context, of reading, and writing. As Giroux (2011) advocates, instead of viewing texts as depoliticized and worthy of only reverence, the critical and queer pedagogue would contextualize and question the text to interrupt familiar interpretations. By extension, queer pedagogy demands more than the mere inclusion of texts that have GSD-themes or characters (Britzman, 1995; Winans, 2006). It also necessitates a critical discussion of GSD, the structures of privilege and oppression that are involved, so that dominant assumptions and thinking of all students are challenged (Britzman, 1995; Winans, 2006). In this way, the main goal of queer pedagogy is to unsettle the process of normalization of dominant beliefs and certain identities that occurs in learning through curricula, texts, and activities (Britzman, 1995). Through this process of questioning, interrupting, disrupting, and unsettling, there is the hope of subversion and change, which opens up space in education for modes of thinking and being that go beyond dominant conceptualization (Britzman, 1995).

Limitations of Case Study Methodology

Many of the critiques of case study methodology stem from issues of boundedness, a single, holistic view of the case, a lack of generalizability, and openness towards research confirmation bias (Flyvberg, 2013; Stake, 2003; Yin, 2009). In this spirit, this section will elucidate how my case study research tackles the issues of generalizability and researcher bias.

Generalizability in the research context denotes how findings or results issuing from one specific study can then be applied to different contexts, situations, or people (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2009). However, there is a difference between *statistical* and *analytic* generalizability (Yin, 2009). Statistical generalizability stems mostly from quantitative studies that seek to find frequencies of certain occurrences (Yin, 2009). This can be done with varying degrees of confidence since its research design usually considers a large sample size and random sampling, which assumes to be equivalent to a greater population (Merriam, 1988). Nonetheless, a case study is specifically meant to understand the particulars of a single case, in as much depth as possible, through the purposeful selection of informants and not necessarily to understand the generality of the many (Merriam, 1988). I recognize the fact that I purposefully chose my participants based on a set of criteria to gain the depth of understanding required of a case study. The participants' views may not be universalized to all people. However, within this expressed purpose of case study, Yin (2009), Stake (2003) and Flyvberg (2013) advocate that case study can be used to make analytic generalizations. Yin (2009) characterizes this level of generalizability as when "a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study" (p. 38). Thus, I strove to make analytic generalizations wherein I interpreted my findings as insights to be learned from this particular context.

The other critique of using case study methodology is the perception of a lack of rigour in its openness to research confirmation bias (Flyvberg, 2013; Yin, 2009). This type of bias occurs when, throughout the investigative process, a researcher favours gleaned understandings that align with their preconceived notions or theories of the phenomenon while ignoring information that demonstrates different or unexpected perspectives (Flyvberg, 2013; Yin, 2009). Such biases ultimately influence the direction of the findings, the conclusions drawn from the study, and do not provide an honest and full account of the case as findings are interpreted through the biases of the researcher (Yin, 2009). As an educator, I have a vested interest in the topic as I advocate for the need for teachers to be prepared to teach against injustices and understand the oppressive structures of education in which they are implicated. Nonetheless, aligning my research with constructivist and critical paradigms allows me to recognize the various ways that I am embedded in my research and held accountable to the knowledge claims that I make.

Haraway (1988) argues that epistemologies that claim to be completely objective, as though they are stemming from a position of nowhere and everywhere at once, are irresponsible and unaccountable. Instead, she advocates for situated knowledges, which acknowledge the positions of the knower and that all knowledge is partial as it is filtered through such specific positions. In this way, objectivity is less about acting as an outside, neutral observer, and more about recognizing that the researcher and their partial knowledge of the world are central to every step of the research process. This demands that the researcher is accountable and responsible for the claims that are made and grounds dialogue of what counts as knowledge (Haraway, 1988). Thus, by being transparent in who I am and what my views of education consist of in relation to this study, I maintained the integrity of this study. In the presentation of my findings, I present perspectives that align with my own theories of this topic alongside those

that contradict it. As well, I outline the specific procedure that guided my data collection and analysis to build the potential for replicability in the future.

Participants, Recruitment and Ethics

The selection of participants can be done purposefully or randomly to gain the best information possible that will address the research questions. Thus, the participants that were sought out for this study are elementary or primary/junior teacher candidates. I had originally proposed that all participants that would be recruited would come from the same teacher education program in Ontario and be in their final year before graduating. However, I encountered difficulties during recruitment that made it necessary for me to cast a wider net for potential participants. Thus, participants that were sought out were teacher candidates across North America in a BEd program who were either elementary bound or high school-bound if they had English as a teachable. Although I widened the net to also allow high school or intermediate/senior TCs, the participants who volunteered were all in the elementary cohort of their programs. Thus, selecting elementary teacher candidates aligns not only with my first research question that deals with selecting picture books but also with advocates' claims for the need to begin GSD anti-oppression education at younger ages (see Cahill & Theilheimer, 1999; Robinson, 2002, 2005; Wallis & VanEvery, 2000 among others).

Recruitment of participants began after receiving approval from the university's Research Ethics Board. Recruitment strategies took a variety of forms and evolved through time as the Covid-19 pandemic forced different approaches to research recruitment and data collection than originally planned. Original strategies included an email invitation sent to the teacher-candidate student body, flyers posted on the education building bulletin boards and in student common rooms, and a brief invitational presentation during class time. Recruitment strategies then

evolved into social media ads being shared among different communities to reach a wider participant pool as well as snowball sampling. Regardless of recruitment strategies, teacher candidates were under no obligation to express interest or participate. I provided my contact information for those who were interested in participating or learning more about my research. I began recruitment a week before Canada and most of the world went into complete lock-down due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the health crisis, I lost direct access to my participant pool and it became very difficult to generate interest in participating in research when many students were overwhelmed with job loss, university closures, and health concerns. Thus, despite the various recruitment strategies that I implemented over the course of a few months, I was only able to find five participants who volunteered to be a part of my research study.

Nevertheless, due to the pandemic's effects, which influenced my need to broaden my potential participant pool, I also gained a more diverse group of participants. Of my five participants, three were nearing graduation while two were in the middle of their BEd programs. All participants came from universities in North America but spanned three different campuses and thus, different educator-training contexts. Although, questions specific to participant demographics were not asked, through the interviews it became apparent that participants also spanned the ages of 22 to 30 years old and identified with various gender identities. The diversity found in my participant sample addresses the concern found in previous literature that elementary teacher candidates often come from young, white, female, and middle-class backgrounds. Having a more diverse group of participants adds nuance and strength to the patterns of similarities found between each individual that will come in my analysis (King & Horrocks, 2010)

Before data collection began, participants who were interested in taking part in this case study were provided with a copy of a letter of information (Appendix A) as well as an informed consent form (Appendix B), all of which were submitted and approved through the REB. Both forms indicated the method of data collection utilized throughout the study and the rights the participants have in the research process. Participants were informed that the consent form would need to be signed before data was collected and that a copy will be securely stored by me to maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred through semi-structured interviews with the teacher candidate participants who voluntarily agreed to participate (Appendix C). These interviews were conducted one-on-one between me and the participant and the interview protocol was offered to participants to review beforehand. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions on face-to-face meetings and conversations as well as the geographical spread of my participants, interviews were conducted through either a virtual meeting or a phone call depending on the participant. Regardless of format, the interviews were conducted in a private and uninterrupted space to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the teacher candidate. According to Hancock and Algozzine (2011), such a setting also increases the participants' comfort levels and "the likelihood of attaining high-quality information" (p. 45). Following this advice, I began each interview with some informal rapport-building questions that allowed both myself and the participant to get a better sense of who we each are and diffuse any awkward tension that may exist at the outset.

Before shifting the conversation to more formal questions that address my research thesis, I reiterated the rights they have as participants throughout the study. I ensured that they understood that what they share will be kept anonymous and confidential at every stage of the

research process. I asked participants to choose a pseudonym or if they would rather have one assigned to them. I also explained that they have the right to refuse to answer any questions and that they can withdraw from participation in the study at any time without any consequences. I confirmed their consent to participate in the study and if they had any questions before beginning data collection. I also asked each participant's permission to audio record the interview and all consented.

Conducting a semi-structured interview means that I had prepared questions in an interview protocol that target my research questions, but it also allows me to ask probing questions that can naturally arise from the conversation and the information the participant is providing (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). This structure is well suited for case study as it “invite[s] interviewees to express themselves openly and freely and to define the world from their own perspectives, not solely from the perspective of the researcher” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011, p. 45). I organized the interview protocol along the lines of each of the three units of embedded analysis: (1) perceptions of GSD, (2) pedagogical choices, and (3) preparedness and comfort. The types of questions were open-ended and flexible. A few examples are as follows:

- Tell me, what does the word *gender* mean to you? (Unit of analysis #1)
- When choosing literature for a language lesson, what factors do you consider? (Unit of analysis #2)
- How comfortable would you say you are in addressing topics of GSD with students in your language teaching? (Unit of analysis #3)

Although interviews are commonly a part of qualitative research because they allow participants to express their own perspectives, there are limitations to this method of data

collection (Creswell, 2014; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Yin, 2009). Creswell (2014) notes that interviews are often not done in a natural setting, and thus, perspectives are filtered through the participant's ability to articulate their thoughts and experiences. Additionally, the more formal setting of an interview as well as the researcher's presence can be an influencing factor. Both Creswell (2014) and Yin (2009) highlight how the very act of speaking to a researcher can bias participants' responses. The participant may want to provide the information they think the interviewer wants to hear rather than their true thoughts (Yin, 2009). Despite these limitations, using semi-structured interviews as the principal method of data collection is still suitable for my research thesis as other methods would not allow me to explore the internal insights of teacher candidates.

Originally, I had also proposed a second method for data collection in the form of a lesson planning activity. For this activity, I had chosen a picture book that had been analyzed previously by Sciurba (2017) for both its positive and stereotypical portrayals of gender. I would have asked participants to create a read-aloud lesson plan using this picture-book. As read-alouds are highly teacher-driven, the activity might have provided further fertile ground to understand the literacy teaching choices teacher candidates may make concerning GSD-inclusive literature. The purpose of such an activity was also to investigate the methods teacher candidates draw upon to discuss GSD in their teaching, which could potentially be further compared and contrasted to how they have positioned themselves in the data collected through interviews. Unfortunately, due to the difficulties I encountered in my recruitment phase and the inability to physically meet with participants to provide the necessary materials, the lesson planning activity became an unfeasible method of data collection. It is, however, an idea that could be explored

with future research studies. Thus, the interview data collected is the only data set that is analyzed and discussed in the next chapters of this thesis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted as an ongoing and reiterative process that occurred simultaneously with data collection and reporting. This aligns with general qualitative research processes, which are characterized by emergent and flexible designs (Creswell, 2014). Within case study methodology specifically, I relied on the inductive and deductive processes of coding and analysis for the whole of the collected data (Yin, 2009).

I first began by transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews so that all of the final versions of the collected data were in written format. The transcripts were mostly verbatim with minor edits to remove conversational *ums* or *ahs* to improve readability (Leavy, 2017). As I began to collect data, I followed the recommendation of Leavy (2017) and immersed myself in it so as to find “the heart of [the] data” (p. 150). Within this immersion, I made brief notations and memos of significant points of interest that were relevant to my research questions. This allowed me to reduce the data to areas that best addressed my research thesis and mitigated a sense of being overwhelmed by the array of raw data collected (Creswell, 2014; Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Leavy, 2017).

Considering the whole of notations initially made and the patterns among them, I created a preliminary list of codes. I chose to follow generic coding guidelines, which often suggest the use of descriptive coding during the initial phases of coding and analysis (Leavy, 2017; Saldaña, 2014). I used the guidelines described by Saldaña (2014) wherein descriptive coding assigns a word or short phrase that signals what the participant is talking about in a given text segment. However, as I continued to review the interview data and became more immersed in the act of

interpreting the meaning of the participants, I found that descriptive coding did not allow for a nuanced analysis of the ideological beliefs that made up my participants' responses. Thus, I chose to go through the data again using value coding (Saldaña, 2014) to see if it allowed for better exploration of participant's attitudes and beliefs. I found that the combination of both descriptive and value codes helped me understand the wider breadth of the entire case data as well as the intricacies of relationship between and within each participant.

After this first cycle of coding, I then hand-coded the data using this list of codes to identify major over-arching categories that grouped similar themes to be analyzed. As further interviews were conducted, I was consistently reviewing my initial set of codes and previous interview data to modify and add codes based on the new data collected. This reiterative process was also coupled with extensive memo writing so that I could keep track of how my analysis and interpretation of the data was evolving. These practices aided in the creation of the over-arching categories so that it was grounded in the data. In the following section, I expand further on my analysis and the specific findings stemming from the coding process.

Chapter Four: Analysis

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the key findings from the semi-structured interviews that I conducted with five elementary teacher candidates. First, I introduce the participants, allowing readers to become acquainted with them in order to contextualize further the study's findings. Each participant has asked to be given a pseudonym in order to protect their identities and maintain anonymity. After, I present the major themes resulting from the collected data that answer my two research questions. A discussion and interpretation of participants' responses follow.

Participant Overview

The pseudonyms assigned to each of my participants are Carmella, Silvio, Adrianna, Joseph, and Rosalie. Among all five participants, there are many similarities and differences in their identities and backgrounds. Carmella, Rosalie, and Joseph all attend the same teacher education program at one university in Ontario. However, whereas Carmella and Rosalie were at the end of their program and shortly awaiting graduation at the time of the interviews, Joseph was only finishing the first year of his BEd. Similarly, Silvio also completed his first year with another year remaining at the time of the interviews but was attending a different teacher education program than the three previous participants. Adrianna belonged to yet another different university from the other participants and was at the end of her degree. Carmella and Rosalie were the youngest in their early twenties, with Joseph and Silvio being in their mid- to late- twenties and Adrianna beginning her thirties. Although I did not ask any participants to specifically identify their gender or race, during the interview, participants organically self-identified with a particular gender.

TC's Ideologies about GSD and Education

Understanding of GSD

Using the underpinning queer theory as a guide, overall, the five participants viewed diverse gender and sexual identities positively. For the most part, the focus was placed on “individual expression” and how people “want to portray themselves.” However, when I dug deeper into what the participants meant by those terms, three of them seemed to fall back onto hegemonic discourses to explain their thinking. For instance, Carmella initially described gender as self-awareness and self-understanding. However, when expanding on her description, she explained that an individual’s understanding of gender stems from their sex. Thus, although they recognized gender as being a part of a person’s identity, self-thought, and bodily display, they had a more difficult time articulating what that means beyond the language of dominant gender ideology.

Conversely, two participants, Joseph and Adrianna, used language most often associated with queer theory to explain their understandings of gender and sexuality. Both participants refer to GSD as a “spectrum” or “continuum,” a concept that is continually fluid and connected to identity as opposed to biology. Particularly, Joseph explained how sex, gender, and sexuality “can live on a spectrum that is totally independent of one another.” His conceptualization connects to how Butler’s (1990) work methodically sought to lay bare the independence that sexuality, expression, and identity had from an individual’s biological sex. Adrianna also framed gender and sexuality as being more various than just male and female: “I mean, there's basically a wider variety of gender than just A and B, there's not just male and female. It's more likely to say that each individual person is more accurately their own gender than to say there's only two genders.” Adrianna highlighted the meaning of queering gender, which breaks down the

dependence on the hegemonic binary to pigeonhole individuals with certain labels (Butler, 1990).

However, with queering the hegemonic binary and allowing for multiplicity in identities comes trepidation for some people. Carmella continually relied on the idea of complication and confusion regarding such multiplicity: “Sexuality can be complicated for some people like, especially young people because they're confused. It's a confusing time for them and there are so many different kinds of sexualities that people are identifying as having.” The fear of causing confusion is a major corner piece of her GSD ideology that bleeds into her pedagogical choices and approach, which will be discussed in future sections.

Conceptualization of GSD in Education

When bringing GSD into the context of education, the conversation began to focus more on difficulties and the broader evolution of GSD acceptance. All teacher candidates noted that, in general, GSD is a “sensitive” or “touchy” topic. This idea may stem from their level of comfort with GSD, which is another major categorical finding, but it also stems from their awareness of societal contention around topics of GSD.

Carmella and Rosalie often referred to the growing normalization of GSD topics and students in schools. However, they also identified that there is a long road ahead before it is viewed as completely “normal” by everyone. For instance, when I asked Carmella why she thought bringing GSD into education was a “sensitive” topic she expanded:

I feel like it's hard because right now this is just, you know, becoming normalized.

Whereas, you know, like I know my parents' age group back in the day like this wasn't even like a discussion, right? So I feel like in the near future it could be way more normalized in classrooms.

Similarly, Rosalie noted, “I think there's going to be more of a focus on different sexual diversity within students now that it's becoming almost more and more known.” For Rosalie, the emphasis on knowing is also connected to her placement experiences where she saw teachers address GSD in the classroom only when it was known that there was a transgender student present:

So, in that case, I think it's more known and talked about. Because it's relevant like it's in the classroom. But for teachers that, you know, don't have that situation or any type of different diversity in the classroom, then I think it's not talked about. So, I think it's becoming more involved in the classrooms, but still not everywhere.

Their views about GSD in education, being based on the level of normalization and knowledge of GSD students, create a stalemate situation. If TCs learn that teachers do not approach GSD topics unless there is an assumed or known presence of a GSD student, then it becomes increasingly difficult to normalize GSD in education. As Carmella highlighted, it is “difficult” to broach such topics in the first place. Thus, their views on GSD and education create a vicious cycle that relies on some future point where GSD is normalized in society so that it can be discussed in an educational context.

While for Carmella and Rosalie, it was the lack of normalization of GSD that shaped their ideological viewpoint of the place GSD had within education, for Joseph and Silvio, it is the idea of the multiplicity of perspectives and the unknown from their positionality. Silvio mentioned a few times throughout the interview the need to take into account multiple considerations as well as multiple understandings of GSD. He acknowledged that he needs to reconcile the traditional with more fluid meanings of GSD to come to his own understanding:

Like we have, I think there's a traditional understanding of gender and sexuality, and not everyone understands it the same as I would understand it or you would understand it,

correct? And I think it's- for me, I think I have to reconcile those different perspectives, right? You have the scientific understanding of gender and sexuality. You might have parents or students who go by a more traditional understanding. You have other perspectives, which are perhaps very open and fluid, right? So, I think for me I have to take into account many different perspectives that informs my own, right?

The hesitancy showed in how he discusses GSD, demonstrated by the upwards inflection in his voice and how he asked "...correct?" and "...right?," also appeared often throughout the interview. The sense of unsureness is also similar to his pedagogical choices where other social factors of parents and students were favoured over an active discussion of GSD in a classroom. The fear of offending was a major concern that other participants shared with Silvio and will be discussed shortly.

Joseph's lack of confidence about bringing GSD into discussions in his classroom came not from external factors, but from concerns about his own positionality. He acknowledged that he is "not an expert on this topic" and that his own background and experiences as a "heterosexual white male" can make him, as he described himself, "biased in what I see and am aware of." At different points in the interview, he summarized this point with the phrase: "I don't know what I don't know." His wariness has less to do with viewing GSD as contentious to parents and general society and more about doubt in his own abilities. It is less a fear of offending others and more a fear of misrepresenting the breadth of GSD in the classroom.

The Role of an Educator

How each participant reacted to notions of GSD in education is also reflected in their beliefs of the purpose of education and their roles as teachers. Both Joseph and Adrianna took up more critical stances in their teaching philosophies in comparison to other participants. Adrianna

emphasized that teaching goes beyond mere academic content to include social-emotional learning. In her practicum experiences, she learned the importance of incorporating both types of curricula in her pedagogy when she commented that, “Because the younger you help them develop empathy and an ability to understand and control their emotions, then the better people we're going to raise, and I think the more empathetic that they will be.” From her perspective, education can be used to build empathetic relationships among diverse peoples, to grow self-awareness and understanding of others. She added,

I think part of that is also making them aware of the diversity of people, whether that be different genders or sexualities or disabilities, just things that they're aware of – the humanity and existence of those types of people. Because I think it's, you know, the isolation and the unawareness are what creates a fear. People fear what they don't understand or what's different from them. And so just that there's not that divide created from a young age, then they're less likely to have negative reactions or emotions towards it.

Thus, for Adrianna, talking about GSD with students is a way to achieve the goals of education in preparing students for a diverse world and dismantling the process of *othering*. As will be discussed later, Adrianna's pedagogical choices are made with this explicit goal in mind.

Joseph also viewed GSD in education as a way to “teach students how to interact with that diversity in our society,” but he took this position a bit further and also included student advocacy in his teaching role. He realized that teachers need to be “role models for students.” He not only demonstrated intolerance for “any sort of homophobic, sexist, racist humour,” but also highlighted how “important it is for students to feel represented and accepted in society.” He conceptualized his role as an educator “to sort of capture the curiosity of students and foster it

and make them feel that all the possibilities that they want to explore are open to them.” In trying to open those possibilities for students in a society that is not necessarily open to all, Joseph refused to take a neutral stance when discussing GSD in education:

Because I can just imagine that just like there are people that don't feel comfortable with talking about it, I can only imagine that there would be someone that feels uncomfortable not talking about it because they feel that way. ... But if I have a student in my classroom that's young and doesn't understand why society feels this way and is essentially discriminating against them, I think that's much more important. And I would rather fight for them than bend to the wills of people who are discriminating.

Taking a critical pedagogical position as a teacher and advocating for students is an essential part of Joseph's teaching philosophy. Like Adrianna, their worldviews of education go beyond providing students with information. Instead, they use the educational context as a legitimized avenue to break down unjust barriers that students may encounter in life. Furthermore, they position their roles as teachers as being inexplicably responsible for working towards such ends.

Inclusive Pedagogical Frameworks

How each participant views education, teaching, and the broader topic of GSD ultimately informs the pedagogical choices they make in their literacy teaching. Joseph and Adrianna, who queered their GSD understandings and took up a critical position as educators, also described their pedagogy in terms that followed closely to the underpinning theory of critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy seeks to use the educational context as a means to disrupt normative ways of thinking of the world, and in this case, of GSD, while providing students with tools to question and participate in issues of inequality, justice, power, authority, and agency (Britzman, 1995; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2011; Winans, 2006) The three remaining participants were much more

hesitant in making pedagogical choices to include GSD in their teaching due to a variety of concerns and considerations. These concerns will be discussed in-depth in the following section.

Critical Frameworks

I have chosen to label this category as critical because of its alignment with critical theory and pedagogy. I have also used *frameworks* as a way to not only refer to the type of pedagogy but the overall thought process of the participants. They are critical of their own positionalities, the curricula that guide their teaching, and their choice of literature. This category is mostly embodied in the approaches taken by Joseph and Adrianna.

Joseph and Adrianna were the two participants that, regardless of other mitigating concerns, would integrate GSD teaching throughout their pedagogy. This choice is reflected in their desire to focus on student identity and autonomy. Joseph explained the only way to create a truly inclusive classroom is to address areas of oppression, which he denoted as “the presence of any -isms.” He specifically expounded that talking about GSD with students is necessary for achieving the goals of an inclusive classroom. However, he was critical of the Ford government’s reversion to a 1998 Physical Education curriculum, which includes a dated and less comprehensive overview of sex education (White, 2018):

So, I would think that that would put a damper on my ability to discuss it. But that's if I discuss it in the context of health education. But if I do it in the context of a language class... So, I think that this document [the language curriculum] and in addition, I think the social studies document – I think you can definitely link it in with, you know, whatever you're doing in the classroom and tie it back to the Citizenship Education Framework, which talks about justice, fairness and all those types of things. So, these two

documents, I think, are a great resource to be able to get in that educational aspect without having to do it under the umbrella of the health curriculum.

Thus, Joseph separated the idea of sex/health education from the practice of guiding students to know their identities within the larger structures of society. He can achieve his anti-oppression goals through a focus on student identity and citizenship by also making curricular connections to support such pedagogical choices.

Adrianna took up a similar approach of focusing on identity and autonomy in her pedagogy while relying on a social-emotional curriculum to guide her pedagogy. She discussed the importance of teaching students to “develop metacognition” so that students come to “understand how they’re thinking and how they feel” in order to grow as “independent and stronger learners.” Tied into the notion of metacognition is also her desire that students can think for themselves: “And I think also not even necessarily saying like ‘this is my idea and my idea is right’, but helping students to develop their own ideas while also kind of creating that inclusive classroom is important.” Adrianna emphasized here that students have an active role when learning about GSD and are not simply passive recipients of the teacher’s knowledge.

Joseph’s and Adrianna’s pedagogical choices are based upon their focus on student identity and autonomy. They both favoured large open discussions of GSD anchored upon selected pieces of literature. Thus, learning and teaching become a dialogic process among the class community. As well, Joseph expressed a desire that GSD discussions and learning “would continue through the entire school year” while being “woven into everything that [he is] doing in the classroom” as opposed to being relegated to a single day or month.

Selection of Resources. For both participants, the selection of literature ranged from “sci-fi” to “narratives, either fiction or non-fiction” and does not necessarily need to be narrowed

solely to literacy teaching but can include other content areas like “science” and “social studies.” When choosing learning resources, there are three factors that both Joseph and Adrianna each considered: the diversity of representation, the quality of the literature, and pathways to legitimize student expression and GSD learning. First, when selecting resources, Adrianna explained that the “biggest factor” she considers “goes back into creating and helping establish a recognition of diversity.” Reflecting the role of an educator to lay the foundation to build empathetic relationships among diverse people, she said that,

literature is great because it gives you that opportunity to incorporate that diversity and recognition into your classroom. So just looking for diverse characters, emotional characters, complex characters, so that students are kind of given that in their lives. Just making sure that, you know, while some characters in the books, you want them to be just like your students, but you also want characters that are different from your students.

As Adrianna selected resources that allow all students to interact with GSD, Joseph also viewed literature as a way to bring diversity into the classroom, both as representation for GSD-students as well as to broaden students’ GSD understandings. He cited going beyond choosing resources with GSD characters to include “a variety of sources that includes the *spectrum* of gender identity and sexual identity.” Thus, Joseph concentrated not only on the mere inclusion of GSD content but the quality of that content. He was concerned that students are not only seeing GSD topics and characters in a certain light but are getting a sense of the full breadth of its diversity.

Analyzing the quality of the learning resources these participants select is the second factor they considered. Both cited the need for teachers to “be careful” and “be aware of your

purpose” when choosing what resources to incorporate in pedagogy. Joseph recounted a situation where he thought he had chosen a quality resource for a lesson plan:

I found a book online beforehand to use in one of my lessons or something. Because I had found it online with some resource saying, you know, “this is a great book to talk about these things,” but then I looked at it a little bit closer and I realized that I kind of wish that I hadn't used it for these intents and purposes.

From his experience, he learned about the need and the responsibility of teachers to ask critical questions of the learning resources they are choosing. He added, “And so it's also sort of thinking like where are you getting your resources from? Who has written them? And are they actually accredited in what they have?” Adrianna was equally critical in her selection of literature, asking similar questions of “why it was written, what their intent was, and who they wrote it for.” She was cognizant of resources that “seem like it’s culturally sensitive or important, but maybe it’s just superficial and not as good as you think it is.”

Such critical questioning of various texts is reflected in their recognition that certain texts provide specific messages of GSD. Joseph found a strategy of “pairing an older book with something new where there is a younger scientist or a, you know, fictional story of someone that represents a more colourful representation of humans – colourful in the sense of gender and sexually diverse.” Instead of accepting the messages inherent in older and oft-used learning resources, Joseph actively finds ways to circumvent the messages students are receiving to broaden their perspectives of GSD. Likewise, Adrianna often cited authors who rewrote canonical English literature with the express purpose of opening up the gender messages to offer variety and acceptance to readers.

Adrianna also cited how using the genre of science fiction helps legitimize her discussion of GSD with students. She described that GSD in sci-fi is:

not blatantly obvious that that's the struggle the character's gone through or that's the identity of the character. But it is there in the story where [students] can discover that on their own, and where it can be kind of a journey through the reading; where it kind of emphasizes both the complexity of [GSD] as well as just allows students to discover things on their own.

She went on to explain that by picking resources where the subject of GSD is “not blatantly obvious,” parents and administrators “may not even know, and then you get to have those great conversations and not make anyone mad.” With her comment, Adrianna signalled how she would subvert the power administrators and parents hold over students’ learning. Her comment also aligns with her focus on student autonomy and the creation of pedagogical space for students to explore ideas to create their own understanding of GSD.

By contrast, while Joseph and Adrianna embody a critical pedagogical approach to teaching and GSD learning, the remaining three participants take a more superficial approach by focusing on inclusion for all. Their approach is discussed next.

Superficial Approaches

I use the word *superficial* to denote the tokenistic or “additive” level of multicultural education (Banks, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 1994) that shapes participants’ approaches to GSD inclusion. Not only is GSD an add-in within their pedagogy, participants’ approaches to inclusion, in general, remain at a surface level, relying on a *just love everyone* framework. The approaches that I discuss in this section do not align as well with critical pedagogy as they do not introduce students to multiple perspectives nor to larger social issues that shape GSD

understandings. Far from condemning these practices or the teacher candidates who rely on them, this section is followed with a discussion of the concerns that participants had when reflecting on their approach to GSD inclusion. It is evident how some concerns drew participants away from taking a more critical approach.

First, despite Carmella, Rosalie, and Silvio valuing student diversity and acknowledging the need for inclusion when it comes to GSD, they all said they “would be very hesitant” to address GSD in their pedagogy. Carmella and Silvio both described that including GSD content or addressing it with students “really does depend on whether the topic comes up during the year” or if “there is a specific issue or wonder.” Additionally, for Rosalie, the choice to include is dependent on the presence of a GSD student in the classroom. Thus, these three participants do not necessarily view their pedagogy as being integrated with GSD-inclusion.

Their pedagogical approach to inclusion creates “a welcoming environment” (Rosalie) that focuses on being “inclusive to all students” (Silvio) regardless of their “gender, sexuality, their origin, their economic status, backgrounds, religions.” (Carmella) However, when I asked participants how they would create this “welcoming environment” or how they would be inclusive to everybody, they relied on a discourse of just loving each other. For Carmella, she emphasized the need for teachers to “be open, be very approachable” while also making “it clear at the beginning of the year, like I will not judge – there’s no judgement.” She explained that it would help “everyone to feel welcome and feel comfortable with each other, not just in their relationship with me but also with each other.” Silvio took a similar approach in “encouraging a community atmosphere where students can feel comfortable to support one another,” which he would achieve by telling students that “within our classroom, we all have inherent differences and those should be respected and affirmed, and we should, as a community, love each other.” In

their descriptions, a welcoming and inclusive environment equates to one in which students should feel comfortable with their peers and teachers because they are loved and not judged. However, instead of this message being a part of their teaching, this approach appears as a type of proverb that is told to the students in the hopes that it is eventually internalized and demonstrated in their behaviours with others.

Furthermore, instead of taking a critical pedagogical approach to promoting positive peer relationships in a proactive manner, Carmella relied on apologies and forgiveness on a daily basis:

If students aren't getting along, I would make sure that they would go and apologize or if something would happen in the class, like that student was able to, you know, fess up to it and apologize and then we'd like forgive the student. So, it's just like on an everyday basis, just trying to get the students, you know, aware of the values.

Relying on students to internalize the messages of *no judgement* and *love each other* as part of inclusive practices means that teachers are continually reacting to issues occurring in the classroom. If teachers are consistently needing to address issues of bullying, exclusion, or other mistreatments between peers, then it is a signal that more needs to be taught than to just love one another. Using such a proverbial-based approach belies the reality of the classroom environment as not welcoming, comfortable, or safe for certain students.

While Carmella and Silvio focused on the relationships in the classroom to create a welcoming environment, Rosalie turned to the physical environment:

Kind of just incorporating different interests of all your students or you can incorporate different cultures or different – just anything that your students might be or believe in.

You know, like having posters in the classroom – yeah, just making everything kind of a welcoming environment.

As much discussion and importance are given to the classroom environment itself being a teacher (OME, 2012), some critiques can be levelled at how such an approach to inclusive teaching fits within critical pedagogy. Although hanging a poster in the classroom does provide students with a visual representation of human diversity, it alone may not move students to critically examine themselves, their relationships with others or to GSD, nor does it necessarily empower social action. Without some kind of pedagogical component, relying on posters as an inclusive practice remains at the tokenistic level and not a deeper critical approach.

Selection of Resources. Lastly, in their selection process for literature and learning resources, Silvio, Carmella, and Rosalie each considered students’ “reading levels,” “interests,” and “relatability” to the resources as the only factors taken into consideration. They did not offer critiques of the content or quality of the resources as a factor of which they were or would be cognisant. For instance, on her placement experiences when selecting pieces of literature for daily read-alouds, Rosalie described her selection process as looking into “not very serious books, just short picture books that were kind of fun – that students could relate to and they enjoyed listening to.” Although these factors are important to consider and do align with certain recommendations within the Ontario Language Curriculum (OME, 2006) and its relevant supports, it does ignore guidelines for selecting quality literature.

Although these three participants would be “very hesitant” to include GSD-themed books as part of their teaching, if they were to incorporate such a resource, they all would choose a similar approach. Regardless of grade level, Silvio, Rosalie, and Carmella would all use a read-aloud approach, which is heavily teacher-guided as opposed to a student-driven learning

approach. Although read-alouds are an integral literacy instructional method at any elementary grade, the reliance on a teacher-driven approach in comparison to the open discussions chosen by Joseph and Adrianna may reflect the concern of student reactions and developmental appropriateness that these three participants shared. This concern will be overviewed shortly in the following section.

Concerns and Considerations

As I have alluded to in the previous sections, all the participants mentioned concerns and considerations that influenced how they addressed GSD topics in their pedagogy. However, the extent to which such concerns influenced their pedagogical choices aligned with their views of GSD in education and the degree to which students were prepared to address GSD in their teacher education programs. Thus, again, this section is primarily dominated by Rosalie, Silvio, Carmella, as the concerns that they have highlighted reflected their hesitancy to use GSD resources in their teaching. I often draw upon instances provided by Joseph and Adrianna to highlight an opposing view and how these two students have found ways to circumvent these concerns.

Administrative Support

First, the participants recognized that the school climate and the support from administrators played a role in whether they chose to include GSD content in their teaching. Carmella noted:

When the whole school is supportive of it and the principals are on board and the other teachers, it's easier because then the students can go through, like starting in kindergarten, knowing what it is. So then when the students also get to grade five, they can expect the same thing. So, it doesn't, you know, drastically change as years go on.

Students having a foundation of knowledge and experience with discussing GSD throughout their elementary schooling makes it easier for Carmella to choose to include GSD in her teaching. Thus, Carmella's choice to include GSD becomes one based on following the status quo of the school context as opposed to the more difficult road of a teacher who approaches pedagogy differently.

Related to school-wide support and climate, Silvio, Carmella, and Rosalie all noted the necessity of having principals support their choice to include GSD content. In fact, when I asked if there was anything they thought would push them to never consider integrating GSD into their teaching, they all replied that not having the principal's support would impel them to drop the topic completely:

I would say if the principal wasn't on board because I wouldn't want to go behind the principal's back. If the principal was like, "no look you shouldn't be teaching this" – like if I taught it for a couple of years and then they just all of a sudden, you know, didn't like it, then I would just give it up because it's like the principal, you know, has the say at the end of the day and I want the principal to be able to back me up. So, I think it's just – I'd want the principal on board with me first for sure. (Rosalie)

At first, it seemed that the need for principal support could relate to the power dynamic between teachers and administrators. This may especially be the case as these participants are all new teachers who will be entering that dynamic for the first time and they may not have a strong hold on their developing autonomy. However, taken within the entire context of each interview, the reliance on administrative support is reflected in the way these participants do not think that there is anything or anyone else that could support their choice to include GSD content.

Curricular Connections and Supports

The relationship between needing principal support and their choice of GSD inclusion becomes clearer when they discussed their second concern surrounding curricular connections. Unlike Joseph, who relied on the Social Studies and Language curricular frameworks, Rosalie, Carmella, and Silvio focused solely on the sex-ed curriculum. For instance, Carmella explained,

I also put down, like, it's not in the curriculum anymore, I think, because of Doug Ford. I think he took all that stuff out. So, it's not like, you know, we have to teach it, and I wouldn't if you don't have to teach it. We have nothing to back ourselves up. If the parents come back and complain, we can't say, "Oh, it was in the curriculum" because it's not.

Carmella's comment suggests a need for a pathway to justify and legitimize to others the inclusion of GSD content in the classroom. It is also apparent that these teacher candidates conceptualize GSD teaching solely in terms of sex education. Along with the changes to the sex-ed curriculum document (White, 2018), these three teacher candidates find little support for GSD inclusive pedagogy within curricula.

The lack of desire to be pedagogically GSD inclusive based on a narrowed curriculum is reflected in their choice to bring GSD content into their teaching only if there was a specific wonder or issue that a student raises. However, a major difference between the group of Carmella, Silvio, and Rosalie and that of Joseph and Adrianna is the depth of exploration of other curricular connections to GSD that is beyond sex education. Without such curricular knowledge, teacher candidates are left feeling hesitant to include GSD content.

Furthermore, none of the participants were aware of any provincial policies or legislation that supports the integration of GSD content in all classrooms in Ontario. The sole exception was

Silvio who was broadly aware that “most school boards do have an equity and inclusive education policy.” However, he was unable to expand with any specificity as to what such policies include or mean concerning teachers’ pedagogy. Again, this group of participants felt as though there is a lack of support to include GSD in pedagogy.

Parental Backlash

The need to justify or legitimize the choice to include GSD content in their pedagogy is reflected in their third concern, which is a fear of backlash from parents. Rosalie’s comment on this concern summarized a similar sentiment shared by the other participants:

I think you also have to worry about parents' reactions. A lot of parents, you know, are against that, don't want their children learning that. They, maybe, don't want their children getting any ideas. So, I think it's just the backlash that you might get afterwards that makes me hesitant.

Similarly, Adrianna also recognized a need to balance her desire to take a critical approach to integrate GSD content and “not walking outside of what’s expected by parents and the boundaries of being a teacher” as she thinks, in her own words, “that there might be limits to what I could do and still keep a job.” Participants acknowledged that parents hold a great deal of power over the approaches and choices made by individual teachers, especially when it comes to “sensitive” issues like GSD. Such issues become compounded when teacher candidates feel as though there are very few people and curriculum support to choose GSD-inclusive approaches.

By contrast, in response to parental backlash, Adrianna has found a grouping whom she thinks should have control over guiding learning:

I think that the parent relationships are important and your relationship with your other teachers in your school is important, but that you shouldn't jeopardize the quality of what

you're teaching because of that. So just finding ways to incorporate it through students getting to independently choose those texts. One of the schools in town does a cool thing where all the students get to pick their own book and a lot of their learning each month is of their own choice. So, by creating student choice in your classroom, students are free to choose and explore this.

As Adrianna already focused on fostering student autonomy in her pedagogy, she uses it to her advantage to circumvent parental control and mitigate the fear of backlash. Such an approach also aligns well with critical pedagogy as it gives the power of education back to students and positions teachers as a guide rather than an expert in the learning relationship.

Although Adrianna has reacted to parental backlash by circumventing their power, Carmella, on the other hand, chooses to rely on parents. For Carmella, fearing backlash from parents is not just a mitigating concern, it is also a way out of learning and teaching. She favours student exemptions from a GSD-based lesson if a parent is contrary to such learning. Moreover, she also favours relinquishing her teaching to parents:

I feel like the parents would have to have a conversation also with their kids about it because ... it could also get really confusing and I wouldn't want to step on parent's toes in that subject. ... So if their parents can, you know, talk about this with them, it would definitely, you know, save me as a teacher.

As Carmella views any discussion of GSD to be the parental domain, she fears parental backlash and relies on parents to avoid the controversy altogether. By relying on parents, teachers may be giving away their professional autonomy and the transformative power of education.

Joseph also alluded to a reliance on parents; however, he offered an opinion in exact opposition to Carmella. He described in a compelling argument:

Teachers are there to teach the students, and a big thing of that, you know, the job of a teacher isn't to – honestly, having parents that are involved helps with whatever the students are doing – but it's not the role of the teacher to say, “hey, you know, can you cover this thing? Because I'm only going to get to this topic, and we need to get started on these new things.” And so, the parents can supplement the information that the teacher is giving, but it's not necessarily their responsibility. It's the teacher's place to say these are things that are happening in our world with people in society. We should be aware of them. So, we should be teaching students how to interact with that diversity in our society.

This passage mirrors how Joseph views his purpose as a teacher and positions himself as an advocate for students. He refused to give up his responsibility and power as a teacher to help guide students to a better understanding of themselves and their relationships to others within society. He claimed teaching students about diversity as his inherent responsibility as a teacher. Just as he would not ask parents to instruct their children about some topic in math or science, he does not rely on them to broach topics of GSD. This is in direct contrast to Carmella. It is possible that the contrast between Joseph and Carmella may not only come from their fundamentally different views of GSD in education but also because Joseph found connections between GSD and curricula, whereas Carmella has not.

Student Reactions

One final concern shared by all five participants is factors related to students' grade or age level, sense of maturity, and level of exposure to GSD topics, which all coalesce to a concern of student reactions and the idea of needing to maintain a safe environment for all.

Developmental Appropriateness. All teacher candidates realized the importance of providing GSD related content at an “age-appropriate” or “developmentally-appropriate” time for students. However, many of them were on the fence about what that term means. Rosalie and Joseph both conceived of the benefits of talking about GSD with students from an early age to “already open their minds so it’s not something that they consider is not normal. It’s just normal to them, right, if they’re educated early” (Rosalie). Both also thought that addressing GSD with students earlier might be “almost easier in a way because they don’t have such an opinion towards it” (Rosalie) and students “have that sort of open-mindedness because they haven’t been corrupted by society yet” (Joseph). On the other hand, “developmentally appropriate” for Adrianna and Silvio meant that, for younger students, teachers address “it as it naturally occurs and not being afraid to shy away from those conversations,” while saving a more specific and in-depth conversation for older students.

Carmella struggled with knowing, if ever, it was developmentally appropriate to bring GSD topics into her teaching. This conflict largely echoed her GSD understanding being mired in complication and confusion: “So, I feel like it also depends on how old they are, their maturity level and like if they’ve been exposed to this topic before because it could also get really confusing.” From her comments, it is apparent that Carmella was genuinely concerned with causing student confusion whenever talking about GSD with them. Framing GSD as inherently complicated and confusing makes knowing how and when to appropriately broach the topic nearly impossible.

Unpredictability of Students. The sense of weariness that participants have as to what counts as appropriate GSD discussion with students forms the basis of their concern of how students will react to such a conversation in class. Rosalie noted how “students can be

unpredictable” and that she would “feel a bit hesitant just to see the reactions, you know, because you never know.” Similarly, Carmella explained how the maturity level of students plays a role in that sense of unpredictability: “Like some students are very immature and if half of your class is mature and half of them aren't, you don't want to hold back those mature kids. But then you might get, you know, some inappropriate responses from the immature kids.”

Their concern over student reactions underlines a power dynamic between student and teacher. When Carmella said she is “worried about how they treat each other” or when Rosalie described that students would “just turn it into a silly conversation,” it is as if they were removed entirely from the situation. It is as though they have no control over how students treat each other and especially over how a conversation is facilitated within the classroom. It is possible that, as new teachers, they may not have a strong hold on their classroom management skills yet. They may not have the ability to anticipate and then deal with student reactions as they occur in the classroom so that a GSD discussion is a positive learning experience instead of “a silly conversation.”

Although all participants recognized a range of concerns that influenced their inclusion of GSD within education, it was apparent that such concerns affected certain teacher candidates to different degrees. Those who were more sensitive to these concerns were also more hesitant to be GSD inclusive. However, those participants who were aware of several supports and pathways of legitimization were able to understand how they might address such concerns and felt more comfortable to provide GSD-inclusive pedagogy to students. As the participants described and as will be discussed shortly, much of their hesitancy or comfort is reflected in what occurred or did not occur in their Bachelor of Education program.

Teacher Education Programs

Joseph and Adrianna were the two participants who felt the most comfortable and prepared to be able to go into a classroom and teach a GSD based literacy lesson with students. For Adrianna, this degree of comfortability comes from both life and educational experiences:

I feel confident, both with my own maturity and life experiences as well as my educational experiences to go in and do that. I will say that probably, like, 80 percent of that comfortability comes from my English degree and the classes I took from my English degree rather than my Elementary Ed degree.

Similarly, Joseph feels like he could go into a classroom and lead a conversation with students. Yet conversely, there is a sense of a lack of confidence when he explained:

So, for me, I think it would be really tough to bring this up, but I wouldn't want to shy away from it. I think I would still want to do it. ... So, I guess I feel it would be challenging at this point because I haven't done enough research into it. ... So, I guess I feel on a scale of 10, I'd say like a seven. Maybe more. Maybe an eight. Like I feel I could do it.

Despite the shortcomings both students have noted in the level of preparation they have received, they both have a strong sense of self-efficacy. This is, again, reflected in their overall self-conceptualization as a teacher and their viewpoint of GSD in education. However, it is also reflective of the learning opportunities they had while working towards their degrees. This becomes a main point of difference when comparing Joseph's and Adriana's responses to that of Silvio, Carmella, and Rosalie.

Lack of Learning Opportunities

Silvio and Carmella made a direct connection between the lack of learning and experiences they received in their teacher education programs and their hesitancy to be GSD inclusive in their pedagogy. As an illustration, Carmella made a point of stating: “I just want to say, like, through my university, I don't feel like too comfortable with teaching this. I feel like they should have maybe focused on this more, you know?” Similarly, Silvio explained how he'd have more confidence to be GSD inclusive if his program had itself been GSD inclusive in its focus:

So, yeah, maybe right now I wouldn't be able to tie it in, just because I don't feel very comfortable tying it in with my current understandings, but I'd be open to it. ... I think if my teacher's college did, you know, teach it to us, I think I would have an even better confidence in approaching it within the classroom.

Comparatively, while Carmella and Silvio lack confidence and comfortability due to an overall lack of preparation in their BEd, Rosalie's hesitancy is in situations where she is proactively teaching or discussing GSD:

I think I would say I don't have any experience doing so. So, I would be a little bit hesitant. I am not super comfortable with it. But if students had questions about it, I would – like I'd be fine to answer. So, yeah, but I think I might be a little bit hesitant to address it as a whole group and for teaching about it.

Her hesitancy or discomfort shown here stems from a lack of previous experience talking or teaching about GSD. The lack of experience in their programs coupled with the variety of concerns the three participants focused on are clearly mirrored in their choice to take superficial approaches to GSD inclusivity.

Lack of GSD-Focused Content

Furthermore, when their programs did take the time to introduce teacher candidates to the practice of inclusive teaching, participants explained that it usually focused on either being inclusive to all or differentiating learning. Carmella described that the program concentrated on the following:

It was mostly just like in your classroom create like, you know, a good inclusive environment, a welcoming learning environment. But it wasn't, you know, specific to anything. It was just saying that, you know, when teaching, like be open to all.

The language she used here to describe the learning of inclusive practices she received in her BEd such as “a welcoming learning environment” and “be open to all” is very similar to the language she used to describe her own approach to GSD. Thus, at least in this case, by BEd programs not being critical in their teaching of inclusive education, teacher candidates are also entering the education system relying on superficial or tokenistic approaches to inclusion.

In Rosalie’s experiences, her BEd program “touched on it a little bit but not a whole lot.” Specifically, in her inclusive education courses, she found that “it wasn't really a high focus on gender identity or sexual diversity”; instead, “it was just social differences in general.” When GSD was addressed in her program, she described, “basically it came up in conversation – it came up how like the sex-ed curriculum changed or whatever happened with that. But other than that, there wasn't a whole lot of talk about stuff like this.” From her descriptions, it is clear that in her BEd program, discussions of inclusive education do not include GSD equity practices, nor are students provided with curricular links beyond the sex-ed curriculum.

While Rosalie’s and Carmella’s BEd program focused on inclusion in general, with little time explicitly given to GSD, Joseph’s, Adrianna’s, and Silvio’s education approached inclusive

education solely as integrating students' neurodiversity. Silvio described that across the program, "we haven't really discussed it [GSD]. We've really only discussed inclusion in terms of special needs." Similarly, Adrianna emphasized that "there was definitely a lot more on inclusiveness and disability and less concentration on gender and sexuality." Not also ensuring that social differences are part of inclusive education programming for teacher candidates is akin to ignoring a large part of the student diversity that teachers will encounter in their future classrooms.

Lack of Practical Pedagogical Applications

Joseph described his own experiences to his program's approach to inclusive education:

So inclusive ed, I mean, it was more like it was more like a psychology course, which I didn't necessarily mind, right? But it was like "we're going to talk about ADHD, we're going to talk about autism, we're going to talk about learning disabilities, dyslexia," – those types of things. But it didn't really speak about the diversity of students and how to include them in the classroom. So that was one piece that was missing.

He noted how his inclusive education courses did not prioritize social diversity among students, but it also lacked practical strategies to include any student. The program emphasized information about different areas of diversity without linking such information to practices and pedagogy, leaving a clear gap between theory and practice.

Silvio commented on a similar phenomenon he found in a course that examines social differences of students and the education system:

I think that the way the social differences course was taught was – for that particular class and that particular semester, it was just a discussion and understanding of these different issues. And it was a way to, I think, change a lot of my classmates' perspectives, and

open them up hopefully. But I think a lot of students were lost at the end of the course because there was no practical application.

Lacking in “practical application” is an echo of how Silvio described his struggles to be GSD inclusive. A major obstacle in his choice to be GSD-inclusive in his pedagogy is a lack of practical pedagogical strategies. Providing teacher candidates with pedagogical strategies is, arguably, one of the major goals of any teacher education program. Yet, when it comes to GSD-inclusive education, it is wholly lacking, according to these participants.

Carmella shared a parallel perception as she asked questions of her BEd program:

Because like, yeah, you can tell us as much as you want about information about, you know, those different sexualities. But when it comes to teaching it, how can we do that? Or how can we include someone who is, you know, a different sexuality? So, I thought that may be more beneficial than just information. I want information specific to teaching and it's like, that's where the education department lacks.

Knowing information about GSD or student diversity issues is not enough for these teacher candidates. The key piece to be able to bring into practice and answer the calls for equitable education is having practical strategies on which they can draw in their pedagogical approaches.

Intensive Curricular Instruction and Exploration

Adrianna relied on the intensive learning she experienced in her English degree to build her confidence and comfortability of discussing GSD with students through literacy. She described that the depth and complexity of analysis demanded by an English degree “was a lot more conducive to the confidence in my ability to both teach, discuss, and read GSD material versus the Elementary Ed degree.” She highlighted how a deeper knowledge of a content area enables better pedagogy:

For literature, I feel like you're only really being taught and being asked to discuss things on the level you're teaching. They're not asking you to think about it at a deeper level, which I think that once you understand something better yourself and you think about it at a higher, deeper level, you're more comfortable with the content, you're more comfortable teaching those things. So, I think maybe just asking for more in those areas can help elementary teachers.

Adrianna was one of two participants who was critical of the literature she chose to use in her teaching as well as to her general approach to GSD-inclusive pedagogy. The depth of exploration she underwent in her English degree is reflected in the ease with which she welcomes GSD into her pedagogical approach.

Joseph had similar opportunities for intensive exploration in both his literacy and social studies courses in which professors had students thoroughly analyze texts they had chosen. For social studies, they were taken to the library to assess a variety of resources “by looking through some of the descriptors used and just some of the word choices” to realize how a “book doesn't have like – maybe it's sort of missing the mark for gender diversity.” Comparatively, in the literacy course, Joseph describes that:

So there were just a lot of resources that I saw in that class that were really, really good at covering, like gender and GSD and including like the diversity of all people. ... It also showed me ways that I can address these books and how these books can be used in a classroom, not just as ways to discuss social justice or anything like that, but also just that there can be books that will help students develop critical thinking and writing skills, reading skills, all of that stuff. So, it's not just a tool to look at GSD independently, but the whole language program.

These informative experiences reflect the fact that Joseph and Adrianna are the only two teacher candidates to choose critical pedagogical approaches in their inclusion of GSD in literacy and broader education. When their education programs provided opportunities for deep exploration of GSD, literacy, and curricula, they came away with ideas of not only how to address GSD with students but also ways they can legitimize such learning by tying it to curricular mandates. The three remaining participants did not describe that similar opportunities were provided to them. Instead, there seems to be an overall lack of intensive curricular instruction and exploration concerning GSD and literacy in their BEd experiences.

Suggestions for Improvement

Based on the shortcomings of their respective programs, the participants call on universities to provide higher quality learning opportunities in teacher education programs. Carmella stressed that, “it would have been nice if we took out some classes to have more inclusive ways. I feel like where my university lacks is having pointless classes and then lots of busywork, like, rather than, you know, more important things that we should be learning about.” Moreover, Rosalie asked, that for courses that are meant to focus on inclusive education, “instead of just touching on GSD, it could be talked about more and just, you know, be more part of the class rather than just it coming up [in conversation].” The idea of wanting “more” out of their BEd programs was echoed by all participants. They want “more resources,” “more discussion,” “more guest speakers and seminars,” “more practical strategies,” “more integration between GSD and the curriculum,” “more professors with expertise in GSD,” “more guidance,” “more practice,” “more teacher feedback,” and “more experiences talking about gender and sexuality.”

Conveniently, Silvio articulates two different approaches universities can take to meet such student needs. One is an additive approach through a separate GSD-focused course that checks a box that the topic has been included. The other approach is more holistic wherein GSD is integrated within and across all curricula and course content to align best with the realities of students and the current education system:

Because it seemed to me that we did really focus a lot on the curriculum aspect, but it would really be nice to feel like these topics are embedded in each of the courses that we took. ... But it'd be nice if even within our lesson planning that we account for how to address, you know, different barriers that students might face with respect to gender and sexual identity or socio-economic background, for example. It'd be good to have that perspective embedded within those courses.

From all these comments, it seems to point to the idea that if universities are invested in developing teachers who are GSD-inclusive, then they themselves have to ensure first that their programming is being inclusive. These are specific and reasonably achievable goals that current teacher candidates are calling on their university programs to implement.

In the following and final chapter, I discuss these results in relation to the broader purpose and scholarship on which my thesis research is founded. I offer recommendations for further areas of study and changes that can be made to BEd programming. I also discuss the limitations of this study.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Before beginning a discussion of the results in relation to the broader purpose and scholarship of this study, it is prudent to remember that a case study does not seek to draw conclusions that are applied to a wider population. Due to the small and specific sample size of case study, Yin (2009) argues that case studies should make analytic generalizations. Therefore, my goal in this discussion is to reflect on the perspectives offered by participants and to develop a theoretical premise to understand my research questions.

The fundamental aim of this study was to explore teacher candidates' ideologies, consisting of both their thoughts and potential actions (McLaren, 1988), towards GSD inclusive pedagogy in literacy teaching and their level of preparedness and comfort to be GSD inclusive. Though there were threads of similarities among the different participants, the findings were split into two groups: participants who aligned their teaching with critical GSD pedagogy and those who were hesitant to do so due to mitigating concerns. The latter group of participants were very similar to the other teacher candidates in previous studies. The cited concerns of parental and administrative backlash, job security, the fear of offending, and the need to maintain a safe environment were all mentioned by this group of participants as well as in the previous body of scholarship (Athanasos & Larrabee, 2003; Clark, 2010; Darvin, 2011; Hermann-Wilmarth, 2010; Knotts, 2012; Larrabee & Morehead, 2010; Robinson & Ferfolja, 2002; Wright-Maley et al., 2016). These concerns reflected a hesitancy to approach literacy teaching with GSD inclusivity and functioned as push factors for TCs to rely on additive or superficial approaches to inclusive pedagogy.

For this group of participants, pedagogical choices were boiled down to whether they *could* be GSD inclusive instead of whether they *should* be inclusive. At the outset, all the

participants expressed openness and acceptance to the topic of GSD and GSD people. For all, it was important for students to be aware of this diversity. Yet, when questions pushed participants to be more specific in how they would approach such learning, ideological contradictions began to appear. Participants' thinking shifted to rely more on the previously mentioned mitigating concerns, which was reflected in their tokenistic approaches to GSD-inclusivity. Thus, for these participants, it is less of a fundamental unwillingness to be GSD inclusive and more of an unwillingness to challenge the status quo of education and the power of other educational stakeholders. This difference is concerning because education then continues to be a site of social reproduction and a tool to maintain social injustices.

In contrast to this first group of participants, the second group differs in two major ways. First, the participants assume a different position in regard to their role as teachers that is based in challenge. Second, their postsecondary education offered them knowledge and experience to position themselves as challengers of the education system in which they work. The deeper understanding of literature, in Adrianna's case, and curricula, in Joseph's case, provided pathways of legitimization. By circumventing a focus on external concerns and subverting the power of parents and administrators, both participants found ways to integrate critical pedagogy and inclusive GSD frameworks into their teaching across curricula.

Overall, it may be necessary to question how teacher education programs are troubling, disrupting, and transforming the thinking and pedagogical approaches of new teachers. It is clear from all participants that very little GSD-based learning actually takes place in their respective BEd programs. This is also unsurprising based on the wealth of previous literature that has identified the same issues across universities in North America (Eyre, 1993; Grace & Wells, 2006; Jennings, 2014; Kitchen & Bellini, 2012; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008; Robinson &

Ferfolja, 2008; Schneider & Dimito, 2008; Sherwin & Jennings, 2006). All teacher candidates in this study noted that their programs had included some type of discussion of GSD, but there were two issues with it. First, the discussion was incidental or relegated to one class in a course that focuses on the entirety of human diversity. Second, when there was direct discussion/learning of GSD, there was a lack of realistic or practical application to classroom learning, teaching, and management. Thus, teacher candidates were left not only with limited information on what GSD is but also an even more limited understanding of how that topic impacts their pedagogical choices and future classroom environments.

The embedded approach promoted by Kitchen and Bellini (2012), as well as some of the participants in this study, helps address the issues teacher candidates found with their programs. Specifically, the embedded approach addresses the areas of practical application with theory, curricular connections to topics of GSD, and aids in viewing inclusion as being interwoven into all classroom and teaching decisions. By changing how teacher education programs are delivered, TCs gain experience in using educational power to reach all students and disrupt common ways of thinking and being in the world. Moreover, BEd programs can provide future teachers with opportunities to practice inclusion instead of mere knowledge to apply later. Embedding a social justice viewpoint throughout course work, teacher education programs may change teacher candidates' ideologies and approaches surrounding GSD-inclusive practices while addressing the mitigating concerns that held participants back from being critical pedagogues.

Research Limitations and Future Directions

As with any study being conducted, my research thesis also has limitations that influence the interpretation of its findings. Namely, a major limitation to this study is the small participant

group who were willing to be interviewed and discuss GSD in educational contexts. The very fact that these teacher candidates reached out and responded to a call for participants may mean that they have an interest in GSD and inclusive education or changing teacher education programs. Furthermore, demographic information about the participants was not purposefully gathered at any point during data collection. Without such information, it is difficult to analyze if or how participants' cultural, religious, family, and socio-economic backgrounds may play a role in their ideologies and approach to GSD inclusive pedagogy. Though aspects of these variables were undoubtedly uncovered and organically offered by participants during the interview, they were not systematically considered in the data collection and analysis process.

Additionally, this study relied solely on one method of data collection – semi-structured interviews. Lacking another method of data collection does not allow me to corroborate the findings from the interviews. As previously explained, I did plan to have an additional method of data collection to gather from participants, namely, the construction of lesson plans, but complications stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic stymied those plans. Thus, in future, triangulation of data is needed to support the findings of this study, whether it be through the originally planned lesson planning artifacts or possibly direct observation of teacher candidates while in their practicum classrooms. In this way, the reliance on teacher candidates' memories and the ability to articulate their learning in interviews is mitigated by observing their pedagogy in practice.

Lastly, a final limitation of this study is my application of a queer theory lens throughout my research thesis from conception to the end of the analysis. My reliance on queer theory shifted my focus predominantly to that of gender and sexuality at the exclusion of other social identities. I recognize that GSD as an identifier does not nor cannot reside in a vacuum separate

from other parts of one's identity. Thus, future research in this area may require a more intersectional lens. Including other facets of student diversity such as culture/race, language, SES, and ability would enable a broader understanding of teacher candidates' approaches to the inclusion of diverse students in their pedagogy.

Conclusion

At the heart of this research thesis was uncovering what it means to be an educator both for teacher candidates and members of institutions whose purpose is to develop future teachers. My hope was to understand how future teachers think about and approach GSD in education and literacy pedagogy. In Ontario, the language curriculum is one of the remaining curricular documents that was untouched by the Ford government and still provides teachers with a social and pedagogical mandate to address topics of critical social justice, like GSD. Yet, from this study, it is clear that not all participants are aware of this goal of the Language Curriculum, nor are they all prepared or comfortable to make choices to meet that mandate in their pedagogy.

Within the educational sphere, there is a common saying that educators often teach in ways that they are taught. In the absence of sufficient preparation from institutions whose purpose is to ready them for diverse classrooms, teacher candidates' only recourse is to fall back on additive methods of inclusion that they themselves experienced. Without a more critical focus on curriculum and GSD learning, the calls to action from Taylor and Peter (2011) continue to go unheeded. By extension, GSD students and those who are perceived to be GSD will continue to face adversity in an environment that can be shaped by individual teachers. When new teachers are given the opportunity to learn the knowledge and tools of being student advocates and allies, education holds the transformative power to shape broader cultural discourses. How teacher

candidates are prepared to be leaders in their careers will shape, not only the education system, but the lived realities of many individuals in the years to come.

References

- Airton, L., & Koecher, A. (2019). How to hit a moving target: 35 years of gender and sexual diversity in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 80*, 190–204.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.11.004>
- Apple, M. (2002a). Interrupting the right: On doing critical educational work in conservative times. *Symploke 10*(1), 133–152. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sym.2002.0002>.
- Apple, M. (2002b). Patriotism, pedagogy and freedom: On the educational meanings of September 11th. *Teachers College Record, 104*(8), 1760–1772.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9620.00219>
- Athanases, S. Z., & Larrabee, T. G. (2003). Toward a consistent stance in teaching for equity: Learning to advocate for lesbian- and gay- identified youth. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 19*, 237–261. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X\(02\)00098-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(02)00098-7)
- Bainbridge, J., Oberg, D., & Carbonaro, M. (2005). “No text is innocent”: Canadian children’s books in the classroom. *Journal of Teaching and Learning, 3*(2), 1–14.
<https://doi.org/10.22329/jtl.v3i2.98>
- Baker, C. D. & Freebody, P. (1989). *Children’s first school books*. Blackwell.
- Banks, J. (1994). *An introduction to multicultural education*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report, 13*(4), 544-559.
<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/2>
- Blackburn, M. V., & Clark, C. T. (2011). Analyzing talk in a long-term literature discussion group: Ways of operating within LGBT-inclusive and queer discourses. *Reading Research Quarterly, 46*(3), 222–248. <https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.46.3.2>

- Blackburn, M.V., Clark, C. T., & Nemeth, E. (2015). Examining queer elements and ideologies in LGBT-themed literature: What queer literature can offer young adult readers. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 47(1), 11–48. [https://doi.org/ 10.1177/1086296X15568930](https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X15568930)
- Bickford, J. H. III. (2018). Examining LGBTQ-based literature intended for primary and intermediate elementary students. *The Elementary School Journal*, 118(3), 409–425. <https://doi.org/10.1086/696139>
- Boggs, C. (1976). *Gramsci's marxism*. Pluto Press.
- Britzman, D. P. (1995). Is there a queer pedagogy? Or, stop reading straight. *Educational Theory*, 45(2), 151–165. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.1995.00151.x>
- Brozo, W. G. (2002). *To be a boy, to be a reader: Engaging teen and preteen boys in active literacy*. International Reading Association.
- Butler J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993). Imitation and gender subordination. In H. Abelove, M. A. Barale, & D. M. Halperin (Eds.), *The lesbian and gay studies reader* (pp. 307–320). Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. Routledge.
- Cahill, B. & Theilheimer, R. (1999). Stonewall in the housekeeping area: Gay and lesbian issues in the early childhood classroom. In W. J. Letts IV & J. T. Sears (Eds.), *Queering Elementary Education: Advancing the dialogue about sexualities and schooling* (pp. 39–48). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Cherland, M. R. (2000). Young adolescents constructing identity: Reading gender. In M. C. Courtland & T. J. Gambell (Eds.), *Young adolescents meet literature: Intersections for learning* (pp. 274–298). Pacific Educational Press.
- Cherland, M. (2009). Harry's Girls: Harry Potter and the discourse of gender. *Journal of*

- Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(4), 273–282. <https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.52.4.1>
- Clark, C. T. (2010). Preparing LGBTQ-allies and combating homophobia in a U.S. teacher education program. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26, 704–713.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.10.006>
- Clark, C. T., & Blackburn, M. V. (2016). Scenes of violence and sex in recent award-winning LGBT-themed young adult novels and the ideologies they offer readers. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 37(6), 867 – 886.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2014.936713>
- Clark, C. T., & Blackburn, M. V. (2017). Bringing queer students and LGBT-inclusive literature into the conversation: Lessons we’ve learned from the work of Arthur Applebee. In R. K. Durst, G. E. Newell, & J. D. Marshall (Eds.), *English language arts research and teaching: Revisiting and extending Arthur Applebee’s contributions* (pp. 73 – 88). Routledge.
- Code, L. (1991). *What can she know?: Feminist theory and the construction of knowledge*. Cornell University Press.
- Code, L. (2007). The power of ignorance. In S. Sullivan & N. Tuana (Eds.), *Race and epistemologies of ignorance* (pp. 213–229). State University of New York Press.
- Code, L. (2014). Ignorance, injustice and the politics of knowledge: Feminist epistemology now. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 29(80), 148–160.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2014.928186>
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. University of California Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2000). *The men and the boys*. University of California Press.

- Cordova, M. (2015). "Because I'm a girl, I suppose!": Gender lines and narrative perspective in Harry Potter. *Mythlore*, 33(2), 21–36. <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol33/iss2/5/>
- Caulley, D. N., & Dowdy, I. (1987). Evaluation case histories as a parallel to legal case histories. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 10(4), 359–372.
<https://www.journals.elsevier.com/evaluation-and-program-planning>
- Crawley, S. A. (2017). Be who you are: Exploring representations of transgender children in picturebooks. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 43(2), 28–41.
https://www.childrensliteratureassembly.org/uploads/1/1/8/6/118631535/be_who_you_are_1.pdf
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1, 139–167.
<https://philpapers.org/archive/CREDTI.pdf?ncid=txtlnkusaolp00000603>
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Crisp, T., Gardner, R. P., & Almeida, M. (2018). The all-heterosexual world of children's nonfiction: A critical content analysis of LGBTQ identities in Orbis Pictus award books,

- 1990–2017. *Children's Literature in Education*, 49, 246–263.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-017-9319-5>
- Crisp, T., & Hiller, B. (2011). “Is This a Boy or a Girl?”: Rethinking sex-role representation in Caldecott Medal-Winning picturebooks, 1938–2011. *Children's Literature in Education*, 42(3), 196–212. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-011-9128-1>
- Cumming-Potvin, W. M., & Martino, W. (2018). Countering heteronormativity and cisnormativity in Australian schools: Examining English teachers' reflections on gender and sexual diversity in the classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 74, 35–48.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.04.008>
- Darder, A. (2012). *Culture and power in the classroom: Educational foundations for the schooling of bicultural students*. Routledge.
- Darvin, J. (2011). “I don't feel comfortable reading those books in my classroom”: A qualitative study of the impact of cultural and political vignettes in a teacher education course. *Teacher Educator*, 46(4), 274–298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2011.604710>
- Davies, B. (1993). *Shards of glass: Children reading and writing beyond gendered identities*. Allen & Unwin.
- Dedeoglu, H., Ulusoy, M., & Lamme, L. (2012). Turkish preservice teachers' perceptions of children's picture books reflecting LGBT-related issues. *Journal of Educational Research*, 105(4), 256–263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2011.627398>
- De Lissovoy, N. (2012). Education and violation: Conceptualizing power, domination, and agency in the hidden curriculum. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 15(4), 463–484.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2011.618831>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative

- research. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1–32). Sage Publications.
- Dionne, A–M. (2010). Developing critical literacy skills. *What Works? Research into Practice*, 32, 1–4.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_Critical_Literacy.pdf
- Donnelly, M. (2015). A new approach to researching school effects on higher education participation. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36(7), 1073–1090.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2014.886942>
- Donnelly, M. (2014). Progressing to university: Hidden messages at two state schools. *British Educational Research Journal*, 41(1), 85–101. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/berj.3136>
- Dreben, R. (1968). *On what is learned in school*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Droog, A., Bettridge, D., Martin, A. R., & Yates-MacKay, A. (2019). *Building and maintaining LGBTQ+ picture book collections*.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1271&context=fimspub>
- Dyches, J. (2017). Shaking off Shakespeare: A White teacher, urban students, and the mediating powers of a canonical counter-curriculum. *The Urban Review*, 49(2), 300–325.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-017-0402-4>
- Dyches, J., & Boyd, A. (2017). Foregrounding equity in teacher education: Toward a model of Social Justice Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (SJPACK). *Journal of Teacher Education*, 68(5), 476–490. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022487117705097>
- Eisner, E. W. (2002). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs*. Pearson Education.

- Epstein, B. J. (2013). *Are the kids all right? Representations of LGBTQ characters in children's and young adult literature*. Hammer On Press.
- Epstein, B. J. (2014). "The case of the missing bisexuals": Bisexuality in books for young readers. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 14(1), 110–125.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2014.872483>
- Eyre, L. (1993). Compulsory heterosexuality in a university classroom. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 18(3), 273–284. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1495387>
- Femia, J. V. (1981). *Gramsci's political thought: Hegemony, consciousness, and the revolutionary process*. Oxford University Press.
- Ferber, A.L., Holcomb, K., & Wentling T. (2013). *Sex, gender, and sexuality: The new basics* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Flyvberg, B. (2013). Case study. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum International.
- Ge, J. (2012). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Giroux, H. A. (2011). *On critical pedagogy*. Continuum International.
- Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2006). The quest for a queer inclusive cultural ethics: Setting directions for teachers' preservice and continuing professional development. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, 2006(112), 51–61.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.236>
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. (Q. Hoare & G. N. Smith, Trans. & Eds.). International Publishers.
- Gramsci, A. (1973). *Letter from prison* (L. Lawner, Trans. & Ed.). Harper & Row.

- Greytak, E. A., Kosciw, J. G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N. M. (2016). *From teasing to torment: School climate revisited, a survey of U.S. secondary school students and teachers*. GLSEN.
- Halperin, D. (1995). *Saint Foucault: Towards a gay hagiography*. Oxford University Press.
- Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2011). *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575–599. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>
- Hermann-Wilmarth, J. M. (2010). More than book talks: Preservice teacher dialogue after reading gay and lesbian children’s literature. *Language Arts*, 87(3), 188–198. <https://library.ncte.org/journals/la/issues/v87-3>
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress*. Routledge.
- Jackson, P. (1968). *Life in classrooms*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Jennings, T. (2014). Is the mere mention enough? Representation across five different avenues of educator preparation. In E. J. Meyer & D. Carlson (Eds.), *Gender and sexualities in education: A reader* (pp. 400–413). Peter Lang.
- Johnson, A. G. (2014) *The gender knot: Unraveling our patriarchal legacy* (3rd ed.). Temple University Press.
- Kimmel, M. (2012). *Manhood in America: A cultural history* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Kimmel, S. C., & Hartsfield, D. E. (2019). “It Was . . . the Word ‘Scrotum’ on the First Page”: Educators’ perspectives of controversial literature. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 70(4), 335–346. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487117751126>
- King, N., & Horrocks, C. (2010). *Interviews in qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

- King, L. J., & Woodson, A. N. (2017). Baskets of cotton and birthday cakes: Teaching slavery in social studies classrooms. *Social Studies Education Review*, 6(1), 1–18.
<https://coe.uga.edu/academics/concentrations/social-studies-education#:~:text=The%20Social%20Studies%20Education%20Review,in%20PreK%2D16%20social%20studies.>
- Kitchen, J., & Bellini, C. (2012). Addressing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) issues in teacher education: Teacher candidates' perceptions. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 58(3), 444–460. <https://cjc-rcc.ucalgary.ca/index.php/ajer/article/view/55632>
- Knotts, G. (2012). Elementary pre-service teachers and homophobia: Curricular changes making a difference. *National Teacher Education Journal*, 5(4), 45–55.
<http://hdl.handle.net/10211.2/3337>
- Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Zongrone, A. D., Clark, C. M., & Truong, N. L. (2018). *The 2017 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools*. GLSEN.
- Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., Truong, N. L., & Zongrone, A. D. (2020). *The 2019 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools*. GLSEN.
- Kramer, L. (2011). *The sociology of gender: A brief introduction* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Kumashiro, K. (2002). *Troubling education: Queer activism and anti-oppressive pedagogy*. Routledge.
- Kumashiro, K. (2004). *Against common sense*. Routledge.

- Ladow, S. (1976). *A content-analysis of selected picture books examining the portrayal of sex roles and representation of males and females*. National Center for Research on Teacher Learning.
- Larrabee, T. G., & Morehead, P. (2010). Broadening views of social justice and teacher leadership: Addressing LGB issues in teacher education. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 19(2), 37–52. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ902674.pdf>
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. The Guilford Press.
- Lester, J. Z. (2014). Homonormativity in children’s literature: An intersectional analysis of queer-themed picture books. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 11, 244–275.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2013.879465>
- Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (1993). *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals*. Sage Publications.
- Luhmann, S. (1998). Queering/Querying pedagogy? Or, pedagogy is a pretty queer thing. In W. Pinar (Ed.), *Queer theory in education* (pp. 141–154). L. Erlbaum.
- Lycke, K., & Lucey, T. (2018). The messages we miss: Banned books, censored texts, and citizenship. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 9(3), 1–26.
<https://doi.org/10.17499/jsser.50009>
- Macgillivray, I. K., & Jennings, T. (2008). A content analysis exploring lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender topics in foundations of education textbooks. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(2), 170–188. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487107313160>
- Malewski, E., & Jaramillo, N. (2011). *Epistemologies of ignorance in education*. Information Age Publishing.

- Malins, P. (2016). How inclusive is “inclusive education” in the Ontario elementary classroom?: Teachers talk about addressing diverse gender and sexual identities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 54, 128–138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.11.004>
- Marinucci, M. (2010). *Feminism is queer: The intimate connection between queer and feminist theory*. Zed Books.
- Martino, W., & Cumming-Potvin, W. (2011). “They didn't have out there gay parents – They just looked like normal regular parents”: Investigating teachers' approaches to addressing same-sex parenting and non-normative sexuality in the elementary school classroom. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 41(4), 480–501. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2011.00557.x>
- Martino, W., & Cumming-Potvin, W. (2014). Teaching about sexual minorities and ‘princess boys’: a queer and trans-infused approach to investigating LGBTQ themed texts in the elementary school classroom. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2014.940239>.
- McLaren, P. (1988). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education*. Longman.
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Meyer, E. J., & Leonardi, B. (2018). Teachers’ professional learning to affirm transgender, non-binary, and gender-creative youth: Experiences and recommendations from the field. *Sex Education*, 18(4), 449–463. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2017.1411254>
- Meyer, E. J., Taylor, C., & Peter, T. (2015). Perspectives on gender and sexual diversity (GSD)-inclusive education: Comparisons between gay/lesbian/bisexual and straight educators. *Sex Education*, 15(3), 221–234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2014.979341>

- Misco, T. & Patterson, N. C. (2007). A study of pre-service teachers' conceptualizations of academic freedom and controversial issues. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 35(4), 520-550. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2007.10473349>
- Möller, K. J. (2014). Heather is 25! So, what literature featuring gays and lesbians is available for primary grades today? *Journal of Children's Literature*, 40(1), 62–69.
<https://www.childrensliteratureassembly.org/journal.html>
- Mudrey, R., & Medina-Adams, A. (2006). Attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge of pre-service teachers regarding the educational isolation of sexual minority youth. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 51(4), 63–90. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v51n04_04
- Murphy, S. (2013). Assessing text difficulty for students. *What Works? Research into Practice*, 44, 1–4.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_ATDS.pdf
- Naidoo, J. C. (2012). *Rainbow family collections: Selecting and using children's books with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer content*. Libraries Unlimited.
- Nelson, A. (2006). *Gender in Canada* (3rd ed.). Pearson Canada.
- Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2003). *A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, K–3*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.
http://eworkshop.on.ca/edu/resources/guides/Reading_K_3_English.pdf
- Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2008). *A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4–6*. (vol. 5). Queen's Printer for Ontario.
http://eworkshop.on.ca/edu/resources/guides/Guide_Lit_456_Vol_5_Reading.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2006). *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8: Language*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/language18currb.pdf>

Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2009a). Critical literacy. *Capacity Building Series: Inspire – The Journal of Literacy and Numeracy for Ontario*, 9, 1–4.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Critical_Literacy.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2009b). Let's talk about listening. *Capacity Building Series: Inspire – The Journal of Literacy and Numeracy for Ontario*, 10, 1–4.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Talk_about_listening.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2011a). Grand conversations in primary classrooms.

Capacity Building Series: Inspire – The Journal of Literacy and Numeracy for Ontario, 18, 1–8.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_Grand_Conversations.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2011b). Grand conversations in the junior classroom.

Capacity Building Series: Inspire – The Journal of Literacy and Numeracy for Ontario, 23, 1–8.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_Grand_Conversations_Junior.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2011c). Student identity and engagement in elementary classrooms. *Capacity Building Series: Inspire – The Journal of Literacy and Numeracy for Ontario*, 20, 1–4.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_StudentIdentity.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2012). The third teacher. *Capacity Building Series: Inspire – The Journal of Literacy and Numeracy for Ontario*, 27, 1–8.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_ThirdTeacher.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2013a). Culturally responsive pedagogy: Towards equity and inclusivity in Ontario schools. *Capacity Building Series: Inspire – The Journal of Literacy and Numeracy for Ontario*, 35, 1–8.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_ResponsivePedagogy.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2013b). *Paying attention to literacy: Six foundational principles for improvement in literacy, K–12*.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/paying_attention_literacy.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education [OME]. (2015). Literacy for a connected world. *Capacity Building Series: Inspire – The Journal of Literacy and Numeracy for Ontario*, 41, 1–8.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_LiteracyConnected.pdf

Oulton, C., Day, V., Dillon, J. & Grace, M. (2004). Controversial issues: Teachers' attitudes and practices in the context of citizenship education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 30(4), 489–507. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305498042000303973>

Palmer, N. A., Greytak, E. A., Kosciw, J. G. (2016). *Educational exclusion: Drop out, push out, and school-to-prison pipeline among LGBTQ youth*. GLSEN.

- Peter, T., Short, D., & Taylor, C. (2018). Religious belief and the queer classroom: Measuring the impact of religious affiliation on LGBTQ-inclusive education practices. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 185, 19–31.
<https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cjeap/article/view/42910>
- Peterson, S. B. & Lach, M. A. (1990). Gender stereotypes in children's books: Their prevalence and influence on cognitive and affective development. *Gender and Education*, 2(2), 185–197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0954025900020204>
- Phillips, D., & Larson, M. (2012). Preservice teachers respond to *And Tango Makes Three*: Deconstructing disciplinary power and the heteronormative in teacher education. *Gender & Education*, 24(2), 159–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2011.602333>
- Pilcher, J. & Whelehan, I. (2004). *50 Key concepts in gender studies*. Sage Publications.
- Rahman, K. (2013). Belonging and learning to belong in school: The implications of the hidden curriculum for indigenous students. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 34(5), 660–672. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2013.728362>
- Ridgeway, C., & Kricheli-Katz, T. (2013). Intersecting cultural beliefs in social relations: Gender, race, and class binds and freedoms. *Gender & Society*, 27(3), 294–318.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243213479445>
- Ringrose, J. (2012). *Post-feminist education? Girls and the sexual politics of schooling*. Routledge.
- Roberge, G. D. (2013). Promoting critical literacy across the curriculum and fostering safer learning environments. *What Works? Research into Practice*, 48, 1–4.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_PromotingCriticalLiteracy.pdf

Robinson, K.H. (2002) Making the invisible visible: Gay and lesbian issues in early childhood education. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 3(3), 415–434.

<https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2002.3.3.8>

Robinson, K.H. (2005) ‘Queering’ gender: Heteronormativity in early childhood education. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 30(2), 19–28.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/183693910503000206>

Robinson, K. H., & Ferfolja, T. (2002). A reflection of resistance: Discourses of heterosexism and homophobia in teacher training classrooms. *Journal of Gay Lesbian Social Services*, 14(2), 55–64. https://doi.org/10.1300/J041v14n02_05

Robinson, K. H., & Ferfolja, T. (2008). Playing it up, playing it down, playing it safe: Queering teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24, 846–858.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.11.004>

Rogers, M. F. (1981). Ideology, perspective, and praxis. *Human Studies*, 4(2), 145–164.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20008798>

Rossi, M. F. (2011). ‘Happy’ and ‘unhappy’ performatives. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 26(67), 9–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2011.546325>

Sapp, J. (2010). A review of gay and lesbian themed early childhood children’s literature.

Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 35(1), 32–40.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/183693911003500106>

Sassoon, A. S. (1980). *Gramsci’s politics*. St. Martin’s Press.

Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2013). *Qualitative research: The essential guide to theory and practice*. Routledge.

Schieble, M. (2012). A critical discourse analysis of teachers’ views on LGBT literature.

- Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 33(2), 207–222.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2011.620758>
- Schmidt, R., Armstrong, L., & Everett, T. (2007). Teacher resistance to critical conversation: Exploring why teachers avoid difficult topics in their classrooms. *The NERA Journal*, 43(2), 49-55. <https://ncte.org/app/uploads/2018/05/Schmidt-critical-conversations.pdf>
- Schneider, M. S., & Dimito, A. (2008). Educators' beliefs about raising lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in the schools: The experience in Ontario, Canada. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 5(4), 49–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361650802223003>
- Sciurba, K. (2017). Flowers, dancing, dresses, and dolls: Picture book representations of gender-variant males. *Children's Literature in Education*, 48, 276–293.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-016-9296-0>
- Sensoy, Ö., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). *Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key concepts in social justice education* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Sherwin, G., & Jennings, T. (2006). Feared, forgotten, or forbidden: Sexual orientation topics in secondary teacher preparation programs in the U.S.A. *Teaching Education*, 17(3), 207-223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210600849664>
- Silko, L. M. (2012). *Storyteller*. Penguin Books.
- Sleeter, C., & Grant, C. (1994). *Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class and gender*. Maxwell Macmillan Canada.
- Stake, R. E. (2003). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Suico, T. (2017). History repeating itself: The portrayal of female characters in young adult literature at the beginning of the millennium. In T. Clasen & H. Hassel (Eds.),

- Gender(ed) identities: Critical readings of gender in children's and young adult literature* (pp. 11–27). Taylor & Francis.
- Sullivan, N. (2003). *A critical introduction to queer theory*. New York University Press.
- Sumara, D. J. (2001). Queer theory and literacy education. *English Quarterly*, 33(3), 14–17.
- Sumara, D., & Davis, B. (1999). Interrupting heteronormativity: Toward a queer curriculum theory. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 29(2), 191–208. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0362-6784.00121>
- Sunderland, J. (2000). Issues of language and gender in second and foreign language education. *Language Teaching*, 33(4), 203–223. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800015688>
- Sunderland, J., Cowley, M., Rahim, F. A., Leontzakou, C., & Shattuck, J. (2001). From bias “In the Text” to “Teacher Talk Around the Text”: An exploration of teacher discourse and gendered foreign language textbook texts. *Linguistics and Education*, 11(3), 251–286. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0898-5898\(00\)00034-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0898-5898(00)00034-6)
- Swann, J. (1992). *Girls, boys & language*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Taber, N., & Woloshyn, V. (2011a). Dumb dorky girls and wimpy boys: Gendered themes in diary cartoon novels. *Children's Literature in Education*, 42(3), 226–242. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-011-9131-6>
- Taber, N., & Woloshyn, V. (2011b). Issues of exceptionality, gender, and power: Exploring Canadian children's award-winning literature, *Gender and Education*, 23(7), 889–902. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2010.549112>
- Taylor, C. G., Meyer, E. J., Peter, T., Ristock, J., Short, D., & Campbell, C. (2016). Gaps between beliefs, perceptions, and practices: The Every Teacher Project on LGBTQ-inclusive education in Canadian schools. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 13(1–2), 112–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2015.1087929>

- Taylor, C., & Peter, T. (2011). *Every class in every school: The first national climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools. Final report*. Toronto, ON: Egale Canada Human Rights Trust. <https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Every-Class-In-Every-School-Final-Report.pdf>
- Thomas, G. (2011). *How to do your case study: A guide for students and researchers*. Sage Publications.
- Thompson, D. L. (2001). Deconstructing Harry: Casting a critical eye on the witches and wizards of Hogwarts. In S. Lehr (Ed.), *Beauty, brains, and brawn: The construction of gender in children's literature* (pp. 42–50). Heinemann.
- Tompkins, G. E., Bright, R. M., & Winsor, P. J. T. (2018). *Language and literacy: Content and teaching strategies*. Pearson Canada.
- Tupper, J. (2005). We interrupt this moment: Education and the teaching of history. *Canadian Social Studies*, 39(2), 1–6. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1073981.pdf>
- Vallance, E. (1973). Hiding the hidden curriculum: An interpretation of the language of justification in nineteenth-century educational reform. *Curriculum Theory Network*, 4(1), 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00784931.1974.11075752>
- Wallis, A. & VanEvery, J. (2000) Sexuality in the primary school. *Sexualities*, 3(4), 409–423. <https://doi.org/10.1177/136346000003004003>
- Walton, G. (2005). The hidden curriculum in schools: Implications for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth. *Alternate Routes*, 21, 18–39. <http://www.alternateroutes.ca/index.php/ar/article/view/20362>

- Weitzman, L. J., Eifler, D., Hokada, E., & Ross, C. (1972). Sex-role socialization in picture books for preschool children. *American Journal of Sociology*, 77(6), 1125–1150.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/225261>
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1991). Doing gender. In J. Lorber & S. A. Farrell (Eds.), *The social construction of gender* (pp. 13–37). Sage Publications.
- White, E. (2018, August 10). *Northern schools to defy sex ed order—'There's no point going back to 1998. It just doesn't make sense'*. CBC News.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/sex-ed-curriculum-northern-ontario-1.4779263>
- Winans, A. E. (2006). Queering pedagogy in the English classroom: Engaging with the place where thinking stops. *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching, Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, 6(1), 103–122. <https://doi.org/10.1215/15314200-6-1-103>
- Wollman-Bonilla, J. E. (1998). Outrageous viewpoints: Teachers' criteria for rejecting works of children's literature. *Language Arts*, 75(4), 287-295.
<https://library.ncte.org/journals/la/issues/v75-4>
- Woloshyn, V., Taber, N., & Lane, L. (2013). Discourse of masculinity and femininity in *The Hunger Games*: “Scarred,” “bloody,” and “stunning.” *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 1(1), 150–160. <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v1i1.21>
- Wright-Maley, C., David, T., Gonzalez, E., & Colwell, R. (2016). Considering perspectives on transgender inclusion in Canadian Catholic elementary schools: Perspectives, challenges, and opportunities. *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, 40(3), 187–204.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2015.12.001>
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Zeikowitz, R. E. (2002). Befriending the medieval queer: A pedagogy for literature classes.

College English, 65(1), 67–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3250731>

Appendix A: Letter of Information

Dear Potential Participant:

You are being invited to participate in my research on Elementary Teacher Candidates' perceptions of gender and sexual diversity (GSD) in education. This study is part of my Master's thesis research at Lakehead University and is tentatively entitled "Gender, Language, and Power: Exploring Elementary Teacher Candidates' Ideologies and Language Arts Curricula Choice." The purpose of my study is to better understand what teacher candidates think of GSD as an equity issue in education, specifically how that thinking informs literacy teaching choices and practices and the sense of comfort and preparation teacher candidates have to address GSD with students. While the Ontario Language Curriculum and other provincial policies are committed to equity and anti-oppression education, school climate surveys find that the well-being and academic achievement of GSD-affirming students are at risk. By sharing your views and teaching choices, you can provide informative feedback on how to improve teacher education programs to best address the concerns found in school climate surveys.

This study asks that potential participants be either First- or Second-Year Teacher Candidates in a Bachelor of Education program who will have qualifications for the elementary level and have a teachable in English. If you fit this description, your participation would greatly benefit this study.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you would like to be a participant, this study consists of an interview that can be conducted through a video conference. We will choose a date and time that is convenient for you.

It will take approximately one hour for the interview. The purpose of an interview is to gain an in-depth understanding of your views of GSD as an equity issue in education, how that thinking informs your literacy teaching choices and your sense of comfort and preparation to address GSD topics with students.

As a potential participant, you are under no obligation to participate and are free to withdraw from any section of this study at any time without any prejudice or consequence. Your decision to participate or to not participate will not affect your academic status. You have the right to decline to answer any questions you are not comfortable with in any section of the research process.

As a research participant, protecting your identity is of the utmost importance. I will not use your real name at any time in the research process, including any presentations or publications that may follow this study. To maintain the confidentiality of your identity, you will be asked to choose another name (a pseudonym) or one will be assigned to you. Any identifying information shared throughout the research process will be redacted and removed before data analysis and publication. That way, anything you share with me will securely remain anonymous and confidential. There is no foreseeable risk or harm to you to be involved in this study.

With your consent, interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. After your interview, I will email you the transcript, so you can check it for accuracy. All data will be securely stored in a password-protected folder on my laptop. Myself and my thesis supervisor, Dr. Gerald Walton, will be the only individuals with access to this data during the course of the study. Upon

completion of my thesis, all data and consent forms will be safely stored in a locked cabinet at Lakehead University Faculty of Education for 5 years. The findings of my research can be made available to you via email upon request. As well, the completed thesis will be available through Lakehead University Library Knowledge Commons.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by phone, 807-708-4653 or by email at bmvescio@lakeheadu.ca. This study is being completed under the supervision of Dr. Gerald Walton in the Faculty of Education. He may be contacted by email at gwalton@lakeheadu.ca.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions related to the ethics of the research and would like to speak to someone outside of the research team, please contact Sue Wright at the Research Ethics Board at 807-343-8283 or research@lakeheadu.ca.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Brittany M. Vescio, OCT
Master of Education Student, Faculty of Education
Lakehead University

Appendix B: Consent Form

By signing below, I agree to the following:

- ✓ I have read and understood the information contained in the Information Letter
- ✓ I agree to participate
- ✓ I understand the risks and benefits to the study
- ✓ That I am a volunteer and can withdraw from the study at any time, and may choose not to answer any question
- ✓ That the data will be securely stored in encrypted offline systems for a minimum period of 5 years following completion of the research project
- ✓ I understand that the research findings will be made available to me upon request
- ✓ That my identity will remain confidential and that a pseudonym will be used in any publication or presentation
- ✓ All of my questions have been answered

By consenting to participate, I have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

Participant Name (print)

Date

Signature

Date

Do you permit the student researcher to record your interview? If yes, sign and date below.

Signature

Date

Would you like a copy of the completed study? If yes, sign and date below and provide your email address.

Signature

Date

Email Address

Appendix C: Interview Protocol Guide

Participants will not be shown this guide; it is merely a tool to help shape each interview that will be conducted between each participant and myself, the researcher.

Sub-Unit #1: Perceptions of GSD

1. In your understanding, what does the word *gender* mean? Sexuality?
2. How would you describe your knowledge of gender and sexual diversity topics?
3. In your understanding, what does *inclusive education* mean? Equity education?
4. What provincial policies or legislation are you aware of that help support your understanding of inclusive or equity education?
5. How would you build a classroom climate of inclusivity? What instructional strategies or approaches might you use to do this?
6. What do you think is a teacher's role and/or responsibility in addressing topics of gender and sexual diversity?
7. What do you consider to be the appropriate way(s) to talk about gender and sexual diversity with students?
8. How effective do you think using GSD picture books in your teaching would be to create an inclusive environment?
9. What do you believe students can gain from learning about GSD topics in language learning?

Sub-Unit #2: Literacy Teaching Choices

1. When choosing literature for a language lesson, what factors do you consider?
 - a. What occurred in your teacher education courses that informed this understanding?
2. When choosing literature for a language lesson, would there be any topics that you gravitate to or that you avoid?
 - a. What occurred in your teacher education courses that informed this understanding?
3. How likely would you be to use literature that addresses gender and sexual diversity?
 - a. What are the factors that you think would support your choice to use such literature in your teaching?
 - b. What are the factors that you think would not support such a choice?
 - c. Do you think it is important to include GSD topics in your lesson planning? Why?
4. How does the grade level you are teaching influence the probability of using or not using picture books that address gender and sexual diversity in your teaching?
 - a. *Were there any situations that occurred on placement or in your courses that helped shape your response?*
5. How do the backgrounds of the students you are teaching influence the probability of using or not using picture books that address gender and sexual diversity in your teaching?
6. How would you approach introducing into the classroom picture books that addressed gender and sexual diversity?
7. How would you respond if a parent or colleague indicated they were not comfortable with you using GSD picture books in your language teaching?

Sub-Unit #3: Preparedness and Comfort

1. How comfortable would you say you are in addressing topics of GSD with students in your language teaching?
 - a. What factors make you feel less comfortable?
 - i. Possibly address issue of being a new teacher
 - b. What factors make you feel more comfortable?
2. How has your practicum experiences and/or course work helped prepare you to address topics of gender and sexuality in your teaching with students?
3. What areas do you think that the teacher education program can improve so that you can feel more prepared to address topics of gender and sexuality in your language teaching?