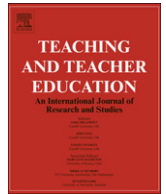


Contents lists available at [SciVerse ScienceDirect](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

Teaching and Teacher Education

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/tate

Recognition, responsibility, and risk: Pre-service teachers' framing and reframing of lesbian, gay, and bisexual social justice issues[☆]

Sandra J. Schmidt^{a,*}, Shih-pei Chang^{b,1}, Aliah Carolan-Silva^{c,2}, John Lockhart^{d,3}, Dorothea Anagnostopoulos^{e,4}

^a Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th St, 420B Zankel Hall, New York, NY 10027, USA

^b Center for International Studies, Huey Deng High School, No. 117-60, Zhenshan Rd., Yuanshan Township, Yilan County 26446, Taiwan

^c Goshen College, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526, USA

^d Pacific University, 40 East Broadway, Eugene, OR 97401, USA

^e Michigan State University, 331 Erickson Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ We develop a matrix of social justice drawing on Nancy Fraser.
- ▶ We find struggle to view sexuality through a social justice lens.
- ▶ Students note the risks and structures that contain teaching.
- ▶ Students need help contextualizing LGBT issues in diversity education.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 October 2011

Received in revised form

11 July 2012

Accepted 12 July 2012

Keywords:

Social justice
Heteronormativity
Sexuality
Transformation
Enacted curriculum

ABSTRACT

This paper presumes teachers play crucial roles in making more just societies and teacher educators must decide how they will participate in and/or shape a global dialog about LGB rights with pre-service teachers. This paper utilizes Fraser's theory of justice to consider curricular change. It examines the values and experiences pre-service teachers bring to their university education that shape their interaction with curricula. Analysis of classroom dialog suggests that pre-service teachers have a more complex understanding of structure and transformation than their nascent language around sexuality allows them to articulate. These optimistic findings lead to proposals for transforming how we teach about sexuality.

© 2012 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Headlines from around the world bear news about the lives of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people and policies affecting them. In a recent speech to the United Nations marking International

Recognition of Human Rights Day, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (2011), identified sexuality as the primary human rights struggle of the day: 'I am talking about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, human beings born free and given bestowed equality and dignity, who have a right to claim that, which is now one of the remaining human rights challenges of our time.' She announced that the U.S. would commit financial and diplomatic resources to debunk mythologies about lesbian, gay, and bisexual [LGB]⁵ people and educate and advocate for rights of LGB people. This

[☆] Stephen Vassallo, American University, was involved in the conceptualization of the project and in data collection. He was also an instructor for one section of the course discussed in this paper.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 212 678 3174.

E-mail addresses: ss4146@tc.columbia.edu (S.J. Schmidt), spchang260@gmail.com (S.-p. Chang), aliahcs@goshen.edu (A. Carolan-Silva), lockhart@pacificu.edu (J. Lockhart), danagnos@msu.edu (D. Anagnostopoulos).

¹ Tel.: +886 03 922 9968x326.

² Tel.: +1 574 535 7826.

³ Tel.: +1 541 485 6812.

⁴ Tel.: +1 517 355 1727.

⁵ This paper, and the course it examines, centers sexuality, and we accordingly use LGB to refer to lesbian, gay, and bisexual sexualities. We recognize that the concept of gender intimately intersects with sexuality, but have chosen to privilege sexuality since sexuality-based justice issues present their own complexity, and exploring gender would cut into the limited space we use to reframe justice around sexuality. If an author or subject we cite used more inclusive language, we did not edit their language.

speech, alongside an earlier one by South African leaders, put the human rights protections afforded by countries such as Canada, South Africa, and Norway into international conversation.

While some countries have interpreted the UN Declaration of Human Rights to incorporate LGB rights and passed legislation protecting these rights, this support is not universal. Some nation-states are doing the opposite – criminalizing or increasing the penalties attached to homosexual ‘behavior’ (i.e., Uganda, Nigeria, Iran). Other countries, as Clinton notes of her own, rest in contested spaces – offering some rights to LGB persons but embroiled in debate about the nature and reach of rights. Even within countries where LGB people receive justice under the law, there exist challenges in the enactment and protection of these rights by individuals, local entities, and provincial/state governments.

This tension depicts the struggle to enact justice and indicates that common conceptions of justice may not be sufficient to achieve equity. Policies, such as the one proposed by Clinton, tend to claim that justice has prevailed when laws recognize and legally protect the rights of a marginalized group. But legal recognition and stated protection without attendant transformation of the social structures that legitimize oppression leaves it unclear that the intended group benefits fully from the justice-oriented policy. Political philosopher Nancy Fraser claims that justice requires institutional change. She proposes that remedying injustice requires recognition by state entities as well as transformation of social structures, including redistribution of resources.

People’s conceptions of justice affect how they understand and engage in conversations about sexuality (including whether they recognize sexuality as a justice issue). Schools are social institutions that both reflect and produce justice schemes. Reflecting society, national socio-political discourses like those about sexuality play out with local flair in schools. The manners in which teachers and other school personnel respond to sexuality are lessons in acceptable social values and expression. Teacher preparation programs have a vital role in shaping the justice approaches that teachers enact within schools. Using a framework developed from Fraser, this paper analyzes the ways pre-service teachers (PST) conceptualize justice to further understand how teacher educators might communicate ideas about LGB inclusion to their students and understand the complexities of enacting a social justice framework for LGB issues.

2. LGB and teacher education

A review of literature on LGB issues in teacher education suggests increased attention to LGB issues alongside the rise of these issues in global political and social discussion. There is significant variation in teacher education policies, program structures, and how and where attention to LGB issues arise therein, but the approaches taken when LGB issues are taught in Canada, Australia, England, South Africa, France, and the U.S. have remarkable similarity. A central concern is the detrimental impact heteronormative school structures have on the lives of LGB youth (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003; Ferfolja, 2007; Ferfolja & Robinson, 2004; Frohard-Dourlent, 2012; Macintosh, 2007; Vavrus, 2009). The literature addresses this concern by critiquing approaches used to remedy heteronormativity and reporting on the impact and usage of these curricular approaches.

Although the specific terminology varies across authors, literature generally suggests three paradigms through which teacher education redresses heteronormativity: tolerance, acceptance, and queerness/criticality (Britzman & Gilbert, 2004; Frohard-Dourlent, 2012; Goldstein, Russell, & Daley, 2007; Szalacha, 2004). These authors express, directly or indirectly, a preference for queering or de-normalizing school and queer youth through LGB education. But

they find that the tolerance and acceptance paradigms dominate teacher education through anti-homophobic or anti-heterosexist curricula. Homophobia reflects a fear of difference that underlies discrimination in relation to non-heterosexual identities (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2008). Heterosexim is understood as ‘the social construction of heterosexuality as normal and superior to other sexual identities’ (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003, p. 238). Opposing both forms of oppression means enacting curriculum that require PSTs to recognize the needs of LGB youth through anti-bullying efforts, disrupting the use of derogatory language, including LGB issues in the curriculum, and asking PSTs to accept all of their students. Britzman and Gilbert (2004) propose that new, queer structures replace schooling that normalizes heterosexuality. Across this literature about oppression, there are few moments in which the lives of LGB youth are represented through positive language (Britzman & Gilbert, 2004; Rofes, 2004).

The literature primarily reports on struggles that result from enacting these curricular models. Ferfolja and Robinson’s (2004) study about attitudes amongst social justice-oriented teacher educators in Australia indicates that these teacher educators feel that redressing sexuality presents unique risks that make them hesitant to tackle anti-homophobia education. Although significant numbers of secondary teacher educators realize the need to highlight LGB issues, this is not matched by primary teacher educators who find the topic irrelevant to their population (Ferfolja & Robinson, 2004). Research in Canada, South Africa, the U.S., and Australia finds varying forms of resistance on the part of students (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003; Francis & Msibi, 2011; Harber & Serf, 2006; Macintosh, 2007; McConaghy, 2004). PSTs are likely to complain that it disrespects their religious or cultural values and is unnecessary. Some success arose by revealing the needs of youth rather than conversing about individual responsibility (Francis & Msibi, 2011; McConaghy, 2004). Other moments of success arise in queer moments when PSTs see the trauma for what it is and locate themselves in it, or when they are suddenly confronted to name their own sexuality (Goldstein et al., 2007; Macintosh, 2007).

Previous literature has queried and reported the limitations of PSTs’ readiness and willingness to adopt tolerant and accepting attitudes toward LGB youth. The paradigms of acceptance/tolerance and queerness conceptualize and promote justice differently. In the affirmation of marginalized sexualities in the school context, PSTs are learning to think that justice resides in individual actions, dependent primarily upon how the teacher responds to an individual student’s behavior. Elevating the acceptance/tolerance narrative masks the institutionalized notions of sexuality that organize life and confound our ability to redress LGB issues. We feel that examining teacher education from a justice stance may help us better understand how to situate this work within social discourse about LGB equity. In order to do this, we ask, ‘How do PSTs’ experiences with and beliefs about LGB issues influence their conceptualization of these issues as justice concerns?’ Information about how young people enter teacher education programs will help us reconsider curricular approaches within teacher education.

3. Redistribution and recognition in a social justice framework

Policies that protect LGB persons and social justice components in teacher education programs use the standard of recognition as a measure of success rather than developing strategies to evaluate and implement justice systematically and institutionally. We contend that the theory of justice articulated by Fraser (1995, 2003) provides a more operational and complete lens through which to examine and understand the treatment of LGB issues within teacher education programs. Fraser’s two-pronged theory proposes

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/374120>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/374120>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)