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Gender Identity through a
Pedagogy of Refusal: Learning
the Body as Literacy Alongside
our Students

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Embedding the Complexities of Gender Identity through a Pedagogy of Refusal: Learning the Body as Literacy Alongside our Students

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Abstract:

Students with non-binary gender identities enter into our schools with gender identities they seem to already readily understand. These students are highly attuned to how schooling practices mostly speak to binary gender identities and reinscribe cis-and-gender identity normativity. Considering that access and recognition shape and inform students' identities, those with non-binary gender identities are positioned by their gendered relationality to school-based relationships, which are co-constitutive of the other. Their bodily awareness enables them to dislodge from the norms that many students are vulnerable to inheriting and embodying. As they move back and forth between their in-and-out of school lives, their bodies are generating different forms of literacy. Outside of school or school, their gender identities are always in conversation as they simultaneously question its construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction. When they are recognized through the eyes and/or words of another, their validation confers gender identity self-determination, and this legitimization generates emergent language, positioning them as agents of literacy. Their gender identities then are complex and indeterminate, and provide the field of education an opportunity to have a different relationship with the body that is expressed through different manifestations of refusal. Expressions of their refusals that resist assimilation and enculturation, posits them as both dexterous and agentive as they move from context to context. The body then as literacy, is a source of learning literacy. This research shares how a group of students with non-binary gender identities spoke to teachers, counselors, principals, school personnel, peers, and family members about what they needed to feel safe, included, and legitimized at school. Dr. Miller has included an extended and rich set of resources from these findings and additional appendices which can be used in teacher education as well as in pre-K-12 classrooms.

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EMBEDDING THE COMPLEXITIES OF GENDER IDENTITY THROUGH A PEDAGOGY OF REFUSAL: LEARNING THE BODY AS LITERACY ALONGSIDE OUR STUDENTS

"The body gives rise to language and that language carries bodily aims, and performs bodily deeds..." even when, "not always understood by those who use language to accomplish certain conscious aims."

-Butler (2004), p. 199

ORIGIN STORY AS EMBEDMENT FOR METHODS

I have struggled with self-love my entire life and will continue to until my time is up to depart this earth. With one foot always on soft ground, and the other with a foot buried into the thick mud that covers like a sock, a split in consciousness is, and has always been, ever-present. Born into a body in 1970 that I never understood or felt at home in, I engaged in self-harming activities in my early childhood. Not even aware or caring why I behaved as I did, I used to run around in the streets with my shirt off and play football with the boys. I used to pee standing up and cover my face with toothpaste and use a toothbrush to emulate shaving. I used to grab beer- yes I did- even at five, and gulp it down. I was Jewish, and drinking, which can be quite common on the Sabbath and the holidays, and was an excuse to cover up the rampant alcoholism in all of my family. I suspect much of this behavior came from my observations of the men in my family and my desire not to just emulate them, but to be them. Why was this considered self-harm? Because when I was told by my father that girls didn't behave in these ways, I would refuse to listen, continue the behavior, shout profanities—knowing it would provoke anger-, only to then drag myself off the floor, black and blue, with tire tracks across my face, my back, and my rear. I became the train tracks for these trains, but with less frequency as I aged. It only stopped when I stopped looking to those men for validation that my maleness was real.

School only offered solace because I was away from home, but my identity remained ambiguous because I did not see myself reflected in curriculum, discourse, or policy. But then again, I didn't really know what I was feeling about my gender, other than I hated my body and I didn't feel female. In fact, I still question: would it have made a difference if I had been recognized in the school climate, curriculum, or school policies when gender identity or the word transgender was not on most people's radars? Although I loved my friends, my soccer and swim teams, and my teachers, I did not see or understand myself. I did not know myself. So, the self-harm turned into anorexia, promiscuity, and aligning myself, even inviting, my sexual abuse. Emo and dark new wave music and movies with gender-queer characters became my closest companions. The mirror became a living nightmare.

Now, as a trans*+ (a)gender¹, tenured professor in teacher education, I feel a personal and moral responsibility and accountability to share my story and BE a disruption to any perpetuation of cisnormativity or cisgender privilege². I refuse to sit still. I refuse to not support my colleagues in their understanding and inclusion of language, pedagogy, or curriculum about gender identity. I refuse to let any student with a non-binary gender identity be delegitimized or *invisibilized*. I refuse to not do a professional development, write a book, give a talk or keynote, visit a school, pick up a call, answer an email, respond on Facebook chat, write a Blog entry, be interviewed by

¹ (A)gender is the ascription that a person does not identify with a gender. For me, trans*+ (a)gender means that my identity moves away gender categories, refuses to be essentialized, and situates identity in a confluence of factors that are always in motion, thereby in perpetual deconstruction, construction and reconstruction.

² Cisgender privilege is the unquestionable entitlement and the tendency to move throughout life without the experience or fear of redress because of one's body and the congruity between how a person looks, acts, and behaves is in accordance with how the perceiver reads the perceived.

the press, do a podcast, or not intervene when someone says something derogatory about someone's gender identity. I refuse to ignore pain, trauma, or bullying. I refuse. I refuse. I refuse. I want to ask you to say with me: "*I will not watch, I will act.*"

GENDER IDENTITY POLICING IN SCHOOLS

In the U.S., people are born into a culture still fastened to a historical policing of gender and gender identities. Certainly, while social and political movements have helped galvanize and afford some level of material, social, and economic gains about gender and gender identities, schools remain as inheritors of gender norms and their subsequent attributions (Lesko, 2012; Petrone & Lewis, 2012). Unfortunately, such changes have yet to be systemically addressed and rooted across or studied over time in teacher education and classroom practice. Such gaps have left educators ill-prepared and ill-equipped to sufficiently address gender identity topics through coursework, curriculum, and pedagogy (GLSEN, 2013; Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2016; Miller, 2016a, b; Quinn & Meiners, 2011).

Schools become a type of prison that mirror social, cultural, and economic modes of reproduction. Seen in this way, some bodies are instantiated with multiple forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1980; Yosso 2005) while others have diminished capital. Specifically, some students are vulnerable to experiencing gender identity insecurity disparities that manifest as disproportionate rates of bullying, dropping out, truancy, lowered GPAs, mental health and substance issues (Kosciw, et al, 2010, Kosciw, et al, 2016), pushout into the juvenile processing system (GLSEN, 2016; Ware, 2015) homelessness, presence in foster care and/or group homes, and suicidal ideation—and for students of color, statistics are much higher (Ybarra, Mitchell, & Kosciw, 2014). In addition, suspensions result in exclusion from classroom instruction and the school community. When these students are not present in school, everyone has diminished opportunities to learn and grow. These micro-aggressions and forms of gender identity-based violence could be disrupted if the schooling system were to embrace policies and practices that shifted beliefs and practices about gender identity topics. In this paper, I consider the TeachingWorks high-leverage practice *specifying and reinforcing productive student behavior* and link how this work is critically connected to interrupting gender identity insecurity disparities.

CARING FOR OUR OWN

Students with non-binary gender identities enter into our schools with gender identities they seem to already readily understand. These students are highly attuned to how schooling practices mostly speak to binary gender identities and reinscribe cis-and-gender identity normativity. Considering that access and recognition shape and inform students' identities, those with non-binary gender identities are positioned by their gendered relationality to school-based relationships, which are co-constitutive of the other. Their bodily awareness enables them to dislodge from the norms that many students are vulnerable to inheriting and embodying. As they move back and forth between their in-and-out of school lives, their bodies are generating different forms of literacy. Outside of school or school, their gender identities are always in conversation as they simultaneously question its construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction. When they are recognized through the eyes and/or words of another, their validation confers gender identity self-determination, and this legitimization generates emergent language, positioning them as agents of literacy. Their gender identities then are complex and indeterminate, and provide the field of education an opportunity to have a different relationship with the body that is expressed through different manifestations of refusal. Expressions of their refusals that resist assimilation and enculturation, posits them as both dexterous and agentic as they move from context to context. The body then as literacy, is a source of learning literacy. This research shares how a group of

students with non-binary gender identities spoke to teachers, counselors, principals, school personnel, peers, and family members about what they needed to feel safe, included, and legitimized at school. Dr. Miller has included an extended and rich set of resources from these findings and additional appendices which can be used in teacher education as well as in pre-K-12 classrooms.

A pedagogy of refusal emerged as a unifying concept for this study. Embodied enactments that refuse to be or to accept essentialized constructions of spaces, binaries, ideas, genders, bodies, or identities, are a form of resistance against the foreclosure of not becoming and being gender identity self-determined. This refusal is complex; it is a moving away from, or a refusal to be located in a predictable pattern of concepts. In other words, it is always in relationship to relationality—it is the act of queering binaries which manifest as indeterminate (Miller, 2016a). For example, a teacher assumes the cis-normative social positioning of a body when they say, “Hey guys, take out your notebooks.” When a student corrects that teacher and responds with, “We are not all guys, and when you say that you position everyone to be male; *guys* means male or boys,” the moment becomes a turning point for literacy learning and learning literacy. Stemming from this pedagogy, *gender identity* is the sense of how someone feels about their gender, its expression, and its relationship to their body and how they want to be seen and legitimized by the world. Gender identity can therefore be the physical, emotional, and/or psychological embodiment that rejects gender ((a)gender)⁶ altogether. It is a metric that signifies bodily location about one’s gender identity that simultaneously questions its construction, the impacts of its social positioning, and its ongoing and “readiness” to participate in its reinvention. When educators put into practice a pedagogy of refusal, students not only see and feel themselves reflected and respected by a teacher’s approach to the classroom, but their legitimization becomes both an academic motivation and a source of empowerment. Such empowerment that is situated in the body, primes the student as readily agentive, and as they move from context to context, they become change agents.

Schooling practices about gender and gender identity are built within hegemonic structures and essentialist notions of the male/man and female/woman binary. As the norm, this binary has, and more or less continues to, position and condition schooling practices and discourse (i.e., use and usage) to assume that bodies are cis- and gender identity normative. These cis- and gender identity normative gazes apprentice students into linguistic and literacy practices that manifest in narrowing perspectives about the continuum of gender identities that are ever-present, and diminish capacities for broadening understanding, recognizing, and legitimizing concurrent shifts in bodily expressions. Case in point, when a teacher introduces a novel using this discourse, “*The House of Mirth*, by Edith Wharton, is about a woman named Lily Bart who, because of how women were viewed as lesser than men, and incapable of financial independence, kills herself.” On the surface, this might seem accurate, however, when the sentence is parsed, we can uncover gaping holes. The teacher has left out key components such as how patriarchy socialized women into domestic roles and made them dependent on men; or, that a view of women who broke from traditional norms and took up characteristics of men such as working and making independent choices made her a social outcast. By leaving out key details, the teacher has reinforced sexist gender identity norms, and limited broader views on the strength, independence, and courage it took for women to be fully human.

Identities seen through an intersection of cultural anthropology, feminist theory, and sociocultural theory suggest that “any given construction of identity may be in part deliberate and intentional, in part habitual and hence often less than fully conscious” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 25). Known as the *partialness principle*, Bucholtz and Hall reason that identity construction is relational, interactional, and social and cannot be individual if it is socially negotiated. They argue that it cannot be fully intentional if it is produced by practices and ideologies that may exceed conscious awareness and, it may be formed through contestation and negotiation because of others’

preexisting perceptions that are linked to larger ideological and held beliefs. Thus, when a person claims an identity, name, or pronoun, those choices are rooted in prior defaults indexed to ideological seatings, and conceived through negotiation and the desire to be gender identity self-determined. Understood this way then, language used to name identity is connected by what is known as the *indexical principle* which relies on how meaning is discursively produced through identity categories and labels; implications and presuppositions about one's or another's identity; evaluative positioning toward someone else's talk and their social roles; and, use of linguistic structures that are associated with specific people and groups (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 21). In other words, when school systems (anyone for that matter) position or presume someone's identity, we demonstrate our own positioning animated by our (difficult to sever) indissoluble ties to a heteronormative, patriarchal, hegemonic, cisgender/cissexual, ableistic, classed (and so on) system that has maintained and structured lives. School systems, and especially teachers who perpetuate these ties, reinforce ideologies that sustain institutional and structural violence.

Yet, youth, whose gender identities may seem incongruous with schools, and are astute about their social positioning, are vulnerable to how negative representations of gender identity impact mindsets and beliefs. Often left with no choice, and in search of positive recognition, they are forced to turn to social media (Adams, 2017; Byron & Hurt, 2017; Giesekeing, 2015) and peer groups to educate and gain validation and recognition of and from each other. These networks foster their *gender identity self-determination* (Miller, 2016a), whereby the individual *is* the ultimate authority on their own gender identity. A norm that has been established in non-binary gender identity communities has been to directly ask someone how they self-identify, how they would like to be referred to, and what their claimed names and pronouns are or aren't (some people are ((a))pronounced, meaning they choose to not to use a pronoun). When someone changes their names or pronouns and asks others to use a particular name and/or pronoun, it marks a major milestone in one's identity transition, and being named or pronounced "correctly marks the moment in which a gender identity leaves the mind of a [trans] person and enters a new reality on the lips of an interlocutor" (Zimman, in press, p. 10).

For many trans*+ and gender non-binary people, naming one's identity is an inherently embodied principle of gender identity self-determination, in which each individual is the ultimate authority on their own gender identity. According to Stanley (2014) and Miller (2016a), gender identity self-determination constitutes "a collective praxis against the brutal pragmatism of the present, the liquidation of the past, and the austerity of the future" (p. 89). In this sense, "it is a form of resistance to normative structures of genital-based gender assignment. As a radical alternative to those normative systems, gender self-determination is realized first and foremost through the linguistic practice of self-identification (Zimman, in press, p.1). What we see then is a refusal to be essentialized, reified, codified, and trapped by institutionalized structures that impose an identity algorithm. While policies certainly guide and shape mainstream practices and offer important protections, within these communities, there is a common (but not for all people) desire and need to self-identify in such a way that naming becomes imaginative and inventive. This act of resistance whether enacted by the student or the teacher, vis-à-vis, a refusal, mediates locating the self in second space (the imagined) (Soja, 1996, p. 10) and third-space (coming together of the real and the imagined) (Gutiérrez, 2008; Gutiérrez. Banquedano, López, & Tejada, 1999; Soja, 1996, p. 10) sanctuaries where language can emerge as preservationist and coded, and yet also provide opportunities for bodies to invent and reinvent language. In these spaces what arises is "something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Bhabha, 1994, as in Soja, 1996, p. 11). What *arises* is that each person determines how they want to be spoken about and understood. And, returning to the epigraph of Butler (2004) we are reminded here that while "The body gives rise to language and that language carries bodily aims, and performs bodily deeds..." even when, "not always understood by those who use language to accomplish certain conscious aims" (p. 199), when students are not empowered for agentic moves, gender identity norms will remain static.

A view of gender identity is bound and tied to dynamisms of structural and institutionalized manifestations of power; identity is not immune from the desire to be recognized or even assimilated, and power relations illuminate presence, absence, and futurity (Bordo, 1993). For instance, Foucault (1980) and Bourdieu (1980) suggest that the effects of power and surveillance construct identities, and that the embodiment of identities is vulnerable as a result of power. For instance, when a teacher has posters up in their classroom of *only* white, able-bodied, students who appear well-dressed, and look like Ken and Barbie Barbie Dolls, they send a clear message to students about who does and doesn't matter. Any absence of a range of identities, whether skin color, dress, ability, or non-binary, to name a few, reflects bias and microaggressive beliefs about bodies. To this Bordo (1993) attests: "the human body is itself a politically inscribed entity, its physiology and morphology shaped by histories and practices of containment and control" (p. 21). As students with non-binary gender identities enter school their bodily enactments are ripe with opportunities to spatialize change as they educate their peers and adults about the ways in which they self-identify. For schools then, understanding that their bodies are *agentive*, means that educators can build from and on those dynamic assets for learning, and affirm and recognize that gender expression is flexible, on a continuum, and can shift over time and in context. These enactments can impact everyone in the school to become more aware of an ever-evolving continuum of gender identity (see examples below and in Miller, 2016a, 2016b, forthcoming a, b).

Mounted within, and stemming from a newfangled theory of trans⁺ (Miller, 2016a, forthcoming b), which grew from students' resistance to static notions and embodiments of gender identities, trans⁺ can be thought of as a mediator and practice for literacy learning. *A theory of trans⁺* is built from the relationship between spatiality and hybridity theories (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Miller, 2014; Soja, 2010); geospatial theories (Gutiérrez, 2008; Gutiérrez, Banquedano, López, & Tejada, 1999; Nespor, 1997; Slattey, 1992, 1995; Soja, 2010); social positioning theories (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1990; Latour, 1986; Leander & Sheehy, 2004; McCarthy & Moje, 2002); culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2002, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014); culturally sustaining pedagogy (Pars & Alim, 2017); queer (Barrett, 2002; Butler, 1990; Leap, 1995, 2011; Motschenbacher & Stegu, 2013), trans (Davis, Zimman, & Raclaw, 2014; Zimman, in press; Zimman, Davis & Raclaw, 2014), and socio-cultural linguistics (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Ochs, 1992; Silverstein, 1985). Arising from this rhizome of theories then, trans⁺ as a theoretical concept, not only is the connective tissue for these studies but uniquely suggests that students have agency in how they invite in, embody, and can be recognized by the self and other as they travel across contexts embodied by multitudinous identities that can be perpetually reinvented. Trans⁺ as rhizome, situated within this framing, is a networked space where relationships intersect, are concentric, do not intersect, can be parallel, nonparallel, perpendicular, obtuse, and fragmented. It is both an invisible (2nd space) and visible space (3rd space), which embodies all of the forces co-constructing identities. Such spaces cut across borders of space, time, and technology and generate pathways into different contexts. It also recognizes that histories have spatial dimensions that are normalized with inequities hidden in bodies whereby bodies become contested sites that experience social justice and injustice both temporally and spatially (Miller, 2014; Miller & Norris, 2007; Nespor, 1997; Slattey, 1992, 1995). Gender identity then, situated within a trans⁺ theory is trans-sectional (Miller, forthcoming) because it is always in perpetual construction and deconstruction (Miller, 2016b, p. 4).

Drawing upon a refusal of pedagogy for learning literacy and literacy learning, when educators use this, they challenge expectations that reinscribe gender identity normativity. Ensuing shifts prime the education system for a deepening understanding, recognition, and increased capacity about teaching and welcoming in students who have dynamic gender identities; a goal is to minimize discontinuities between literacy learning and learning literacy inside-and-outside of school. Ongoing embodiments, long-term practice and applications of refusal, in and across schools, can deepen human awareness and provide meaningful and

intentional opportunities to shift deeply entrenched binary understandings of highly nuanced complexities about gender identity. As a literacy practice, a pedagogy of refusal is an enactment and engagement of learning that opens up space for ideas, concepts, and the indeterminate to be part of the process of learning. It proffers that answers are not compartmentalized into the binary of the *yes* or *no*, and that answers can shift back and forth, be between, imagined, futuristic, and fragmented. As students come to understand and recognize these possibilities through participation and practice, a pedagogy of refusal uptake can grant bodied communications to both be made legible and become legible to others. Thought of this way in unison, their bodies and minds become emerging forms of and for understanding and teaching. Therefore, this theory of trans⁺ suggests that for new knowledges to emerge, classrooms must be thought of and taught rhizomatically, or as a networked space where relationality and one's relationship to relationality is continually reinvented based on where both students and *educators* are in their awareness about gender identity (Miller, 2014). A theory of trans⁺ is a critical consciousness about how we read and are read by the world (Freire, 1970) and a refusal and divesting from, essentializations (Miller, 2016a, 2017b). Since language helps us locate and discover gender identities the education system is primed with an opportunity to learn from students' relationships to the complexity of their gender identities, and discover how to approach a re-invention of language through policy, pedagogy, and curriculum. This paper shares a study of how a group of students with non-binary gender identities spoke to teachers, counselors, principals, school personnel, peers, and family members about what they needed to feel safe, included and legitimized at school.

Why Shifts in Relationship to Student's Gender Identities Matter

Today's students with non-binary gender identities are increasingly visible within public schools, and can be extraordinarily creative in negotiating the politics that seek to suppress, repress, and occasionally eradicate and erase their very being. Yet, while they have an innate sense of how gender identity norms function as modes of surveillance, they are locked into a system that does not fully understand, recognize, or know how to support them. As a result, they are forced into silence, and often experience isolation or marginalization. Resultant, they often seek social validation and recognition in each other outside of school (Miller, Lugg, & Mayo, 2018). In these outside moments, the *extraordinary* occurs. Their very embodiment is the construction and production of literacy wherein new meaning/knowledges emerge. Were schools prepared to embrace and build on these generative moments of literacy production, not only could it expand and advance opportunities for their psycho-, social-and academic well-beings, it could generate increased capacities for all stakeholders in schools to disrupt microaggressions and rationales that produce stereotypes, bullying, and violent behavior. These changes can manifest as incorporating more inclusive forms which explicitly invite students to self-identify; allowing students to use bathrooms and locker-rooms that match their claimed gender identity or having those spaces be inclusive of all or non-gendered; going beyond the gender binary when teaching, speaking, making announcements, having causal conversation; putting up signs that enumerate all forms of identities in hallways and classrooms; always introducing oneself by claimed name and pronoun; and, putting up vivid claimed pronoun signs and posters all over the school (Miller, 2016a, forthcoming a).

Uses of bullying and vitriolic language as evidenced by our current political climate and perhaps those likely to still come, and its removal of the *Federal Guidance*³ that protected trans⁺ and students who are gender/gender identity non-binary, have brought gender identity topics into critical focus, warranting immediate attention in schools. Not only have literacy educators been summoned to understand how school systems delimit boundaries of gender identity normativity, sanction certain configurations of gender, and reinforce

³ For more information on the Federal Guidance, see Miller (forthcoming a) and Department of Justice (2016).

cissexism⁴, but they are challenged now, more than ever, to disrupt resocialization. Such efforts though cannot continue to be tokenized in individuals, they must be cultivated and embodied to bring about systemic transformation. This research addresses these concerns by analyzing how student's self-determined gender identities produce literacy practices that can be embedded as mediator for galvanizing systemic changes in school-based literacy practices (e.g., curriculum, pedagogies, policies, and discussions) and how that can foster a culture of affirmation, recognition, and love.

Trans*+-cultural and Trans*+-culturaling

Since language helps locate and discover gender identities, such awareness can help us imagine, invent and re-invent language. Seen this way, language becomes a critical agentive nexus for bridging various contexts. Self-identification, legitimization, and recognition, when embodied, present possibilities to impact and inform local, national, and international communities dedicated (even unknowingly) to discursive and dialogical processes between the intersections of gender identity and emergent language. I call this process *trans*+-cultural*, while the action or movement as bodies move from space to space, *trans*+-culturaling*. Trans*+-cultural is the broader conceptualization of complex gender identity formation as bodies trans-sect with technologies, spaces, times, contexts, cultural identifiers, and language and simultaneously produce both material and symbolic meanings that give rise to literacy practices. Trans*+-cultural then is the trans-section, i.e., the rhizome or networked space, whereby relationships intersect, are concentric, do not intersect, can be parallel, nonparallel, perpendicular, obtuse, and fragmented (Miller, 2014, 2016b). It is both an invisible and visible space that embodies all of the forces co-constructing gender identities that traverse borders of space, time, and technology, and carves out and generates pathways into different contexts where gender identities are formed and generated. Trans*+-culturaling then is the process, activation and realization of such gender identity formations. Gender identity, when validated by another, simultaneously highlights its visibility, ontology and affirms its social positioning.

THE HAPPENSTANCE OF THE STUDY

My life experiences eventually led me to write the book *Teaching, Affirming, and Recognizing Trans and Gender Creative Youth: A Queer Literacy Framework*. The book invited pre-K through university level educators to talk about a best practice that addressed, recognized and affirmed gender identity. Their stories were nothing short of powerful and as a collective, it gave students voice and recognition that is often absent from academic books, let alone practice. Based on these narratives, I coded them for findings which paved the way to an organic and unplanned next step. It occurred to me that other educators and stakeholders invested in the well-being of students with complex gender identities could also benefit from the teachings of the educators' and students' voices in the book. Instead of trying to sell more of the book in its current, expensive, hard-back form, I wanted to create a professional development series that could either occur in person or as a hybrid on-line, powerful experience for participants to interact and engage with each other and gleanings from the book. The series could be tailored for administrators, superintendents, principals, deans, department chairs, staff, support staff, learning specialists, instructional coaches, teachers and/or faculty, preservice students, classroom students, parents and/or guardians, community organizations, grant funders, social workers and counselors, and policy makers. The latter would come to be called a webu-mentary, which is a combination of pre-shot documentary footage combined with an on-line, live interfacing with participants and myself engaged in interactive activities based on the footage.⁵

⁴ Cissexism is the impact of a cisgender assumption in which all gender normative appearing bodies are always assumed to be not trans*+.

⁵ The conception of the hybrid process was co-conceptualized with David Kirkland.

The book was assembled into five different series clustered around the categories that emerged from the coding. The series included (1). T*+GC/E⁶ topics in pre-K-12 Schools, (2) How to trans*+ curriculum and practice, (3) How to shift school culture and climate, (4) Resources for parents, teachers, school staff, and administrators and other key stakeholders, and (5) T*+GC/E topics in pre-K-12 Schools. Each series was comprised of 4-5 different topical foci as shown below. While each of these sections below contain myriad examples of high leverage practices that are responsive to, support, and mitigate productive student behavior I have included an extended and rich set of resources from these findings and additional appendices which can be used in teacher education as well as in pre-K-12 classrooms.⁷

Series 1: Introduction to T*+GC/E Topics in pre-K-12 Schools

This series introduces language use and usage that affirms and recognizes T+GC/E identities. We will unpack complex language and apply it to real-time classroom practice. We will look at different origins of gender and sex, look closely at how to affirm and recognize T*+GC/E students' identities to facilitate maximum engagement, understand how cisgender privilege polices T*+GC/E bodies, and closely examine the structural impact of microaggressions on T*+GC/E students.*

- Unpacking Germane Language and Terms
- Gender and Sex
- T*+GC/E 101 (names, pronouns, etiquette)
- Reflecting on and Understanding Cisgender Privilege
- T*+GC/E Microaggressions

Series 2: Trans*+ing Curriculum and Practice

This series focuses on how to shift curriculum and practice to be inclusive of T+GC/E identities. Participants will learn how to trans*+ literacy practices so they reflect myriad representations of identities across disciplines, how to support students to develop (a) gender self-determination, dive into how T*+GC/E intersectional identities can be taken up in curriculum and practice, how to teach to, affirm, and recognize T*+GC/E students, and then, how to audit and shift curriculum so all students develop a deeper awareness about ever-expanding gender identities.*

- Trans*+ing Literacy Practices (crossing disciplinary lines)
- Developing (a) Gender Self-determination (2 weeks)
- Understanding Intersectional Trans*+ and Gender Creative/Expansive Students
- Teaching, Affirming and Recognizing Trans*+ and Gender Creative/Expansive Students
- Auditing and Shifting Curriculum to be Inclusive about Topics Related to Gender Identity

Series 3: Shifting School Culture and Climate

This series focuses on examining current school culture and climate and developing strategies to make schools more inclusive. Participants will analyze current school documents, account for how bathrooms, locker rooms, and play/open spaces attend to, and provide safety for T+GC/E students, decipher how to create internal and external safety with and for students, and develop strategies to work with stakeholders who are resistant, reluctant, or have emerging awareness about T*+GC/E students. Participants will leave this webinar with the ability to create action plans for change.*

- Shifting Policies and Practices
- Disrupting Trans*+ and Gender Creative/Expansive-focused Bullying
- Bathrooms, Locker Rooms, and Playgrounds
- Creating School Environments for External and Internal Safety
- Working with Parents (administrators, staff) around Trans*+ and Gender Creative/Expansive Issues

⁶ T*GC/E stands for transgender, gender creative, and expansive. The plus sign + here was not included because when the book was published I was notified that it cannot be catalogued by the Library of Congress database. The + indexes to arbitrary terms and provides inaccurate text connections.

⁷ Please contact me for specific examples

Series 4: Resources for Parents, Teachers, School Staff, and Administrators

This series focuses on providing critical resources that can mediate positive socio-emotional-psychological well-being for T+GC/E students and those individuals they interact with. Participants will be provided resources that recognize their identities, affirms the trajectory of a non-binary pathway that helps them make meaning of their histories, situates language expansion taken up by T*+GC/E students in and across contexts, and helps participants think of ways that the community can take an active role in students' lives.*

- Books, Films, Videos, Featuring Trans*+ and Gender Creative/Expansive Students
- Transgender History and its Role in Schools
- Expanding Language Practices to be Inclusive of and for Trans*+ and Gender Creative/Expansive Students
- Community Engagement with and for Trans*+ and Gender Creative/Expansive Students

Series 5: Building Partnerships Across National and International Educational Contexts

This series focuses on building national and international partnerships that can build capacity for understanding the experiences of T+GC/E students in-and-out of educational contexts. Participants will share how their T*+GC/E students experience the day-to-day, will explore how language is used to self-identify, learn how others make and are making changes in their own schools, offer supports for change, collectively build a network to help sustain change, share and exchange resources, and consider follow-up research projects and innovations.*

- Learning about Language and T*+GC/E Identity in Different Spaces
- Developing Innovations and Supports to Sustain Change
- Leveraging, Gathering, and Sharing Resources for T*+GC/E Students
- Developing Research for Sustainable Changes

While this initially began as a professional development series, trademarked by me, and shared vis-à-vis conversation with my colleague, David Kirkland, we decided to build out a pilot within the webu-mentary series. Each series, or individual topics within the series, could be modified to the population who wanted to participate. This could include any discipline, pre-K-12 schools and districts, universities, community colleges, small businesses, non-profits, and law enforcement groups, to name a few, and any combination of these intersections. Participants could include but would not be limited to administrators, superintendents, principals, deans, department chairs, staff, support staff, learning specialists, instructional coaches, teachers and/or faculty, preservice students, classroom students, parents and/or guardians, community organizations, grant funders, social workers and counselors, and policy makers. The intended purpose and potential outcomes of the series were to advance knowledge, dispositions, and pedagogical capacities about supporting the wellbeing of students' personal and social-emotional legitimacies; to experience increased confidence to engage with, and motivate student learning; to strengthen pedagogical tools; to develop concrete understanding and awareness about how to create external and internal safety; and, to make schooling contexts equitable.

Building the Webu-mentary

After considerable conversation and brainstorming we concluded that not all of these constituents could travel for professional development, nor could I to them. It made sense to build an on-line platform as a different way of offering professional development but we did not want to use the traditional model of a webinar where participants log on and watch slides that are narrated by a moderator. We wanted to do something new, innovative, and forward-thinking. Something powerful and memorable. This meant something that would become embodied. So, we decided to combine documentary footage with research, live participant interaction, and moderation by me in real time.

First, we met with Shindig, which is a turnkey solution for online video chat events that offers the dynamics of an in-person event at internet scale (taken from their website, <https://www.shindig.com/about-us>). Their platform would be able to host up to

1,000 participants, which seemed like a reasonable number. Then, knowing what our possible on-line platform could do, and after hours of brainstorming about how this process could unfold, we conceptualized the draft process and purpose: we would build a cutting-edge documentary style webinar that would explore the importance of supporting students who were trans** and had complex non-binary gender identities in schools as threaded through any one of the series or individual topics. With a focus now, we teamed with *Public Consulting Group* (PCG), a group of individuals who support schools and districts with policy change, curriculum, and professional development.

The Webu-mentary

The webu-mentary would be a remixing of the traditional powerpoint presentation that would leverage highly-produced documentary footage, stylized infographics, and purposeful participant interaction to engage participants nationwide in shifting mindsets towards acceptance and affirmation of students who were trans** and had complex non-binary gender identities. Participants would be interviewed about in-and-out of school experiences as it related to being affirmed, recognized, and educated. These stories would later be used as a pre-recorded narrative to guide the interaction with the live audience.

I began building a team with PCG to plan and map out the stages of the work. The team, comprised of 6 people, participated in its building: 2 videographers, 2 consultants, a graphic designer, and myself. This process was cooperative and iterative and rolled out in several stages: conception and planning; recruitment; framing, mind-mapping, storyboarding, scripting, re-scripting and rehearsing; interviewing; editing, string-outs, time-stamping; reviewing cuts; adding infographics, creating online resources; marketing, and, release. The most important piece in all of this was to locate a robust group of students with different gender identities, with a range of ages, who came from different schooling contexts, and had cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. They needed to be willing to be videotaped and granted permission by their parents or legal guardians.⁸

Initially, the first webu-mentary was going to be focused on *Investigating the Beliefs, Practices, and Policies about Teaching Trans** and Gender Creative/Expansive Youth*, but as we were preparing, the new political administration had just been elected, and within 2 days of the swearing in of Jeff Sessions as the new Attorney General (and 33 days from the inauguration of Trump), The Department of Justice withdrew the *Federal Guidance*. Because there was widespread panic about bathroom use, our focus immediately shifted to how could support these students. We regrouped and pivoted the project to the urgent need about safety and created *Supporting Trans**, Gender Creative, Expansive, Non-binary, Fluid, and Dynamic Students*.

Recruiting participants. In order to locate participants, I created a memo that detailed the project and reached out to personal networks, social media, and by word of mouth. To protect the identity and respect the confidentiality of the potential participants, the team emailed each of their networks with a personal invitation to reach out to their contacts to inquire if an individual was interested in being interviewed. We invited a range of key school personnel who had a vested interest in these supporting this population of students. If they agreed, they were asked to respond to me so I could begin cataloging participants. Altogether, 20 agreed to be filmed. This pool was comprised of students from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, who ranged in ages of 7-18, several family members, key school personnel (teachers and school counselors), and a Gender and Sexual

⁸ This study has been IRB approved and the building of the webu-mentary was partially funded by Metro and the Public Consulting Group.

Diversity Alliance.⁹ Though more agreed to be in the study, two principals pulled out at the last minute on our shooting day and due to budget limitations we were unable to film a second time. All participants were informed that the purpose of the project was to create and make a positive impact in classroom and school contexts, and create a safer school and social climate. They would all have a chance to tell the world, what they needed in order to achieve this. Understanding this, participants signed consent forms stating that the webu-mentary would be used as a professional development tool and their identities would be clearly visible.

The Filming

A few weeks ahead of filming, participants were provided a date, time, list of possible items and colors to wear (some colors film better than others), questions they would be asked (see Appendix A), length and format of interview, and the location (Metro Center). Since participants were traveling from several locales across New York City, we decided this would be central for everyone. Interviews were to last 30 minutes each and participants would be placed into small focus groups so we could get a rich cross-section of talk. Decisions were based on the aforementioned demographic differences. I was also to be interviewed about my research and read a prior constructed narrative about why this work matters. The crafting and rewriting of the narrative, including the building of slides to read from, helped to shape the eventual splicing together of the project. Overall, I was filmed for several hours, which included reshooting angles and trip-ups in reading from the script. Sometimes, segments had to be revised and rewritten if it did not look good on camera. Combined with the participant interviews, over eight hours of video were captured.

The Assemblage of the Webu-mentary

The process of putting the webu-mentary was quite involved and required keen observation to detail. During the conception of the original project, we'd decided that the webu-mentary would be no more than an hour, and broken into three sections for live interaction. This meant that each section would be roughly 15 minutes each, with a few minutes to introduce the platform and trouble-shoot and then a few minutes at the end for closing remarks. Each segment would have about 8 minutes of footage, which left about 7 minutes for me to come on live and interact with the participants and provide guiding questions about what they had just viewed. Shindig supports the capacity for participants to virtually interface with each other, and so once a question was posed, they could move themselves by clicking on their images on screen and join into small groups. In other words, this process totaled one hour, broken down into 15-17 minute sub-sections, with opening and closing comments. Drawing from my research and the questions participants had been asked, the videographer created cuts of the participants' narratives which were then sent to me for viewing. The eight hours has been reduced to two and half which made this process more manageable. Knowing how we'd conceived the webu-mentary and the time frame, helped me narrow down and hone in on specific comments from the participants. As I watched the footage several times over, I began to look for major themes that emerged. I would often stop the video, take notes, time stamp, replay and repeat this process. I spliced time stamps that were similar in theme, listed those together in clusters drawing upon my knowledge of the constant comparative method and visual (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2012) and axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This process would be later used to create a cohesive narrative. Once the common comments had been listed, I looked across in order to determine three major themes. The themes that emerged were: (a) School through these students' eyes; (b) Support by outside of school networks, and (c) Various needs to

⁹ A limitation of this study is that demographics were not used as a mechanism for coding and participants' responses were clustered. Future studies should look at how gender identity language and literacy practices vary by demographics.

feel affirmed and recognized in school. Using additional footage, the videographer made two short promos for marketing.

The themes then framed the narratives that the videographer spliced together into three short 8- minute segments. Each member of the team viewed the clips as they related to the themes. They made notes and comments that were then sent back for more editing. This process was done at least five times. Participants who had been filmed were sent the edited copies to review so if they were uncomfortable with any of their own material, it could be edited. Once the narratives were consolidated, I began to draft slides that would be used to prompt discussion. Section 1's guiding prompt was "*How do these startling realities make you feel and what concerns do you have?*" Section 2's prompt was "*What can I do to make my classroom and/or school safer and more inclusive?*" And, section 3's was "*Share some strategies you overheard in your group that we should all know about*". The graphic designer then worked along with me to add graphics and explications on terms that required definition onto the slides. We also added claimed pronouns, ages, dominant identifiers (e.g., who the person was, grandparent, counselor, student, etc.), statistics, and images. This process was similarly iterative because we wanted to ensure that it was as user-friendly as possible, without losing any important information (see picture 1).

- Pre-survey
 - Introduction to the Webu-mentary
 - Section 1: Pre-recorded video, question, live interfacing of participant and moderator interaction
 - Section 2: Pre-recorded video, question, live interfacing of participant and moderator interaction
 - Section 3: Pre-recorded video, question, live interfacing of participant and moderator interaction, question and answer
 - Conclusions: Take-aways, sharing commitments to expanding and sharing out the work, thank you
- Post-survey

Picture 1: Structure of the one-hour Webu-mentary

Recruiting participants participating in the webu-mentary. To show how participants could make their classroom and/or school safer and more inclusive, the sections following detail the process, and explicate how that process itself yielded significant knowledge and wisdom, in particular wisdom around the importance of refusal.

Once the webu-mentary was completed, I drafted another letter that was distributed to recruit participants to participate in the webu-mentary. We followed the same process described above to recruit participants. Since this would be the pilot for the launch, we did not target any one specific group of individuals because we wanted to see how the process went. The letter that went out, detailed the purpose, process and potential outcomes; the resources they would receive (i.e., research based-resource packet of terms, lesson plans, websites, texts, films, trailblazers, current federal policies, and concrete examples of how to systemically embed gender identity across curriculum, pedagogy, and policy); the cost; the length of time and the date. When participants agreed, they were sent a confirmation link about how to sign on and how to use the platform. For those who agreed by IRB consent to let me use their pre-and-post answers to assess what they knew about gender identity before and after the webu-mentary, they were provided with a pre- and post-survey hosted by Qualtrics. They were told that their identities would be anonymous and links were disidentified to mask any and all identifiers other than the role they held in relationship to education. These findings would be coded and used to frame future webu-mentaries as a

pedagogical tool. On the day of the live webu-mentary, participants would log onto the Shindig platform from a remote site of their choosing.¹⁰

Refusal as the Heart of The Study: Decoding Participants' Voices


A previously described, the dominant overarching word that emerged throughout this process was *refusal*. Quite interesting, was although the initial title of the webu-mentary was *Supporting Trans*⁺, *Gender Creative, Expansive, Non-binary, Fluid, and Dynamic Students*, once the data were coded, the title would have shifted to *Shifting/Creating a Trans Youth narrative- Creating a World they Want to Live in*. The take-aways from their stories provided crucial insights that can help change educators and all school personnel's relationships to these students' lived experiences both in-and-out school.

Storied Codes

Throughout the filming *all* participants were eager to share their stories with others and openly shared they were elated to *finally* have a chance to speak directly to teachers across the country about what they needed to feel recognized and understood in schools. Throughout their narratives, the dominant theme as noted, became the thread to organize these findings: *Shifting/Creating a Trans Youth narrative- Creating a World They Want to Live in*. This became obvious from time stamping and stringing these phrases together, "what we need," "if only the school, teachers, principals," "I wish that," "I had to advocate for myself," "my friends and I," and for some, "I told my parents." Drawing from these, three major themes emerged.

School through these students' eyes

All of the students asked for positive representations, role models, and representative inclusion of texts in all of their classes (one noted, in math problems). Tele, a middle school student said, "My teacher always has us read math problems, and I like, roll my eyes because it's that same old man/woman, boy/girl stuff we've heard over and over all the way through school. When are these teachers gonna make these word problems represent students like us?" They observed that none of their teachers talked about gender identity, though some talked about LGBT in vague and circuitous ways. Lu¹¹, a proudly identified non-binary high school junior said, "LGBT, LGBT, LGBT, yawn! Teachers always use that acronym but never name gender identity in any of their teachings. They say things like, 'sometimes people are non-binary,' but stop there. They never go further and some of us look at each other with our eyes are like, *come on*, you go this." They also identified a lack of books in their classes, posters, or even bulletin boards that were inclusive. A gender fluid¹²

high school student who identified as the emoji  said, "I went up to Miss Cárdenas's bookshelf, and she is really open-minded, and looked through all of her categories. I saw science fiction, novels, poetry, non-fiction, LGBT, graphic novels, sections focused on Latinx, Black, Asian, Native American stories, and books by authors from around the world. But there was nothing that addressed gender identity and I know soooo many books out there that do. You know what, I think I'll give her a list." They also noted that their teachers used language and pedagogy that assumed cis- and- gender identity normativity which only minoritized them more. They said that who they were just didn't basically exist at school: "Since school doesn't seem to care about me, I say NO to school," noted Sami, who was a sophomore. They weren't just misrecognized, they weren't recognized at all.

¹⁰ Although this data has been analyzed, I focus on what was learned from the students. The data from those participants are not included because of word count constraints.

¹¹ All names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

¹² Gender-fluid is moving back and forth, between, and away from gender identities, never fully committing to one particular way or expression.

They identified several areas where they could and wanted to be self-advocates for school change. In some ways then, they were like detectives who were in constant surveillance of the school (and district) culture and climate. Ethan, a very outspoken female-to male high school student said, “I wanted my diploma to be in my claimed name but the principal wouldn’t let me use it. So, I got a petition going and got 200 signatures from students and teachers who supported me. I took that to the principal, and he gave it some thought and changed his mind. It was great but I shouldn’t have had to do that.” Ethan continued, my school didn’t have a Gender and Sexual Diversity Alliance either—we are so far behind. I told that to the principal too and my parents got involved. Well guess what? They have one now! Can you spell H-O-L-L-A?” Many noted that they would and could help teachers and administrators integrate topics about gender identity. Fatou, a gender fluid 6th grader said, “I want to get my friends together and sit down with teachers and just talk. Tell them what we see and what we know and let them ask questions. I know they care but just don’t know what to do.” I think they’re scared they’ll offend us or something.” Several noted how much they knew about media, the arts, film, books, and claimed identities. The problem though, resided in their fears of approaching teachers and facing the possibility of feeling even more marginalized and exposed for discrimination and bullying. Some noted that having a gender and sexuality alliance helped, even if they didn’t attend. Others commented that organizing and creating advocacy work to address issues that surfaced for them in schools helped them “fit in,” to some degree. Others, if they were fortunate, spoke to the importance of seeking out a supportive administrator or teacher they could confide in or felt safe going to. “Like Mrs. G, and Mr. Capone, they are the only two I can go to. They let me each lunch in their rooms and go in their whenever I don’t feel safe,” said Shea, a 9th grade student who was just coming out as male-to-female. They also offered a range of pedagogical suggestions for teachers to use e.g., “treat us like any other student” “ask us how we want to be called,” “ask my pronouns preference,” “find resources to bring in to the classroom,” “don’t be afraid to ask me a question,” and “say something to other students or school personnel, when you hear something mean; I mean gosh, it’s not *THAT* hard!”

Support by outside of school networks

Every student revealed how rich and alive their out of school networks were. In fact, some of the said they would often start counting down the last 30 minutes of class because they couldn’t wait to leave, even clutching their bags several times over. After school, some met at local cafes, others met in parks, only one met at their home with friends, while a few said, “we just roam around on Christopher street because that’s where all the queer kids go.” Common within these spaces, was the positive validation and recognition they were given, and how grounded it made them feel, though temporal. A few noted they changed their clothes and put on make-up when school got out so they could be “more myself,” and some expressed they could *finally* “pee” because they weren’t afraid to use the bathroom. There was a gaiety in their voices that had been absent from their expressions while at school.

They talked about their interactions with social media and the arts. Hardly knowing what they were naming, and scrambling to understand and keep pace with them during their interviews as their gaiety moved into expert mode, I listened as if I were apprenticed in to learning a new language. Diamond, a very snazzily dressed 8th grader who said they were just them, and didn’t identify any one particular way, said, “OMG, last night I learned, that, hey, that singer Anohi, was the first transgender person nominated for an Academy Award?” Jah-quan, a quieter effeminate 9th grade student said in an unexpected tone, “I SOO love CUTE PUKE. They are sooo good,” and Lu responded, “Did you know Jaden Smith is gender – fluid. They are so hot!” T said, “Did you see the new Tomgirl vid on YouTube- they are gender fluid?”

They also talked about what they were reading. “I just read *None of the Above*,” noted Jay, a self-identified proud reader, “the main character is intersex. We never talk about *that* in school. It just came out.” Angel, a sweet, pensive, masculine presenting student commented,

"There's this new cool comic book called *Alters*, that features this transgender character." "Last night I watched 'The Fosters' and that cute actor, oh shoot, what's their name? I forget, but Callie broke up with him. I'm totally bummed because he's really trans," La-taya commented. Raul jumped in, "My family went to this play and like half the cast were trans and it was so good. My family is cool. My grandma cried and hugged me afterwards and my sister kissed me."

On-line and gaming forums were also prevalent in their interviews. Tumblr came up for nearly everyone. It was noted as amongst one of the most active, trafficked and contagious of all their interests. Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat were next, respectively. "I always go to Tumblr because there all these people my age who deal with the same shit at school and it's like I get them and they get me." Another commented, "I like to see what their wearing and where they shop." Fly, a confident senior with lots of bling and spikey hair said, "I just like to surf for whatever. It makes me feel like I'm not alone." "There's this really cool game called *LongStory* and you can pick an avatar that is androgynous, and has neutral pronoun, said one student." Responding back, Keenesha, the group's rational and calm mediator who had already flamed down some of the heated moments said, "I like *Dragon Age*, because there's this main character who is trans—it's racy. I would never share it with my sister!"

Various needs to feel affirmed and recognized in school

The adults present in the filming leant depth to, and softness about, the student's narratives. Enrico, one of the fathers present, said that his son was his best educator. He noted, 'When Raul comes home, he tells me about his day, what he learned, what other kids and teacher said and *didn't* say. We usually debrief and talk about what he would have liked or needed that day. As a parent, I am always taking mental notes about what I can offer the school or my peer groups. And on several occasions, I have approached the school to tell them. Usually I get the response, 'yeah we are addressing that.' But rarely do I see anything change."

Sharon, Diamond's mother said she found herself educating her own peer network about language use, people in the media, and how changes in federal policies were impacting her daughter. She'd also formed a social club and they would read novels, Young Adult Lit texts, watch films and go to plays (come on, how cool is that?). The adults also noted that they felt truly supportive of their children and had become advocates in all aspects of their life. This took the form of working in the community, writing Blogs, speaking out and up, visiting schools, and staying involved and present in their child's daily school activities. They also revealed they were doing research on books and films that provided accurate information. One of the school counselors present commented that she was the only counselor in her school that knew much about gender identity topics and found herself as the go to for both students and school personnel. Cisa said, "Everyone needs to be trained to work with these students. I've told my admin this several times and very little has been done. I mean, some of these students are suicidal and are struggling to stay in school. I don't know what it will take. It breaks my heart. I wish I had more time in my day for everyone who comes to me. And, someone stops by every day to discuss related issues." The gender and sexual diversity club sponsor noted similar issues. They commented that they were trans⁺ but did not feel safe being out in the school because they were concerned for their job and physical safety: "If my kids don't feel safe, how can I? We support each other and are trying to find our way through these issues together. I am hopeful we'll be able to give the admin some ideas. We're happy to be here today because we get to think through some of this stuff together without the pressure of a bell or interruption." What becomes evident from these narratives then, is that if these students' and adults' needs were treated with respect and dignity, we would not likely need to have a study such as this.

Embedding the Complexities of Gender Identity through a Pedagogy of Refusal: Learning the Body as Literacy *Alongside* our Students

The high leverage literacy practices embodied by participants, illuminate rich examples of strategies that encourages productive student behavior. They are tomes of information that present possibilities for bridging in-and-outside of school literacy practices that are waiting to be un-sedimented so they can be embedded. They are the walking, breathing, living agentic embodiments that can not only change and shift literacy practices in schools, but simultaneously be educative for all people in schooling contexts. Their literal understanding of *being refused* prompted them to use it as a means for resistance and survival. These assets, when built *with* can help to restructure approaches to engage and activate literacy learning and learning literacy as a co-constitutive process. All people in the school system are on a learning curve, and each enter into this work at different stages of understanding and applications of such knowledge in school settings. Many want to learn about how to support students with non-binary gender identities and it will take folding in the literacy lives of these students in order for changes to systemically occur. This means *listening to* and *being in* the work with the students.

What we currently see from students' literacy practices is that they must make a stance if change is to occur: they know this and land in roles that the adults around them should be in. Currently, they are the true teachers: they are self-advocates for both small and larger school-wide and community change; they are parenting each other and providing love, understanding, support and encouragement; they are teaching each other and developing literacy practices; and, together finding ways to navigate through the complex obstacles that (everyone?) must face.

What, then, will it take to bridge this gap- wherein teachers can learn with and from their students? Below are some practices that together comprise work that teachers could do inside of the high-leverage practice of *specifying and reinforcing productive student behavior*. These practices from my own research, and some suggestions are named by those filmed about what they need to make their classrooms and/or schools safer and more inclusive.

- Schools can study policies, texts, and films together in order to be more attentive (See Appendix B for suggestions)
- Schools can change in-take forms that are inclusive of self-claiming gender identities;
 - Instead of saying "male" and "female" they can read:
 - Male
 - Female
 - Female-to-Male
 - Male-to-Female
 - Gender non-binary
 - Gender non-specified
 - Self-identify as: _____

*A word of caution, never use the word "other" on a form because these students already are othered."

- Professional development can be tailored to specific needs such as changing culture and climate, trans*+ ing classrooms and curriculum (Miller, 2017), creating strategic action plans and naming commitments with specific action steps (see Appendix C for additional suggestions), learning about and practicing discourse that recognizes (Miller, forthcoming c) and affirms gender identities (e.g., these suggestions were presented in the Series List);
- Create various resource packets that include terms, lesson plans (especially the framing from the Queer Literacy Framework (Miller, 2016), websites, texts, trailblazers, people of interest, suicide help lines, inclusive and pronoun posters,

- syllabi statements, current federal policies (Miller, forthcoming b), etc.; (See Appendices D and E for examples)
- Invite guest speakers who have non-binary gender identities of all ages to speak about their life journeys, interactions with others, experiences in-and-out of school and the triumphs they've had and seen;
 - Update gender and sexual diversity club names so identities are enumerated in the title;
 - Ensure that the counselors, nurses and administrative office staff, have updated and accurate information to hand out about where to get medical care, counselling, peer support groups, community organizations that do outreach, faith-based support, and safe homes;
 - Dialogue with students on a regular basis about what they need;
 - Begin with the presumption that all students' identities are trans-sectional and reconfigure approaches to pedagogy, curriculum and policy; and,
 - Commit to ongoing self-reflection.

This work will deepen, expand, and advance capacities about how these students' production of literacy practices can be folded across curriculum, practice, and policy. Both adults and youth present in the school system should not be forced to survive during a school day, or hide who they are to placate others' discomfort; that is not what school should be about. For true systemic transformation to occur, more research should attend to how youth create, use and vary linguistic practices in different cultures and social groupings; how youth in different parts of the country use their rich and innovative gender identity funds to create and recreate language and literacy; how gender identity language and literacy practices vary by demographics; and how trans*-culturalizing shifts and deepens understanding about language and literacy practices in local, national and international contexts. Together, these studies can inform us about the dynamism between language and literacy formations and how they evolve, shift, and are re-invented. As these identities become empowered vis-à-vis recognition and affirmation in schooling practices, there is a greater possibility to spatialize change and expansion across different educational contexts. Such change will strengthen schools in their efforts to move away from presuming the cis- and gender identity normative default and to be reset through a trans-sectional gaze.

When I look back at my own life trajectory, I am certain that had the educational system known how to attend to the complexity of gender identity, it would have. But like so many of the students and adults in the study have shown, while strides have been made and change is happening, to a more or less degree, 48 years later, they still face many of the issues I faced as a child; *And*, as some of the adults in the study are too. These individuals should not have to resort to self-harm, or tolerate their misrecognition or erasure because of a system that is *failing* them. Educators—*err*, the entire schooling process-- is charged with paying attention to students' agentiveness: to their knowledge, what they bring into schools, and how that can push schools forward to expand what literacy can be by learning alongside students. As students continue to fashion indeterminate gender identities, and as the education system comes to see how a pedagogy of refusal can move away from policing gender identity norms, schools will be better prepared to embed the literacy practices continually unfolding. Many of those in education are deeply committed to transforming the field and striving to sustain those changes. I do believe that we can shift the default away from how hegemony structures and centers schooling standards and outcomes normed within white, middle class, monocultural, monolingistic, cis- and gender normative schooling processes and practices. Paris and Alim (2017) in their powerful work on culturally sustaining pedagogies provoke questions about not only how can we shift, change, embed and sustain linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism in schooling practices, but how this can bring about social transformation. Building with this, it is also important to consider how sustaining trans*-cultural identity (Miller, forthcoming) "is increasingly necessary given the explicit assimilationist and antidemocratic monolingual/monocultural educational policies emerging ..." (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 88) and, how that still maintains remnants of colonization.

Drawing upon this thought, we are reminded about the power of the collective; that we *can* hit refresh so that trans-sections of identities become a starting point for the work. As we do this, gender identity (amongst all trans-sections of identities) will be unhinged from the word “issue,” and self-determined will become evidence for its embedment.

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APPENDIX A

Questions for Interviewees:

For all of these ask, *what are your claimed pronouns and names?*

Parents/Grandparents:

- Tell us about the first time you realized your child/grandchild did not identify with their birth sex.
- How did you discuss this with your child's/grandchild's school?
- What was their initial reaction? How has that changed over time?
- Tell us about a typical day in the life of your child/grandchild. What do you see, hear, experience at home about their life?
- What concerns about their safety and well-being do you have?
- What do you see their teachers or their schools do well that addresses your child's/grandchild's safety?
- What words of hope can you offer to other parents/grandparents around the country about how to support their child/grandchild?
- What kinds of changes do you still want to see in your child's/grandchild's school?
- What would you tell teachers is the most important thing they can do to support trans* gender/fluid/expansive/dynamic students?

Teachers:

- What concerns (e.g. bullying, bathroom use, truancy, mental health, suicidal ideation) do you have about trans* gender/fluid/expansive/dynamic youth in your classroom and/or school? What have some of these students expressed to you?
- What has your school done to make it more affirming and inclusive for trans* gender/fluid/expansive/dynamic youth?
- Tell us what you do to make your classroom and/or school a safe and inclusive environment for trans* gender/fluid/expansive/dynamic youth.
- Describe what you see as the overall mindset in your school about trans* gender/fluid/expansive/dynamic youth?
- What kinds of policy changes would you like to see in your school?
- What words of hope can you offer to other teachers around the country who are just beginning this work?
- As a trans* gender/fluid/expansive/dynamic educator, what would you like to tell your colleagues about working with trans* gender/fluid/expansive/dynamic students?

Youth:

- What's a typical day at school like for you?
- What do you like about school?
- What activities do you participate in?
- What is your favorite subject and why?
- How do you self-identify or tell me about your identity?
- What have you told your friends, school or teachers about your identity? How have they responded?
- Do you ever feel uncomfortable at school? Tell us about it.
- What have your school and teachers done to make you feel welcome and supported?
- Are there things you wish that they would do that they haven't?
- What are you hopeful about how schools and society are changing to support trans* gender/fluid/expansive/dynamic youth?
- What are you worried about regarding your identity at school?

- What would you like to say to teachers of other trans* gender/fluid/expansive/dynamic students? What advice would you give them?

Allies

- What do you see, hear, experience from your peers who have trans* gender/fluid/expansive/dynamic children?
- In what ways have you supported your friends (e.g., emotional, campaigning, policy events, hanging out with their kids, etc.)
- What suggestions and words of hope can you offer to others around the country about how to support trans* gender/fluid/expansive/dynamic?

APPENDIX B

Documentaries about transgender and gender non-binary individuals
Compiled by sj Miller, Ph.D.

Audience: Young adults, adults, parents practitioners, teachers, university level

Film Title: The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson

Where to view: <https://www.netflix.com/title/80189623>

The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson is a feature-length documentary about the mysterious death of one of the most important activists in the movement for Trans liberation.

Length: 105 minutes

Film Title: Diagnosing Difference

Where to view: <http://www.diagnosingdifference.com/>

Diagnosing Difference is a feature-length length documentary featuring interviews with 13 diverse scholars, activists, and artists who identify on the trans spectrum (transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, and gender variant) about the impact and implications of the Gender Identity Disorder (GID) on their lives and communities.

Length: 64 minutes

Film Title: The Family Journey: Raising Gender Nonconforming Children

Where to view: http://www.youthandgendermediaproject.org/The_Family_Journey.html

The Family Journey: Raising Gender Nonconforming Children charts the emotional and intellectual transformations parents and siblings must make in order to successfully nurture their gender nonconforming family members. In frank, vulnerable interviews, families from all over the country speak about the power of love and acceptance to help their unusual children thrive. They also come to realize that loving a gender nonconforming child, in the face of ignorance—and sometimes—hostility, has turned them into more compassionate human beings.

Length: 14 minutes

Film Title: Gender Matters

Where to view: <http://cart.frameline.org/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=T780>

Gender Matters is six short films about transgender & gender non-conforming young adults.

Length: 74 minutes

Film Title: Gender Revolution

Where to view: <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/gender-revolution-a-journey-with-katie-couric/>

Gender Revolution follows Katie Couric as she sets out to explore the rapidly evolving complexities of gender identity.

Length: 133 minutes

Film Title: Gender: The Space Between

Where to view: <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/gender-the-space-between/>

Gender: The Space Between follows several youth and college students through their experiences as coming to terms with their gender identities.

Length: 30 minutes

Two additional pieces break down the above documentary:

- *Role of Education, Parenting and Community on Gender Identity.*
<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/the-role-of-education-parenting-and-community-in-gender-identity/>
- *Breaking Down the Policy and Science Behind Gender Identity.* Interview by A. Wagner. CBS News

<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/breaking-down-the-policy-science-behind-gender-identity/>

Film Title: *Growing Up Trans*

Where to view: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/growing-up-trans/>

Growing Up Trans is a PBS Frontline Documentary that takes an intimate look at the struggles and choices facing transgender kids and their families.

Length: 84 minutes

Film Title: *I'm Just Anneke*

Where to view: http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org/watch/10/im_just_anneke

I'M JUST ANNEKE is the first film in a four-part series of short films called **The Youth and Gender Media Project** designed to educate school communities about transgender and gender nonconforming youth. The films are being used in schools and conferences throughout the U.S. to train administrators, teachers and students about the importance of protecting all children from harassment due to gender identity and expression.

Length: 11 minutes

Film Title: *It Gets Messy in Here*

Where to view: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tis4k7zqDT4>

It Gets Messy in Here is a short doc challenges gender assumptions and gender identities of all kinds by delving into the bathroom experiences of masculine identified queer women and transgendered men of color, featuring performance artist D'Lo, Alice Y. Hom, Prentis Hemphil, Megan Benton, Dr. C. Riley Snorton, Jun-Fung Chueh-Mejia, Jay-Marie Hill, and Che.

Length: 30 minutes

Film Title: *Just Call Me Kade*

Where to view: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pRt9pxmP0s>

Just Call Me Kade follows Kade Farlow Collins who is a sixteen year old FTM (female to male transgendered person) residing in Tucson, Arizona. Kade's parents maintain a supportive and nurturing relationship to Kade regarding the many challenges facing their teenage child. However, it hasn't always been easy.

Length: 26 minutes

Film Title: *Limina*

Where to View: Turbid Lake Pictures: <http://turbidlakepictures.com/projects/>

Limina is about a intuitive gender-fluid child on a journey of kindness to change the lives of fellow townspeople in a picturesque village.

Length: 14 minutes

Film Title: *Passing*

Where to view: https://www.amazon.com/Passing-Victor-Thomas/dp/B01GEVQH0K/ref=sr_1_1_dvt_1_wnzw?s=instant-video&ie=UTF8&qid=1481061427&sr=1-1&keywords=passing

Thomas/dp/B01GEVQH0K/ref=sr_1_1_dvt_1_wnzw?s=instant-video&ie=UTF8&qid=1481061427&sr=1-1&keywords=passing

Passing is a short documentary profiles the lives of three men of color who have undergone gender transition from female to male. The film explores what life is like living as a black man, when no one knows you are transgender. This award-winning film is one of the few films to address the intersectionality of race, gender, and the experiences of those who walk multiple paths in life.

Length: 23 minutes

Film Title: *PBS First Person*

Where to view: <http://www.pbs.org/show/first-person/>

PBS First Person follows a number of different narratives of young adults about their different expressions of identity including intersectionality, queer of color, disability, intersex, non-binary, and being religious, to name a few. The site also features resources for teachers with tools for

language, and connections to the standards.

Length: 6-7 minutes, vary in length

Film Title: *Pink Boy*

Where to View: PBS, POV: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/pinkboy/video/pink-boy/>

Pink Boy is an intimate portrait of a young transgender child in rural Florida at the moment of transition. Butch lesbian BJ successfully avoided wearing dresses her entire life. Then she and her partner, Sherrie, adopted Jeffrey, who, to their shock, started to dance in gowns and perform for his parents. As Jeffrey, now 6, increasingly wishes to dress up in public, BJ must navigate where it is safe for him, from school to a rodeo in Georgia to the ultimate holiday for a “pink boy,” Halloween. Since filming ended, Jeffrey has transitioned and now identifies as a girl, Jessie, full-time. In 2015, ***Pink Boy*** won a Grand Jury Prize in the Shorts Competition of DOC NYC, Best Documentary Short at the Palm Springs International ShortFest and Audience Award for Best Short at the Nantucket Film Festival.

Length: 9 minutes

Film Title: *Raised Without Gender*

Where to view: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sPj8HhbwHs>

Raised Without Gender follows the day-to-day life of one gender non-conforming family living in Sweden. Mapa (mom and dad) Del LaGrace Volcano — who was born intersex — and their two children, 5-year-old Mika and 3-year-old Nico share their experience of navigating their lives without the restrictions of gender.

Length: 29 minutes

Film Title: *Real Boy*

Where to view: <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/real-boy/>

Real Boy is an intimate story of a family in transition. As 19-year-old Bennett Wallace navigates early sobriety, late adolescence, and the evolution of his gender identity, his mother makes her own transformation from resistance to acceptance of her trans son. Along the way, both mother and son find support in their communities, reminding us that families are not only given, but chosen.

Length: varies by video, 72 minutes

Film Title: *Screaming Queens*

Where to view: <http://cart.frameline.org/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=T636>

Screaming Queens tells the little-known story of the first known act of collective, violent resistance to the social oppression of queer people in the United States - a 1966 riot in San Francisco's impoverished Tenderloin neighborhood, three years before the famous gay riot at New York's Stonewall Inn.

Length: 57 minutes

Film Title: *Straightlaced: How Gender's Got us All Tied Up*

Where to view: <http://groundspark.org/our-films-and-campaigns/straightlaced>

Straightlaced includes the perspectives of teens who self-identify as straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning and represent all points of the gender spectrum. With courage and unexpected humor, they open up their lives to the camera: choosing between “male” and “female” deodorant; deciding whether to go along with anti-gay taunts in the locker room; having the courage to take ballet; avoiding the restroom so they won't get beaten up; or mourning the suicide of a classmate. It quickly becomes clear that just about everything teens do requires thinking about gender and sexuality.

Length: 67 minutes

Film Title: *This is Me*

Where to view: <https://www.amazon.com/This-Is-Me/dp/B010BYPAYA>

This is Me, a docu-series, is an anthology of five 3-5 minute-long Transparent-inspired documentaries by five different trans and gender-nonconforming filmmakers. Personal essays,

direct actions, explainers - each filmmaker has crafted a segment that explores a theme in *Transparent*.

Length: 5 documentaries, 4-6 minutes long

Film Title: *The Trans List*

Where to watch: <http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/the-trans-list>

The Trans List is a documentary that features interviews and an introduction by Janet Mock. It features such outspoken subjects as Kylar Broadus, Caroline Cossey, Amos Mac, Bamby Salcedo, Buck Angel, Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, Nicole Maines, Shane Ortega, Caitlyn Jenner, Alok Vaid-Menon and Laverne Cox, sharing their stories in their own words, addressing identity, family, career, love, struggle and accomplishment.

Length: 57 minutes

Film Title: *TRANSFORMATION*

Where to watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA5fNBQNVyE> or, <http://www.mtv.com/shows/transformation>

MTV's TRANSFORMATION is a documentary about a group of transgender teens and young adults struggling to find the resources, safety, and confidence to express their gender identity. With 45% of young transgender people having reportedly attempted suicide in the United States alone, non-binary stylist Madin Lopez has made it their business to provide life-altering, gender-affirming makeovers. Afterwards, these individuals are hopefully able to be their true and best selves, looking on the outside how they've always felt on the inside.

Length: 45 minutes

Film Title: *Transgender Basics*

Where to view: <http://www.gaycenter.org/gip/transbasics/video>

Transgender Basics is a 20 minute educational film on the concepts of gender and transgender people. Two providers from the [Gender Identity Project](#) discuss basic concepts of gender - sex, identity and gender roles - as three transgender community members share their personal experiences of being trans and genderqueer. The film targets service providers and others working with the LGBT community, but it also provides a fascinating glimpse into gender and identity for the general public.

Length: 19 minutes

Film Title: *Treasure: From Tragedy to TransJustice: Mapping a Detroit Story*

Where to purchase: <http://www.treasuredoc.com>

Treasure is a feature, award-winning documentary about nineteen year old trans woman Shelly 'Treasure' Hilliard whose murder involved police coercion, Jim Crow drug laws, the criminalization of sex work and transphobia. It is about a young Detroit trans community activated by her death, and her family, who are suing for justice.

Length: 63 minutes

Film Title: *TRUTH- Share Your Story*

Where to view: <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/programs/truth/truth-share-your-story>

TRUTH- Share Your Story, housed on the Transgender Law Center website, is a space for youth to share their stories and have them archived in narrative or in video.

Length: varies by video, 2-5 minutes

Film Title: *We've Been Around*

Where to view: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfNvZrTLs1tVmwnoBD3UIEGOyV4hZljF->

We've Been Around, Created by Rhys Ernst (co-producer of Amazon's hit *Transparent*) and produced by Christine Beebe, is a series of documentary shorts that chronicle the lives of Lucy Hicks Anderson, STAR, Albert, Little Axe, Lou Sullivan and Camp TRANS.

Length: 6 documentaries, 4-5 minutes long

Film Title: *Where We Are Now*

Where to view: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYmLLhK3Kw4>

Where We Are now, made by Scottish artist filmmaker Lucie Rachel, is an insightful personal documentary about the relationship between a young bisexual woman and her transgender parent, who recently made the decision to transition. The moving film presents viewers a rare, intimate look at a non-heteronormative family. The film pairs clips of Rachel and her parent going about their daily lives with candid voiceover reflections on the transition process. *Where We Are Now* shines as a testament to the simple truth that we are all more similar than we are different. It was named "Best Scottish Short" at the Scottish Queer International Film Festival and won "Best Documentary" at the Forbes Under 30 Film Festival.

Length: 9 minutes

APPENDIX C

| <i>Schools Checklist for Embracing Gender Identities</i> | | |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Priorities | Actions to be Taken (how can I meet the priority?) | Target Date |
| Develop more self-awareness | | |
| Change/expand curriculum | | |
| Approach language around identities expansively | | |
| Reframe the notion of refusal | | |
| Develop lessons that mediate internal safety | | |
| Shift the classroom environment to create external safety | | |
| Revisit classroom or school code of conduct | | |
| Work with colleagues on bathroom policies | | |
| Revisit the name of the GSA and consider how to make it more inclusive | | |
| Work with colleagues on sports policies relative to trans** issues | | |
| Revise all school forms | | |
| Create a school-wide, district wide task force/focus group to address trans** harassment (e.g., enumerating bullying policies, physical education classes) | | |
| Intervene when any student is bullied | | |
| Deepen community involvement about trans** issues (your Pride Center) | | |
| Work with parents about trans** issues | | |
| Work with school board members about trans** issues | | |
| Draw from city, state, and national resources to support teaching | | |
| Stay appraised of city, state, and national policies that impact trans** people and discuss them with students, colleagues, parents, etc., | | |
| Work with school health | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| care workers about trans** etiquette and support | | |
| Work with school counselors about supporting trans** students | | |
| Work closely with administrators and leading experts to develop professional development models that can support all stakeholders in their ongoing awareness | | |
| Caucus state legislatures to change state policy about trans** rights to be more inclusive of health care needs, identification changes, and bullying policies. | | |

Commitments Toward Enacting Trans and Gender Non-binary Safety and Inclusion

Commitment #1: Invest emotionally in the well-being of students to exist without redress for gender presentation.

Ask: *In what ways are students harmed? What should be changed?*

- Look closely at how codes of conduct, forms, bathrooms, locker rooms, physical education classes, extracurricular participation regulations (especially in athletics), counseling and mental health supports, and language use and terminology attends to the needs of, and reflects, a continuum of gender identities.
 - For example: *In all areas noted above, ensure that all students' gender identities will be supported, recognized, and valued in our institution of learning.*
- Ensure that professional development prepares teachers, administrators, staff and other personnel to use language and terminology that reflects a continuum of gender identities.
 - For example: *Ask students how they want to be called on or referred to.*
- Ensure that professional development prepares teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists to include opportunities that mirror or expand awareness and respect regarding a continuum of gender identities.
 - For example: *Strive to include texts, films, writing assignments, images, art/ists, media representations, trailblazers, political movements, histories, musicians, poets, key figures, etc. that reflect different representations of gender identities.*
- Create an ongoing focus group.
 - For example: *Have monthly meetings where stakeholders study a text, issue, visit a local community organization, or policy, and map out strategies that can support gender identity inclusivity. Meeting sites should be rotated.*

Commitment #2: Carve out strategies to address the inclusion of a continuum of gender identities university or school-wide.

Ask: What kinds of supports to our stakeholders need to effectively attend to this work?

- Survey and interview stakeholders about what they know, want to know, and how to apply knowledge to their contexts.

- For example: *Questions can range from background knowledge related to gender identity. Findings can be used to generate professional development opportunities.*
- Ask stakeholders about experts they would like to learn from.
 - For example: *Invite in speakers, use films, videos, texts, attend conferences, etc., to support capacity building.*
- Ask stakeholders to consider conducting research with students and university programs to better understand schooling through students' eyes.
 - For example: *Consider ways to bridge the gender identity divide and create action research projects that are built into university curriculum.*

Commitment #3: *Plan for and map how to create new opportunities where new social relations can form.*

Ask: How is power built into the dynamics of gender identity and how can we shift those dynamics?

- In surveys, focus groups, professional development, etc., ask stakeholders to reflect on how their own gender identities maintain and sustain gender identity hierarchies of power? Ask them how they have created harm and what they want to change.
 - For example: *Create opportunities to closely reflect (as a group and individually) about how gender-typical identities maintain and sustain gender identity power dynamics. Facilitate conversations about Neoliberalism and create a long-term plan to both study those effects and how to shift the academic environment.*
- Reflect on from where issues about gender identity seem to spring.
 - For example: *Look closely at the spaces where bias exists and attend to those. Ask, do certain students cluster in only some classrooms? Is there a Gay Straight or Queer and Sexuality Alliance and who attends those meetings? Ask, do we need to rename the club to be more expansive? How can we bring students and teachers together so our institution for learning is safe for everyone? Put up posters, signs, billboards, art, rearrange classrooms, include more books with diverse gender identity representations in classrooms and the library, invite in speakers, show movies or videos, and rename spaces so that all gender identities are recognized.*

Commitment #4: *Plan for and map how to shift power dynamics around allocations of social space, curriculum, and innovations.*

Ask: How do we navigate this work from the ground up?

- Take a group walk through the institution of learning and determine what spaces are funded more than others.
 - For example: *Assemble a group that examines and then creates a portfolio about how power operates and is sustained. Based on those findings, redistribute those resources (money, larger rooms, technology, etc.) that maintain power.*
- Examine how pedagogy and curriculum account for trans-sectionality.
 - For example: *Look closely at pedagogies that are monologic, authoritative, pedantic and are not culturally responsive. Review how curriculum accounts for trans-sectional voices. Make changes that lead to more equity in the classroom.*
- Develop school and university-wide models for assessing ongoing processes related to shifting dynamics of gender identity.
 - For example: *Create a long-term checks and balances plan to continually assess the distribution of finances.*
- Work closely with neighboring universities' teacher education programs

- For example: *Have discussions about how to embed gender identity work across grade-level and disciplinary areas in preservice teacher education. Discuss lesson plans, pedagogy, and possibilities for research that can be co-created.*
- Review how spaces are liberatory.
 - For example: *How do social spaces reinforce dynamics of power about gender identity? Who holds power in that space? Collectively plan how to reframe the space so gender identities have equal representation.*

Commitment #5: *Continually assess how changes are working, and invite stakeholders to help address and create forward-thinking solutions.*

Ask: Have our strategies been effective in exposing or confronting the root causes that maintain the educational gender identity industrial complex? What do we need to do to build the world we want to live in?

- Generate a list of reflections that address awareness now about root causes of gender identity subjugation.
 - For example: *With the list, compile a survey and distribute. Reflect on the findings and build those findings into continued efforts.*
- Reflect on what the environment should look like and construct a plan for wants and needs that will galvanize its realization.
 - For example: *Create working groups that attend to each of the identified areas and put a plan into motion with action steps and timelines that will help achieve the desired outcomes.*
- Reflect if root approaches to work are trans-sectional.
 - For example: *Evaluate how students' trans-secting identities frame the core of discussions. Be sure to disaggregate any data to see where disproportionality is situated. Make changes based on those findings.*
- Create resource packets to distribute to new stakeholders.
 - For example: *Create googledocs that support gender identity inclusivity in curriculum, policies, resources, spaces, etc., for on-going use.*
- Assess that the work is process-oriented rather than end-oriented.
 - For example: *Ensure that all efforts reflect a continuum of gender identity inclusivity and the indeterminate for self-identification. This means staying open and aware to what may still come and being open to the work that will continue to support elasticity.*
- Continually cultivate new leaders who have the vision to challenge and change the system.
 - For example: *Create a strategic action plan that addresses the kinds of leadership styles and vested interest can be manifested. Work to ensure that those styles and interests are present.*
- Determine strategies for university, or school-wide and individual accountability.
 - For example: *Revisit the mission and vision statements. Create an equity profile that assesses how these criteria are implemented and demonstrate changes over time (e.g., informal, formative, summative). Make changes to the work as needed.*
- Develop a statewide network dedicated to working with legislatures who can create policies and policy changes.
 - For example: *Map out the policies and policy changes related but not to limited to athletics, enumeration in bullying laws, dress, bathroom and locker room access, mental and health care, body safety, disciplinary practices (e.g., zero tolerance policies and overuse of subjective discipline infraction categories), identification rights, etc., and have ongoing discussions and meetings.*

APPENDIX D

Glossary of Terms: Defining a Common Queer Language

(A)gender or agender- Rejecting gender as a biological or social construct altogether and refusing to identify with gender.

(A)gender and (a)sexual justice and queer autonomy- These interchangeable terms each ideologically reflect an actualized freedom of humans to be self-expressive without redress of social, institutional, or political violence. See also *queer autonomy*.

(A)gender self-determination- This is the inherent right to both occupy one's (a)gender and make choices to self-identify in a way that authenticates self-expression. It is also a type of self-granted or inherited permission that can help one refute or rise above social critique; it presumes choice and rejects an imposition to be defined or regulated; it presumes that humans are entitled to unsettle knowledge, which can generate new possibilities of legibility; and, it means that any representation of (a)gender deserves the same inalienable rights and the same dignities and protections as any other human. This de 'factoness' grants individuals ways of intervening in and disrupting social and political processes because one's discourse and self-determined ways of being demonstrate placement as a viable stakeholder in society, revealing that no one personhood is of any more or less of value than any other.

Ally- Any non-lesbian, non-gay man, non-bisexual, or cisgender person whose attitude and behavior are anti-heterosexist and who is proactive and works toward combating homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism on both a personal and institutional level.

Apronoun- Refusal of using pronouns when self-identifying.

Aromantic- One who lacks a romantic orientation or is incapable of feeling romantic attraction. Aromantics can still have a sexual orientation (e.g., "aromantic bisexual" or aromantic heterosexual"). A person who feels neither romantic nor sexual attraction is known as an aromantic asexual.

Asexual/Ace- A person who does not experience sexual attraction to another person. Individuals may still be emotionally, physically, romantically, and/or spiritually attracted to others, and their romantic orientation may also be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender⁺, intersex, agender/asexual, gender creative, queer and questioning (LGBT⁺IAGCQQ) (A in this case meaning ally). The prefixes of homo-, hetero-, bi-, pan-, poly-, demi- and a- have been used to form terms such as heteroromantic, biromantic, homoromantic asexual, and so on. Unlike celibacy, which people choose, asexuality is intrinsic. Some asexual people do engage in sexual activity for a variety of reasons, such as a desire to please romantic partners or to have children.

Assigned gender- The gender one is presumed or expected to embody based on assigned sex at birth.

Assigned pronouns- The commonly accepted pronouns that others use to describe or refer to a person based on actual or perceived gender.

Assigned sex- The sex one is assigned at birth based on genitalia.

Bigender- Refers to those who have masculine and feminine sides to their personality. This is often a term used by cross dressers. It should not be confused with the term two-spirit, which is specifically a term used by Native Americans.

Bisexuality/BI- A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to both genders.

Butch- An identity or presentation that leans towards masculinity. Butch can be an adjective ("she's a butch woman"), a verb ("he went home to butch up"), or a noun ("they identify as a butch"). Although commonly associated with masculine queer/lesbian women, it's used by many to describe a distinct gender identity and/or expression, and does not necessarily imply that one identifies as a woman.

CAFAB and CAMAB- Acronyms meaning "Coercively Assigned Female/Male at Birth."

Sometimes AFAB/FAAB and AMAB/MAAB (without the word "coercively") are used instead. No one, whether cis- or trans, has a choice in the sex or gender to which they are assigned when they are born, which is why it is said to be coercive. In the rare cases in which it is necessary to refer to the birth-assigned sex of a trans person, this is the way to do it.

Cisgender or Cissexual- A person who by nature or by choice conforms to gender based expectations of society. (Also referred to genderstraight or 'Gender Normative'.) A prefix of Latin origin, meaning "on the same side (as)." Cisgender individuals have a gender identity that is aligned with their birth sex, and therefore have a self-perception and gender expression that matches behaviors and roles considered appropriate for their birth sex: for example, a person who is femininely-identified that was born female. In short, cisgender is the opposite of transgender. It is important to recognize that even if two people identify as men (one being cis and the other being trans*), they may lead very similar lives but deal with different struggles pertaining to their birth sex.

Cissexism- Synonymous with transphobia, this definition is associated with negative attitudes and feelings toward transgender people, based on the expression of their internal gender identity. Cissexism is also the belief that cisgender individuals are superior to transgender people and that a cisgender lifestyle is more desirable to lead.

Claimed gender- The gender one feels most comfortable embodying and how one sees the self.

Claimed pronouns or Claimed gender pronouns- This refers to names and pronouns that one feels most comfortable identifying with or being used when spoken or referred to. Names and pronouns can change over time and based on context and should be honored. Names and pronouns are ever-expanding and indeterminate. Examples might include: 'ze', 'per,' they, 'or 'hir'.

"Coming out"- Also, "coming out of the closet" or "being out", this term refers to the process in which a person acknowledges, accepts, and in many cases appreciates her or his lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender identity. This often involves sharing of this information with others. It is not a single event but instead a life-long process. Each new situation poses the decision of whether or not to come out.

Crip- Increasingly used to refer to a person who has a disability and embraces it, rather than feeling sorry for themselves. Historically used as a disparaging term for a person that is partially disabled or unable to use a limb or limbs. It is similar to the word queer in that it is sometimes used as a hateful slur, so although some have reclaimed it from their oppressors, be careful with its use.

Cross-Dressing (CD)- The act of dressing and presenting as the "opposite" binary gender. One who considers this an integral part of their identity may identify as a cross-dresser. Transvestite is an obsolete (and sometimes offensive) term with the same meaning. Cross-dressing and drag are forms of gender expression and are not necessarily tied to erotic activity, nor are they indicative of one's sexual orientation. Do NOT use these terms to describe someone who has transitioned or intends to do so in the future.

Demisexual- A demisexual is a person who does not experience sexual attraction unless they form a strong emotional connection with someone. It's more commonly seen in but by no means confined to romantic relationships. The term demisexual comes from the orientation being "halfway between" sexual and asexual. Nevertheless, this term does not mean that demisexuals have an incomplete or half-sexuality, nor does it mean that sexual attraction without emotional connection is required for a complete sexuality. In general, demisexuals are not sexually attracted to anyone of any gender; however, when a demisexual is emotionally connected to someone else (whether the feelings are romantic love or deep friendship), the demisexual experiences sexual attraction and desire, but only towards the specific partner or partners.

Drag- Stylized performance of gender, usually be female-bodied drag kings or male-bodied drag queens. Doing drag does not necessarily have anything to do with one's sex, gender identity, or orientation.

Femme- An identity or presentation that leans towards femininity. Femme can be an adjective (he's a "femmeboy"), a verb (she feels better when she femmes up"), or a noun ("they're a femme"). Although commonly associated with feminine lesbian/queer women, it's used by many to describe a distinct gender identity and/or expression, and does not necessarily imply that one identifies as a woman.

Gay- A common and acceptable word for male homosexuals, but used for both genders.

Gender- Socially constructed roles, behaviors, and attributes considered by the general public to be "appropriate" for one's sex as assigned at birth. Gender roles vary among cultures and along time continuums.

Gender affirmation/confirmation surgery-Having surgery as means to construct genitalia of choice. Surgery does not change one's sex or gender, only genitalia. Gender/genitalia reassignment/reconstruction surgeries affirm an essentialist perspective of being born in the wrong sex from birth and are less frequently used in a lexicon.

Gender attribution- Is the process by which an observer decides which gender they believe another person to be.

Gender binary- A system of viewing gender as consisting solely of two categories (termed woman and man) which are biologically-based (female and male) and unchangeable, and in which no other possibilities for gender or anatomy are believed to exist. This system is oppressive to anyone who defines their birth assignment, but particularly those who are gender-variant people and do not fit neatly into one of the two categories.

Gender creative- Expressing gender in a way that demonstrates individual freedom of expression and that does not conform to any gender.

Gender dynamic/evolving/expansive- The recognition that gender continues to shift and emerge and generate pathways to understanding expansive views of gender. These new iterations of gender will continue to push on norms and stereotypes in ways that individuals can self-determine and have agency about their identities.

Gender expression/presentation- The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc., typically referred to as feminine or masculine. Many transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity rather than their birth-assigned sex.

Gender-fluid- Individuals who are between identifying with a gender or who do not identify with a gender. This term overlaps with genderqueer and bigender, implying movement between gender identities and/or presentations.

Gender identity- This is the soul and spirit of a person: It is how an individual feels about themselves (Levine, 2008), intuitively, and then writes themselves into the world (Perl, 2004). Gender identity is how someone wants to be seen and legitimated through the eyes of another in the world-- just as someone *is* (Federal Intragovernmental Working Group, 2016; Herbert, 2016, n.p.).³ Understood and fashioned in these ways, gender identity can be the embodiment of gender, or lack thereof, and any expressions of the self are reinforced by how we think and want others to see and think of ourselves. Gender identity can therefore be the physical, emotional, and/or psychological embodiment that rejects gender (*agender*) altogether.

Gender identity justice- The state of recognition in which all gender identities are afforded the same dignities as any other individual.

Gender identity self-determination- The state of, and right to, self-identify in a way that authenticates one's self-expression and self-acceptance, and which refuses to be externally controlled, defined, or regulated.

Gender non-conforming- A term for individuals whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.

Gender Normativity This is an expression of identity that aligns with social expectations and norms for one's gender. Cisgender, cissexual, and genderstraight are considered as synonyms.

Gender role/expression- How one performs gender in the world as it relates to social expectations and norms

Genderqueer-Those rejecting binary roles and language for gender. A general term for non-binary gender identities. Those who identify as genderqueer may identify as neither woman nor man; may see themselves as outside of the binary gender boxes; may fall somewhere between the binary genders; or may reject the use of gender labels. Genderqueer identities fall under the "trans umbrella. Synonyms include androgynous.

Gray-A Sexual- Asexuality and sexuality are not black and white; some people identify in the **gray** (spelled "grey" in some countries) area between them. People who identify as **gray-A** can include, but are not limited to those who: do not normally experience sexual attraction, but do experience it sometimes, experience sexual attraction, but a low sex drive, experience sexual attraction and drive, but not strongly enough to want to act on them, **and** people who can enjoy and desire sex, but only under very limited and specific circumstances. A person can be gray-heterosexual, gray-homosexual, and/or gray-bisexual.

GSM- Gender and Sexual Minority is a term used to describe those who fall outside of dominant gender and sexuality identities.

Hate Crime- Any act of intimidation, harassment, physical force or threat of physical force directed against any person, or their property, motivated either in whole or in part by hostility toward their actual or perceived age, disability, gender identity, ethnic background, race, religious/spiritual belief, sex, sexual orientation, etc.

Heteroflexible- Similar to bisexual, but with a stated heterosexual preference. Sometimes characterized as being “mostly straight.” Commonly used to indicate that one is interested in heterosexual romance but is “flexible” when it comes to sex and/or play. The same concepts apply to homoflexible.

Heteronormative/Heteronormativity- A culture or belief system that assumes that people fall into distinct and complementary sexes and genders and that heterosexuality is the normal sexual orientation. A heteronormative view is one that involves alignment of biological sex, sexuality, gender identity, and gender roles, sexuality, gender identity, and gender roles.

Heterosexism- The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual people while it gives advantages to heterosexual people. It is often a subtle form of oppression which reinforces realities of silence and invisibility.

Heterosexuality- A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the opposite gender.

Homonormative/Homonormativity- The assimilation of heteronormative ideals and constructs into LGBT⁺IAGCQQ culture and identity. Homonormativity upholds neoliberalism rather than critiquing monogamy, procreation, normative family social roles, and binary gender roles. It is criticized as undermining citizens' rights and erasing the historic alliance between radical politics and gay politics, the core concern being sexual freedom. Some assert that homonormativity fragments LGBT⁺IAGCQQ communities into hierarchies of worthiness: those that mimic heteronormative standards of gender identity are deemed most worthy of receiving rights. Individuals at the bottom of the hierarchy are seen as an impediment to this elite class of homonormative individuals receiving their rights. Because LGBT⁺IAGCQQ activists and organizations embrace systems that endorse normative family social roles and serial monogamy, some believe that LGBT⁺IAGCQQ people are surrendering and conforming to heteronormative behavior.

Homophobia- The fear, dislike, and/or hatred of same-sex relationships or those who love and are sexually attracted to those of the same sex. Homophobia includes prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and acts of violence brought on by fear and hatred. It occurs on personal, institutional, and societal levels.

Homosexual- A person who is physically, romantically, emotionally and/or spiritually attracted to a person of the same gender. Many prefer “gay,” “lesbian,” etc. because of the term's origins as a medical term at a time when homosexuality was considered a disorder.

Homosexuality- A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same gender.

Inclusive Language- The use of non-identity specific language to avoid imposing limitations or assumptions on others. For example, saying “you all” instead of “you guys” in order to not impose assumptions regarding a person's gender identity.

In the closet- To be “in the closet” means to hide one's homosexual identity in order to keep a job, a housing situation, friends, or in some other way to survive. Many LGBT⁺IAGCQQ individuals are “out” in some situations and “closeted” in others.

Internalized homophobia- The fear and self-hate of one's own homosexuality or bisexuality that occurs for many individuals who have learned negative ideas about homosexuality throughout childhood. One form of internalized oppression is the acceptance of the myths and stereotypes applied to the oppressed group. Internalized oppression is commonly seen among most, if not all, minority groups.

Intersex (IS)- Those born with atypical sex characteristics. A person whose natal physical sex is physically ambiguous. There are many genetic, hormonal or anatomical variations which can cause this (e.g. Klinefelter Syndrome, Adrenal Hyperplasia, or Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome). Parents and medical professionals usually assign intersex infants a sex and perform surgical

operations to conform the infant's body to that assignment, but this practice has become increasingly controversial as intersex adults are speaking out against having had to undergo medical procedures which they did not consent to (and in many cases caused them mental and physical difficulties later in life). The term intersex is preferred over "hermaphrodite," an outdated term which is stigmatizing and misleading.

Invisibility- The constant assumption of heterosexuality renders gay and lesbian people, youth in particular, invisible and seemingly nonexistent. Gay and lesbian people and youth are usually not seen or portrayed in society, and especially not in schools and classrooms.

Label free- Individuals who shirk all labels attached to gender and reject the gender binary.

Lesbian- A femininely-identified individual who is emotionally, physically, romantically, sexually and/or spiritually attracted to femininely-identified individuals.

Monosexual/Multisexual- Umbrella terms for orientations directed towards one's gender (monosexual) or many genders (multisexual).

Non-binary Gender Identity- The expression of gender identity that does not fit any categorization or is not necessarily discernable to another. This expression can refuse, align with, or play with representations of gender that can, but doesn't have to shift over time and in context.

Pansexual/Omnisexual- "Pan," meaning "all." Someone who is emotionally, physically, romantically, sexually and/or spiritually attracted to all gender identities/expressions, including those outside the gender-conforming binary. Similar to bisexual, but different in that the concept deliberately rejects the gender binary. Polysexual people are attracted to "many," but not necessarily all, genders.

Passing- A term used by transgender people to mean that they are seen as the gender with which they self-identify. For example, a transgender man (born female) who most people see as a man. Also a term used by non-heterosexual people to mean that they are seen as or assumed to be heterosexual.

Polyamory- Having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the knowledge and consent of everyone involved. It is distinct from both swinging (which emphasizes sex with others as merely recreational) and polysexuality (which is attraction towards multiple genders and/or sexes). People who identify as polyamorous typically reject the view that sexual and relational exclusivity are necessary for deep, committed, long-term loving relationships.

Preferred or claimed gender pronouns- Self-selected pronouns for how an individual prefers to be referenced. While there is an emerging lexicon of pronouns, it is best to ask the individual how one self-references.

QPOC- "Queer People Of Color" or "Queer Person Of Color."

Queer- Despite the negative historical use of this term, it has been embraced in the last decade, particularly by younger members of the LGBT*+IAGCQQ community. It is an umbrella term that many prefer, both because of convenience (easier than 'gay, lesbian, etc) and because it does not force the person who uses it to choose a more specific label for their gender identity or sexual orientation. Queer also refers to a suspension of rigid gendered and sexual orientation categories and is underscored by attempts to interrogate and interrupt heteronormativity, reinforced by acknowledging diverse people across gender, sex, and desires, as well as to foreground the sexual. It embraces the freedom to move beyond, between, or even away from, yet even to later return to, myriad identity categories. Queer is not relegated to LGBT*IAGCQ people, but is inclusive of any variety of experience that transcends what has been socially and politically accepted as normative categories for gender and sexual orientation.

Queer autonomy or (a)gender and (a)sexual justice- These interchangeable terms each ideologically reflect an actualized freedom of humans to be self-expressive without redress of social, institutional, or political violence. See also **(a)gender and (a)sexual justice**.

Romantic Orientation- A person's enduring emotional, physical, romantic and/or spiritual — but not necessarily sexual — attraction to others. Sometimes called affectional orientation. "Romantic orientation" is often used by the asexual community in lieu of "sexual orientation."

Safe Space- A place where people who identify within the LGBTQIA communities feel comfortable and secure in being who they are. In this place, they can talk about the people with whom they are involved without fear of being criticized, judged or ridiculed. Safe spaces promote the right to be comfortable in one's living space, work environments, etc. It is focused toward the

right to use the pronoun of a significant other in conversation, and the right to be as outwardly open about one's life and activities as anyone else.

Same-Gender Loving- A term created by the African-American community that some prefer to use instead of "lesbian," "bisexual" or "gay" to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender. SGL is an alternative to Eurocentric homosexual identities, which may not culturally affirm or engage the history and cultures of people of African descent.

Self-determined presumes the right to make choices to self-identify in a way that authenticates one's self-expression and self-acceptance, rejects an imposition to be externally controlled, defined, or regulated, and can unsettle knowledge to generate new possibilities of legibility.

Sex- Sex refers to the biological traits, which include internal and external reproductive anatomy, chromosomes, hormones, and other physiological characteristics. The assignment and classification of people at birth as male or female is often based solely on external reproductive anatomy. Related terms: intersex, female, male.

Sexual orientation- A person's emotional, physical, and sexual attraction and the expression of that attraction. Although a subject of debate, sexual orientation is probably one of the many characteristics that people are born with.

Sexual minority- A term used to refer to someone who identifies their sexuality as different from the dominant culture (i.e., heterosexual), for example, homosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, or transvestite.

Sexual affirmation/alignment/confirmation Surgery- Establishing one's affirmed sex via legal and medical steps.

Stealth- Going stealth means for a trans* person to live completely as their gender identity and to pass in the public sphere; when a trans* person chooses not to disclose their trans* status to others. This can be done for numerous reasons including safety, or simply because the person doesn't feel others have the right to know. For transexuals, going stealth is often the goal of transition.

Trans* - This term is technically synonymous, though etymologically different from trans*, trans**, and transgender, is the experience of having a gender identity that is different from one's biological sex. A transgender person *may* identify with the opposite biological gender or identify outside of the binary altogether. A trans* person may or may not be pre-or post-operative and is not defined by an essentialized gender formula. This term has become an umbrella term for nonconforming gender identity and expression.

Trans** when written with an asterisk and superscript plus sign, denotes transgender identities that continue to emerge as indeterminate. Trans* with only an asterisk denotes a segment of the transgender population that was inclusive of only some trans people's identities, while excluding others. In my writing, I use the superscript plus sign + ** to symbolize the ever-expanding and indeterminate ways of self-identifying, and the asterisk to honor those who fought for gender identity self-determination which paved way for new identities to emerge.

Trans is a prefix or adjective used as an abbreviation of transgender, derived from the Greek word meaning "across from" or "on the other side of." Many consider trans to be an inclusive and useful umbrella term. When the prefix is affixed to gender it signifies all non-cisgender gender identities and a recognition of difference from cisgender people.

Transgender (TG)-The experience of having a gender identity that is different from one's biological sex. A transgender person may identify with the opposite biological gender and want to be a person of that gender. A transgender person may or may not be pre-or post-operative; if they are, they are likely to refer to him/herself as transsexual. This has become an umbrella term for nonconforming gender identity and expression.

Transmisogyny This is the hatred of women or those who are feminine-identified, the expression of the feminine, or those who are feminine-of-center but not assigned female at birth.

Transphobia- Irrational fear of trans* people through active prejudice and active discrimination by institutions, communities, and/or individuals that diminishes access to resources throughout mainstream society.

Transition- Adopting one's affirmed, non-biological gender permanently. The complex process of leaving behind one's coercively assigned birth sex. Transition can include: coming out to one's family, friends, and/or co-workers; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) some form of surgery. It's best not to assume that

someone will “complete” this process at any particular time: an individual’s transition is finished when they are finally comfortable with how their gender identity is aligned with their body, and may not include going through all of the aforementioned steps.

Trans* Woman or Trans* Man-Informal descriptors used relative to one’s affirmed gender. Variants include T*, trans person, and trans folk.

Transsexual People (TS)- Typically those taking all available medical and legal steps to transition from their assigned sex to their affirmed sex. Transitioning across the sexual binary can go from female to male (FTM) or male to female (MTF). Some go stealth, hiding their transsexual history.

Two-Spirit- A contemporary term that references historical multiple gender traditions in many First Nations cultures. These individuals were sometimes viewed in certain tribes as having two spirits occupying one body; two-spirit indicates a person whose body simultaneously manifests both a masculine and a feminine spirit. Many Native/First Nations people who are LGBTQIA or gender non-conforming identify as Two-Spirit; in many Nations, being Two-Spirit carries both great respect and additional commitments and responsibilities to one’s community.

When discussing or having conversations with people, it is best to avoid:

- She-male, tranny, transie, sex change, he-she, shim
- Sexual preference (suggests choice)
- Hermaphrodite (an outdated clinical term)

APPENDIX E

Axioms and QLF

- We live in a time we never made, gender and sexuality norms predate our existence;
- Non-gender and sexual “differences” have been around forever but norms operate to pathologize and delegitimize them;
- Children’s self-determination is taken away early when gender and sexuality are inscribed onto them. Their bodies/minds become unknowing participants in a roulette of gender and sexuality norms;
- Children have rights to their own (a)gender and (a)sexuality legibility;
- Binary views on gender and sexuality are potentially damaging;
- Gender must be dislodged/unhinged from sexuality;
- Humans have agency;
- We must move away from pathologizing beliefs that police humanity;
- We are all entitled to the same basic human rights; and,
- Life should be livable for all.

Table 1: Axioms guiding framework

A queer literacy framework promoting (a)gender self-determination and justice. Modified but originally printed [29] (Copyright 2015 by the National Council of Teachers of English. Reprinted with permission

| Principles | Commitments of Educators who Queer Literacy |
|--|---|
| 1. Refrains from possible presumptions that students ascribe to a gender | Educators who use queer literacy never presume that students have a gender. |
| 2. Understands gender as a construct which has and continues to be impacted by intersecting factors (e.g., social, historical, material, cultural, economic, religious) | Educators who employ queer literacy are committed to classroom activities that actively push back against gender constructs and provide opportunities to explore, engage and understand how gender is constructed. |
| 3. Recognizes that masculinity and femininity constructs are assigned to gender norms and are situationally performed | Educators who engage with queer literacy challenge gender norms and gender-stereotypes and actively support students' various and multiple performances of gender. |
| 4. Understands gender as flexible | Educators who engage with queer literacy are mindful about how specific discourse(s) can reinforce gender and norms, and they purposefully demonstrate how gender is fluid, or exist on a continuum, shifting over time and in different contexts. |
| 5. Opens up spaces for students to self-define with claimed (a)genders, (a)pronouns, or names | Educators who engage with queer literacy invite students to self-define and/or reject a claimed or preferred gender, name, and/or pronoun. |
| 6. Engages in ongoing critique of how gender norms are reinforced in literature, media, technology, art, history, science, math, etc., | Educators who use queer literacy provide ongoing and deep discussions about how society is gendered, and thus invite students to actively engage in analysis of cultural texts and disciplinary discourses. |
| 7. Understands how Neoliberal principles reinforce and sustain compulsory heterosexism, which secures homophobia; and how gendering secures bullying and transphobia. | Educators who employ queer literacy understand and investigate structural oppression and how heterosexism sustains (a)gendered violence, and then generates meaningful opportunities for students to become embodied change agents and to be proactive against, or to not engage in bullying behavior. |
| 8. Understands that (a)gender intersects with other identities (e.g. sexual orientation, culture, language, age, religion, social class, body type, accent, height, ability, disability, and national origin) that inform students' beliefs and thereby, actions | Educators who engage with queer literacy do not essentialize students' identities, but recognize how intersections of sexual orientation, culture, language, age, religion, social class, body type, accent, height, ability, disability, and national origin, inform students' beliefs and thereby, actions. |
| 9. Advocates for equity across all categories of (a)gender performances | Educators who employ queer literacy do not privilege one belief or stance, but advocate for equity across all categories of (a)gender performances. |
| 10. Believes that students who identify on a continuum of gender identities deserve to learn in environments free of bullying and harassment | Educators who use queer literacy make their positions known, when first hired, to students, teachers, administrators and school personnel and take a stance when any student is bullied or marginalized, whether explicitly or implicitly, for their (a)gender identities. |

Websites for support of LGBT, gender non-conforming and gender fluid students

Compiled by sj Miller, Ph.D.

Brave Trails: <http://www.bravetrails.org/10-best-summer-camps-for-lgbtq-youth/>

The Brave Trails Mission is to provide lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning youth and their allies, ages 12-20, innovative, impactful summer camp programs that foster meaningful relationships and develop 21st century skills to become the leaders of tomorrow. This website also lists all LGBTQ camps for youth and their families.

Center: <http://www.gaycenter.org/>

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center is at the heart of the LGBT community in New York City, providing quality health and wellness programs in a welcoming space that fosters connections and celebrates our cultural contributions. The Center provides a secure place to come together and plan, share knowledge and expertise, and to shape our future as a vibrant community in New York and around the world. The site has a gender identity media project that educates about gender non-conformity.

Colage: <http://www.colage.org/resources/112/>

COLAGE unites people with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer parents into a network of peers and supports them as they nurture and empower each other to be skilled, self-confident, and just leaders in their communities.

Family Equality Council: <http://www.familyequality.org/>

Family Equality Council connects, supports, and represents the one million parents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender in this country and their two million children.

Gay-Straight Alliance Network: <http://gsanetwork.org/>

Gay-Straight Alliance Network is a national youth leadership organization that connects school-based Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) to each other and community resources through peer support, leadership development, and training.

GSA Network supports young people in starting, strengthening, and sustaining GSAs and builds the capacity of GSAs to:

1. create safe environments in schools for students to support each other and learn about homophobia, transphobia, and other oppressions,
2. educate the school community about homophobia, transphobia, gender identity, and sexual orientation issues, and
3. fight discrimination, harassment, and violence in schools.

Gender Spectrum: <http://www.genderspectrum.org/>

Gender Spectrum, a comprehensive website, provides information about education, training, medical and health services, books and resources, legal and policy issues, faith, and other information and support to help create a gender sensitive and inclusive environment for all children and teens. There are a plethora of downloadable resources to use.

GLSEN (Gay lesbian straight educators network): <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/home/index.html>

GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established in 1990, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes to creating a more vibrant and diverse community.

Human Rights Campaign: <http://www.hrc.org/issues/youth-campus>

As young people push to attain the goals of the queer community on their campuses, HRC is working to provide tools, facilitate connections with other LGBT student activists across the country and empower youth to fight for LGBT equality on campus and beyond.

National Youth Advocacy Coalition: <http://www.nyacyouth.org/>

The National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC) is a social justice organization that advocates for and with young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) in an effort to end discrimination against these youth and to ensure their physical and emotional well-being.

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG): <http://community.pflag.org/>

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

Pride School Atlanta: <http://www.prideschoolatlanta.org>

Pride School Atlanta provides K-high school LGBTQQIAA* students, families and educators a safe, fun and rigorous learning environment free of homophobia and transphobia — a place that honors their identities so they can be themselves, find themselves, and find friends and mentors who can help them navigate the challenges of life and education.

Safe Schools Coalition: <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/>

Safe Schools Coalition is an international public-private partnership in support of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth, that is working to help schools - at home and all over the world - become safe places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

Transgender Student Educators Network (TSER): <http://www.transstudent.org/sites>

Trans Student Educational Resources is a youth-led organization dedicated to transforming the educational environment for trans and gender nonconforming students through advocacy and empowerment. In addition to a focus on creating a more trans-friendly education system, their mission is to educate the public and teach trans activists how to be effective organizers. They believe that justice for trans and gender nonconforming youth is contingent on an intersectional framework of activism.

Youth and Gender Media Project: <http://www.youthandgendermediaproject.org/Home.html>

The Youth and Gender Media Project encompasses a growing collection of short films that capture the diversity and complexity of gender non-conforming youth.

Comprehensive Genres of Texts with characters who are Transgender and/or have self-determined Gender Identities

*Bolded indicates particular grade levels (the rest of the genres are a blend of grades)

<https://www.goodreads.com/list/tag/transgender>

- Australian
- Award Winners
- British
- **Children's**
- **Elementary**
- FTM
- Gender-bending

- Gender non-conforming
- Gender diversity
- Graphic Novels
- Humor
- Indian
- Indonesian
- Jewish
- Islam
- Literary Fiction
- Memoirs
- **Middle Grade**
- MTF
- Non-binary
- Princesses
- Queer Youth of Color
- Romance
- Romanian
- Science Fiction and Fantasy
- Small town
- Stonewall Children and YA Adult Winners
- Themes about religion
- Trans Characters
- Urban Fantasy
- **Young Children's**
- **Young Adult (YA)**

Suicide hot lines and document links

The Trevor Project

Trained counselors are here to support youth 24/7. If you are a young person in crisis, feeling suicidal, or in need of a safe and judgment-free place to talk, call the Trevor.

www.thetrevorproject.org

866-4-U-TREVOR

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

800-273-TALK

Trans Lifeline

This line is primarily for transgender people experiencing a crisis. This includes people who may be struggling with their gender identity and are not sure that they are transgender. If you are not sure whether you should call or not, then please call us.

<https://www.translifeline.org>

877-565-8860

Talking About Suicide & LGBT Populations

Talking About Suicide & LGBT Populations provides detailed recommendations for more safely discussing suicide in public conversations and social media, while at the same time expanding public conversations about the well-being of LGBT people, promoting the need for family support and acceptance, and encouraging help-seeking by LGBT people who may be contemplating suicide.

<http://www.lgbtmap.org/effective-messaging/talking-about-suicide-and-lgbt-populations>

Preventing Suicide Among LGBT Youth

This is a free workshop kit to help staff in schools, youth-serving organizations, and suicide prevention programs take action to reduce suicidal behavior among LGBT youth. Topics covered include suicidal behavior among LGBT youth, risk and protective factors for suicidal behavior, strategies to reduce the risk, and ways to increase school or agency cultural competence. The kit contains everything you need to host a workshop: a Leader's Guide, sample agenda, PowerPoint presentations, sample script, and handouts. The workshop includes lecture, small group exercises, and group discussion. All these can be adapted to meet the needs of your audiences.

<https://www.glsen.org/chapters/phoenix/preventingsuicide>

Suicide hot lines and document links

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<https://www.glsen.org/chapters/phoenix/preventingsuicide>

List of Trailblazers: Artists, Educators, Musicians, Activists, Athletes, Politicians, Authors, Scientists, Doctors, Poets, etc.

List of transgender rights activists

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Transgender_rights_activists

List of notable transgender people

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_transgender_people

25 People who Influenced American Culture

<http://time.com/130734/transgender-celebrities-actors-athletes-in-america/>

Trans Teens Who Made a Difference

<https://www.bustle.com/articles/137494-7-young-trans-activists-you-should-know-about-this-year>

Exercises for practicing names and pronouns:

The “Get to Know Me”, allows students to privately reveal their *current*¹³ claimed name, (a)gender identity (i.e. gender identity or absence of), and, (a)pronouns (i.e., pronouns or absence of), and with an option to note if they want these identities publically acknowledged (see Box). For the student who does not want others to know about particular identities, but is comfortable sharing that part of the self with the educator, the educator can respond on assignments with comments that recognize the student’s true name, (a)gender identity, and or (a)pronoun.

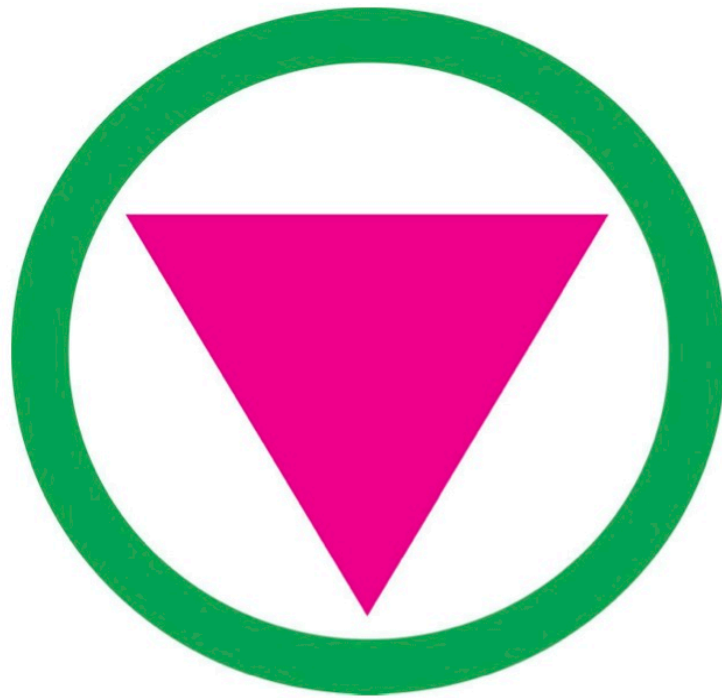
Box 1: Get to know me

My assigned name is _____ and my claimed name (leave blank if they are the same) is _____. My assigned sex is _____ but my **CURRENT**, claimed (a)gender identity (leave blank if they are the same) is _____. The pronouns people use when referring to me include _____ but my **CURRENT**, claimed (a)pronoun is/are _____.

In class I prefer you to use (please circle) *assigned* or *claimed* name, *assigned* or *claimed* (a)pronouns, but on my assignments, you can use (please circle) *assigned* or *claimed* name and *assigned* or *claimed* (a)pronouns.

¹³ The use of the word “current” signifies that gender identity and naming are on a continuum and demonstrates the awareness that it can shift depending on time, context, and circumstances.

Inclusive Space



This space
RESPECTS

all aspects of people including age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion/no religion, national origin, immigration status, language, education, marital status, body size, political affiliation/philosophy, (a)sexual orientation, (a)gender identity/expression and creativity, physical and mental ability, social-economic status, genetic information, HIV, and veteran status.

Do you use *pronouns*?

I prefer
She,
Her,
and
Hers

I prefer
He,
Him,
and
His

I don't
use any

Please
use...

I prefer
Ze,
Hir,
and
Hirs

I prefer
They,
Them,
and
Theirs

Sample Syllabus Statement

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to present information, resources, and opportunities that enable students to reflect critically on the curriculum and pedagogy of the secondary English Language Arts (SELA). Students will be expected to develop awareness of the nature of English curricula and experience *how* theory *moves* and *constructs* the pedagogical skills necessary to implement a variety of teaching strategies including assessment and evaluation strategies. Students will learn how to select and assess content and strategies through in-depth rehearsals that attend to needs of diverse learners with special attention to ***culture, language, age, social class, body type, color, accent, height, ability, disability, (a) gender, gender expression or creativity, gender identity, (a) sexual orientation, HIV status, political affiliation, religion, spiritual belief, creed, veteran status, language, immigration status, and/or national origin***. This work is embedded in a social justice framework in order to leverage the psycho-emotional-cognitive development and growth of all learners.

Personal Philosophy Toward Students

My classroom teaching supports, affirms, and recognizes the diverse backgrounds and nature of students with myriad identities. Therefore, all students are welcomed in this space because of your ***amazing different cultures, languages, ages, social classes, body types, colors, accents, heights, abilities, disabilities, (a) genders, gender expressions or creativities, gender identities, (a) sexual orientations, HIV status, political affiliations, religions, spiritual beliefs, creeds, veteran status, language, immigration status, and/or national origins***. Attending to issues of social justice can underscore not only ***your*** psycho-emotional-cognitive development, but to the growth of all your ***future*** students...

My Accountability to You and Us to Each Other

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, (a)sexual orientation, (a) gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, immigration status, language, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or (a) gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records