

THESIS

PROBLEMATIZING DIVERSITY IN AMERICAN EDUCATION: LANGUAGE
AND CURRICULUM AS CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

Submitted by

Nathan Lee Huseman

Department of English

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 2011

Master's Committee:

Advisor: Pamela Coke

Louann Reid
Rodrick Lucero

ABSTRACT

PROBLEMATIZING DIVERSITY IN AMERICAN EDUCATION: LANGUAGE AND CURRICULUM AS CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

Diversity in American education is problematic. The language that both defines and exemplifies diversity is unclear, which produces competing definitions of diversity. As a result, diversity in American education is constructed as a composite of differences between student groups, which include: race, class, language, socio-economic status, and [homo] sexuality. The language, then, promotes pacification with education in the form of sloganizing and tolerance. In addition, diversified curricular pursuits focus on further pacification in the form of recognition and hospitality.

For these reasons, I argue that education must move away from diversity as a concept within education, and move toward an inclusive model of education. In order to do so, American education must look at constructing a model based on dialogue and equality, action and transformation. I further argue that language and curriculum are the catalysts for change, and offer possibilities for change within education related to each.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My writing is inspired by many. Dr. Pam Coke, thank you for your tireless dedication to my work and to me; thanks for rescheduling, for reading multiples drafts, and for being a consistent voice of encouragement and optimism. Dr. Rodrick Lucero, thank you for challenging me, for planting the seed of “shake things up” in my head. Dr. Louann Reid, thank you for the consistent support, and for challenging my ideas. Michael, thanks for reading countless drafts and for not being afraid to be honest and truthful in both criticism and in love. To my friends and family, you were always there to comfort me and to provide support; I cannot imagine doing this without each of you. Finally, to Kyle Spain, though I knew you a very brief time all those years ago, I write this in your memory. May this provide a voice in the conversation that may assist others in a situation likes yours.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction: Why Diversity? Why Now? Why Care?.....	1
Chapter Two: Review of Literature.....	10
Chapter Three: Research Methodology.....	28
Chapter Four: Irreconcilable Differences—Message, Messenger, and Diversity in Education.....	39
Chapter Five: Curricular Cogency: Moving Toward an Inclusive Curriculum in American Education.....	65
Chapter Six: Reading the Past, Writing the Future: Purpose, Possibility, and Potential in American Education.....	85
Bibliography.....	96

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION: WHY DIVERSITY? WHY NOW? AND WHY CARE?

Diversity in American education is problematic. Diversity is a conglomerate entity in education that encompasses many terms, many groups, and many justifications. It is within this all-encompassing word that problems arise. Specifically, I seek to examine and challenge diversity in American education in two areas: language and curriculum. While I write not to undermine the notion that diversity does make a difference within American education, I do write to challenge its purpose and performance in assisting marginalized students, specifically, but not entirely, gay and lesbian populations. It is my hope that through my examination and challenging of diversity conceptually that education will use diversity not as a means of highlighting differences but as a means of creating equality for all American education students.

WHY DIVERSITY? A TOPICAL JUSTIFICATION

I center my writing on diversity in American education, specifically secondary education, not by happenstance. Rather, my road to researching about diversity, writing about diversity, and arguing about diversity came about out of both personal and academic experiences and perspectives. Being the sole “out” homosexual at my high school, forced me to reconcile my own experiences with those that I see in educational settings every day. I grew up homosexual in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a place with few homosexuals who were “out and proud.” Growing up gay was a challenge, but one that I never let on was difficult. I went quietly about my days—in school and out—as

Nathan, the quiet, shy redhead. I came out to my mother and father at the age of sixteen—too young to know the impact on both myself and those around me, too ignorant to know what it all meant. I remember that evening vividly: it was August, and I handed my mother a stack of green guest checks, each one filled with my innermost fears and troubles. After reading my fears, my mom fired question after question: How do you know? Are you sure? The usual suspects that parents ask of someone they don't understand. My father was no different—questions, questions, questions. Needless to say, my parents were not accepting of my declaration; I choked down every tear that my father told me to dry. My parents told me to go to my room, where only the darkness would feel my pain. And I did. While the reaction to my being gay at home was mostly accusatory, the reaction at school was minimally supportive.

School was no different. My “friends” stood by me until they no longer knew what to say or do. My friends held secret meetings after school or after class once I had left the room attempting to answer the questions “What do we do?” and “What do we say?” Each day at East Central High School was a magnificent misunderstanding involving my sexuality and my friends. Even my best of friends, Robert, moved on from me once he heard the news that I had come out as a homosexual male. There were many moments in high school where I was shoved, teased, called “faggot”, told I was going to hell. I lived in a constant state of fear for months, with no friends, with no outlet in which to release my fear. Suicide became a constant thought as I grappled with what it meant to be gay in Tulsa, Oklahoma, but more importantly what being gay meant to me.

Below is a brief excerpt from a personal essay I wrote about my high school experience.

In the essay, I reflect on an incident where my sexuality made me a target. I do so to allow perspective on my history, which has spurred my writing.

I remember getting up, and everything was ok. I went to school, had my day as usual: classes, friends, lunch, and a test. I only saw him once that day, at lunch, which was peculiar as I was accustomed to seeing him every second. This day was different; this day would change my life forever; this was also the last day I'd see him. I was about to end my day, as I always did, waiting for my friend Jennifer at the door. That's when I heard them. "FAG," they yelled. I looked at them and turned away, hoping they wouldn't continue. Before I could make it anywhere, they were there. Yelling in my face and all I could think about was him. Where was he? They asked me if I was a fag and I answered, "Yes." They said, "We thought you were," staring me down. As soon as they were gone, I ran...I ran as fast as I could, tears rolling down my cheeks, my heart beating as fast as I was running.

This was my earliest memory of school and sexuality. Fag was my label and it stuck throughout my high school experience. Only two of my teachers spoke to me directly about my homosexuality. Both attempted to make me feel more comfortable in my own skin, but both were in the clear minority with respect to assisting me vs. ignoring me. And while my teachers' attempts to tell me "it gets better," "it will be okay," or "there's nothing wrong with you," made me feel a bit better, they were futile, voices from afar, from those who did not know me beyond the assignments I turned in at the end of each class period. In their attempts to help, my teachers only assisted to make me feel more alone. Their attempts were all in language and were obligatory (more on this in chapter five), which sought to satisfy my difference not with action or relating my experience to those around me but with sloganizing. There was no diversity in my high school experience. There were no SafeZone or Ally programs or GLBT students to talk with. There was just me.

My own experience foreshadowed what I see in the halls of American schools today. It is within this noticeable lack of change and difference between my high school career, 1997 to 2002, and my career as a graduate student, 2008 to 2011, that my questioning of diversity in American education began. Indeed, after entering public secondary schools throughout my master's program, and seeing the teasing, the fighting, and the general lack of understanding shown by students, I began to question how diversity is or is not represented in the American education system, and what that representation, or lack of representation, says about diversity as a construct in American education (see research questions in Chapter 2). I view diversity in American education as a skeptic, but I am open to the notion that diversity in does have promise in American education.

As a graduate student in English, two moments have prompted me to question diversity as an institution within American education. The first, working with Dr. Pam Coke on an independent study, looking at gay and lesbian studies, began my foray into the world of diversity in American education. The purpose was to explore and question notions of diversity, masculinity, and representation in American education—what is being seen and what is being ignored by the dominant social structure (and ideology) in place. It was within this study that my academic curiosities began to question the role(s) of diversity in education. One of the core texts of the study was *Dude! You're a Fag!* by CJ Pascoe (2007), which looked at masculinity formation in high school and its relation to sexuality. Pascoe's text opened my eyes to the ways in which masculinity is accepted in high school, and the ways in which sexuality, in any form—gay, bisexual, lesbian, transgender, even curious—is seen as unacceptable by the dominant social structure in

[the] school. The text highlights the underrepresentation of gay and lesbian students in the high school setting. While I realize that Pascoe's text looks at a single high school, the questions raised—"How is masculinity a factor in American education?" and "How does sexuality factor into images and notions of masculinity?"—apply to larger educational contexts. While Pascoe's text provides insights into diversity within the high school arena, it also questions the educational understanding of diversity by arguing student groups are unequal—straight males making homosexual jokes is acceptable, however, lesbian students wearing t-shirts pronouncing their sexuality is not acceptable. In this instance, diversity is highlighted not via the actions of the student groups, but by the reaction of the school: mocking homosexuals is all right while presenting an identity outside the heterosexual norm is not all right.

While textual experience has influenced my choice of topic, the coursework in my graduate career has also impacted my choice. Throughout my graduate career, issues of diversity have largely been ignored or discussed at a cursory level. In the many education courses required for licensure, issues of diversity were primarily discussed on the level of race, class, or English language learners (ELL); sexuality was discussed once or twice throughout my three-year program, but each time only in brief discussions or tangential conversations related to other diversified groups. Diversity, then, was discussed through a lens that equates diversity to race, diversity to class, and diversity to language acquisition. Diversity as an educational paradigm was presented less about diversifying education and more about understanding diversity through a myriad of dichotomies and binaries.

It was this realization that spurred my interest in analyzing diversity: the movements and definitions of diversity, the language of diversity, and the curriculum of diversity in the American education system.

WHY NOW? PURPOSES FOR WRITING

In researching and analyzing the way(s) in which diversity functions in American education, one thing has become remarkably clear: diversity is often related to the voice of a marginalized group of students and teachers (Banks, 1993). Diversity has been defined in relation to race and class and ability and curriculum. Education today, though, demands that we, as educators, look at the ways in which we approach our students in order to best provide the education necessary. My purposes for writing about diversity and in arguing that diversity, as it is presented now, is out-of-date and out-of-focus, are numerous; all center on the need to refocus diversity for the diversified student populations in American education. Below I examine three areas related to diversity and education, and offer purposes for writing related to each.

Diversity as Language. Diversity in education has largely been defined by notions of race and class. However, those definitions that center squarely on race and class are no longer appropriate for education. Diversity must have a purpose for all students; a message and a messenger that is equivalent in all students' minds, not just those that may be of a different race or socio-economic status. To that end, one purpose in writing is to examine the inequality present in the current language and message surrounding diversity, and to propose a language and a message of diversity that does more than exist in a vacuum of difference.

Diversity as Multiplicity. Another purpose in writing is to examine the way(s) in which diversity does not acknowledge an ever-changing audience, and to argue that diversity must reshape itself in order to make all students feel a part of the education system on both a micro- and macro-level. Specifically, I look at Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) students as a primary example of how diversity's message does not extend beyond issues of hospitality and tolerance. In looking at the discrepancy between message and audience, the argument made is that diversity must be defined in terms of multiplicity. That is to say that diversity *must* become more than difference, it must have a multiplicity in terms of audience; all students must see themselves as an active part of diversity.

Diversity as Curriculum. A final purpose in writing is to examine the curricular notions that continue to supplement diversity conversations. Curricular notions include cultural responsive teaching, tolerance, hospitality, and “teaching queerly” in relation to diversity. I examine each in hopes to understand and problematize curriculum's role in current discussions of diversity.

WHY CARE: GOALS IN EXAMINING DIVERSITY

Current understandings and promotions of diversity have it centered, still, in notions of race and class, while some understandings and promotions of diversity also include sexuality (Banks and Banks, 2004), gifted and talented students, and other groups who are quickly making up more and more of the American school population. One of my goals in writing, and arguing, about how diversity is represented in American education is to inform readers about the pseudo-representation of GLBT students and faculty members in current diversity talks. In doing so, my ultimate goal is to show that

while conversations pertaining to GLBT students and faculty are occurring (Banks and Banks, 2004), the conversations need to be heightened and expand beyond notions of curriculum (see chapter five) in order to address the rising GLBT population in American schools. I hope that my writing will assist in the continued examination and potential transition from marginal to “out and proud” within American schools and curriculum.

Beyond firmly representing GLBT needs in relation to diversity, another goal in my writing is to describe the overwhelming amount of status quo that exists in relation to diversity and education. The same definitions and the same messages have been sent to students, faculty, and the larger educational community that diversity is a composite of difference—different students, different cultures, and different languages. The message equates diversity to difference, and, as I will argue, promotes diversity as a term of oppression, not inclusivity.

Thus, I argue that diversity no longer be constructed on difference. And while I do not have firm solutions, I offer several possibilities throughout my writing that are meant to expand the discussion on diversity, and, I hope, begin education talking about how diversity can be better implemented within the curriculum and larger school communities.

My writing is not meant to undermine the many scholars and educators that have worked tirelessly to promote current understandings of diversity and its meaning(s) in American education. I believe, however, that the way(s) in which diversity is presented in current literature strips diversity of purpose in education today, and as educators we must examine and interrogate if diversity today is serving the needs and interests of all students in American education.

Throughout the writing of my thesis, I have written with examination, conversation, and possibility in mind. However, I first examine where diversity has been and where it currently sits in the educational consciousness. It is this history that begins the conversation. In chapter two, the review of literature, I will examine the history of diversity: the major scholars associated with diversity, the movements that have created diversity as is seen in American education today, and where diversity might be heading in the educational arena.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this literature review, I seek to examine the ways in which diversity is defined in American education today. The review focuses on two categories of diversity: multiculturalism and race. I discuss a third category of diversity—GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender) — as a means to highlight its pseudo-inclusion in contemporary diversity definitions beyond cursory inclusions in curriculum and hospitable discussions. Finally, the conclusion examines the possibility of GLBT inclusion under the banner of diversity in education, and suggests two obstacles to inclusion—the curriculum and consensus.

AN UMBRELLA TERM: DEFINING DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

Diversity is a difficult word to define given its many positive and negative connotations within education and society. Indeed, the word diversity in and of itself implies different, many, or variation. Eric Rofes (2000), educator and activist, asks two important questions:

When we in the USA say we ‘value diversity’, do we mean we seek to create sites where people of different genders, races, classes, and sexual identities can come together and bring with them the social and cultural attributes that mark them as different, unusual, transgressive? Or do we mean that we like the *concept* of diversity but, in practice, aim to whitewash, silence, de-sex, straighten-out or overlook cultural differences? (p. 444)

Rofes' question is important in attempting to understand how diversity is defined and used. Within the American educational landscape, diversity is used as a catch-all word, an umbrella term that encompasses a whole host of categorized social and cultural forms and ways of being. Banks et al (1993), as cited in Marrow et al. (2005), define diversity as "the wider range of racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious variation that exists within and across groups that live in multicultural nation-states" (p. 17). Banks' definition of diversity mirrors that of other researchers (Bourdieu, 1984; Marrow et al, 2009) in that it is categorical in nature, as they break down, element-by-element, what is included within diversity, broad and open-ended. It is this categorical nature of these definitions that proves problematic to discussions of diversity as educators and administrators broach diversity as a system of differences rather than a system of inclusivity. This is problematic because diversity conceptually in education then becomes about how students are different, creating divisions and "cliques" within education, and not about how students can learn from one another's differences. French sociologist Bourdieu and literacy educator Marrow hold a similar, broad definition of diversity. Marrow defines diversity as, "[a] term used in contemporary discussions about American education, is the product of a historical process of diversification of populations occupying shared space" (p. 21). This definition, similar to Banks', continues to classify diversity as a broad, open-ended concept within education. Thus, diversity in education seemingly is meant to be for anyone who "shares space." The problem with this definition, similar to Banks', is that it is without clear distinctions. What are the parameters of "shared space" in this definition; furthermore, how does this relate to diversity in education?

Just as diversity has been defined in large, overarching definitions such as Banks', so, too, has it been defined through the lens of its components. Below diversity is defined via its components: multiculturalism, race, class, culturally responsive teaching, and gay and lesbian issues.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: IS IT MORE THAN RACE?

Arguably the most prominent component of diversity in education is multiculturalism. Educational psychologists and researchers Shapiro, Sewell, and DuCutte (1995) state that "current presentations of diversity are either synonymous with, or extensively overlap with, presentations of multicultural education" (p.2). These overlaps between diversity and multiculturalism calls into question how diversity conceptually can be effective within education if it is not strictly defined. Does diversity, then, merely a composite of educational terms and programs that seek to help various student populations? Multicultural education is defined by Banks and Banks (1993) as "the idea that all students—regardless of their gender or social class and their ethnic, racial or cultural characteristics—should have an equal opportunity to learn in school" (p. 3). It is this belief in equal opportunity on which multicultural education was born during the Civil Rights Movement and African-American outcry against discrimination, especially in educational institutions (Banks, 1989; Davidman and Davidman, 1997). Multicultural researchers Sleeter and Grant (1988), however, take a more direct approach to defining multicultural education, stating it involves "educational practices directed towards race, culture, language, social class, gender, and handicap" (p. 26). This "directed" approach to pedagogy and curriculum towards minority groups has shaped multicultural education in hopes of effecting social change, and in an attempt to close the

achievement gap. The “directed” approach has seen a movement in education from the ‘individual’ (individual achievements) to the ‘whole’ (classified groups of students and their achievements). Education has singled out whole groups of students in hopes to better assist them and their learning needs (more on the problematic nature of this practice in chapters four and five).

However, just as multicultural education is seen by educators as a way to teach students about respecting differences and working toward democratic ideals (Banks, 1989), much debate about its boundaries and limitations still exists, and many of the debates center on race and social class, which, in much of the literature, share many of the same viewpoints regarding the advantages (i.e. allowing students to understand how race/class affects language) and disadvantages (promoting a worldview of diversity that focuses on a single variable) that a focused, albeit limited, perspective of diversity provide. The disadvantage, then, promotes a segregated notion of diversity by presenting diversity as singular differences between students, and reinforces the idea that diversity as a concept in education promotes difference not inclusivity. It should be noted that the topics discussed below, with regards to race and class, are cross-topical. That is to say that they appear in the literature for each category—race, class, GLBT—of multicultural education as it pertains to diversity in schools.

Race. Arguably regarded as the foundational means by which multicultural education came about, race remains a significant aspect of multicultural education. Race is a key component of multicultural education as scholars (Gandara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2000; Landson-Billings, 2008) see it as education for people of color, who are routinely underserved and disserved by schools, as opposed to a means to expand notions of

diversity through an understanding and comprehension of race and culture. Indeed, this was the prevailing thought when the term multicultural education first came into being in the mid-1960s, (Gorski p. 1) and continues in educational thought today. Race, then, became the foundation of multiculturalism when it was introduced, and, arguably, continues to be the foundation today; though, other movements are present that present race as only one element of multiculturalism, not *the* element. While the notion of skin color and disenfranchised minorities continues to be a point of contention in education, some scholars (Gresson) are moving beyond the notion that education and race are interrelated, and argue that race and education are beginning to be thought of as separate entities.

Gresson (2008) argues that race and education are not all about the color of skin, but rather are a perspective that educators hold. He argues that “race and education” “refers to the education and schooling that were created because of an influence by ideas about certain minorities” (p. 7). Gresson, distinguishing between “race in education” and “race and education” provides an important change in the discourse of race in relation to education. “Race in education” reinforces the idea that diversity in education, with regard to race, refers to the color of a student’s skin. Furthermore, that it is the color of the student’s skin that will determine his/her achievement level. “Race in education” refers to an ideology of diversity that argues that those that are not Caucasian will need assistance to achieve in equal with those that are. “Race and education,” however, implies that race and education are two separate entities that work together, that are influenced by one another. However, Gresson is quick to point out that varying perspectives of race and education are still present including the continued discussion of the achievement gap

and its existence, and the notion of racism in education (p. 10). Both perspectives on race and education provide critical insights into how race as a conceptualized notion in education is being used within the larger framework of diversity. Similarly, both perspectives help to highlight the justifications I present in arguing that race can no longer be contextualized within discussions of diversity (more on this in chapter four).

Class. With respect to diversity in education, the relationship between class and schooling is oftentimes subtle. The debate regarding class within educational structures focuses largely, but not solely, on two camps: those that believe that schooling reaffirms the dominant cultural structure (Bernstein, 1982; Wexler, 1982), meaning that cultural norms (e.g., notions of honesty, work, and so on) are upheld through the American education system, and those that believe schooling reproduces the economical paradigm (class system) within the curriculum of the school (Shapiro, 1990), which is to say that schools condition students for their roles/jobs within society. This notion could also be used to reiterate the discussion of race. Tracking and “hidden curriculum” are two ways in which class and education are linked, and a way in which diversity within the educational system remains categorical.

Tracking is the notion that students are divided into groups based on ability (Gamoran, 1992). Fiedler, Lange, and Winebrenner (1993) define tracking further stating, “Tracking separates students into class-size groups using their perceived ability or prior achievement...there is little movement between tracks during a school year or from one school year to another” (p. 45). In this way, certain students are categorized and some students are allowed access to knowledge that others are not, which inherently implies an inequality in education. Some educators believe that tracking has its benefits,

including more effective and direct instructional time and academic success for gifted and talented students and students in higher ‘tracks’ (Ansalone, 2003; Fiedler, Lange, & Winebrenner, 2002). In contrast, many educators believe that tracking is just another way that educators distinguish students based on limitations of the school system and on race, class, and culture (Oakes, 1990; Hyland, 2006). Tracking, arguably, is about access for students within education and where students are positioned within education due to perceived limitations of learning and success based upon notions of race, class, culture, language, etc. Low-track classes tend to be primarily composed of low-income students, usually minorities, while upper-track classes are usually dominated by students from socioeconomically successful groups (Hyland, 2006). While tracking is a point of contention with regards to race and class, tracking also occurs that is not based on any systematic or categorizing of students (i.e. Advanced Placement courses where students voluntarily sign up for the course).

Similar to tracking is hidden curriculum. Giroux defines the hidden curriculum as, “Those unstated norms, values, and beliefs embedded in and transmitted to students through the underlying rules that structure the routines and social relationships in school and classroom” (Giroux, 1982, as cited in Kentli, 2009, p. 84). Giroux’s definition implies that the American education system operates, at least in some form, on acquired cultural norms, and that students are subjected to these norms in school. This normalization is problematic as not all students are the same, and neither are the ‘norms’ by which they live.

The larger implication for education, in terms of diversity, is that students are no more diverse than the ‘track’ or curriculum they participate in, and that students on

higher tracks, which could mean more intensive curriculum, are at an advantage both in- and out-of-school. Furthermore, students of color or other cultural backgrounds could be at a further disadvantage as they attempt to acculturate themselves to U.S. norms and schooling.

THE NEW MULTICULTURALISM? CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS IN EDUCATION

Multicultural education, as discussed above, has been the catch-all phrase for many years in education. Notions of race and racism, pedagogy and praxis have been central components of multicultural education. However, in the last decade, notions of race have, in some educational circles, been thrust to the back, and a new educational paradigm has taken shape: culturally responsive teaching. Multicultural educator and scholar Gay (2000) predicates the need for “systematic, holistic, comprehensive, and particularistic reform interventions” (p. xiii) stating:

Significant changes are needed in how African, Asian, Latino, and Native American students are taught in U.S. schools. Two characteristics of their current achievement patterns highlight this imperative. One is the *consistency of performance patterns* among ethnic groups across different indicators and measures of school achievement. The other is the *variability of achievement* of subsets of individuals in ethnic groups. (p. xiii)

Gay, then, argues that learning for students of different cultures needs “significant changes” based upon the achievement data of various cultural groups within education; Gay will argue that attention to a student’s culture will be paramount to reaching him/her in the classroom. Similarly, Ford (2010) echoes Gays’ sentiments stating, “the need to

focus more assertively and proactively on students' culture—their values, beliefs, habits, customs, and traditions—may be greater now than ever before in our nation's history" (p. 50). The movement Gay and Ford refer to—culturally responsive teaching—moves beyond multicultural education and deals with educators looking at students' (and their own) notions of culture, and the ways in which culture creates meaning in one's life. Gay defines culturally responsive teaching as

[U]sing cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches *to* and *through* the strengths of these students. It is culturally *affirming* and *validating*. (p. 29)

Indeed, several researchers believe that culture is the foundation of educational practice today (Boykin, 1994; Gay, 2000; Pai, 1990; Splinder & Splinder, 1994) and that educators have a duty to look at the “social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our lives” (Gay, 2000, p. 8). One of the underlying principles of culturally responsive teaching is that it is “based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of students they are more personally meaningful, have a higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly” (Brown, 2007, p. 60). The purpose of culturally responsive teaching, then, is to allow students to see their own experiences within the classroom setting, and in doing so, students will in turn be more capable of learning and achieving in the classroom. In this situated experience, culturally responsive teaching seeks to create for students an order to allow for greater academic

achievement and understanding; if students can see themselves in the curriculum, then they are more likely to be engaged in the classroom. In large part, the effectiveness and perspective that culturally responsive teaching takes is shaped by educators (Cummins, 1996; Freeman, 2004; Nieto, 2002) themselves. Educators can take either an inclusive approach, where the classroom and curriculum is approached with the mindset that students bring information to the classroom, or educators can take a deficit approach whereby they see students from other cultures as having to be taught everything and thus a lot of work needs to be done (Mitchell, 2009, p. 3). Much like multicultural education, culturally responsive classrooms, curriculum, and pedagogy is predicated on the educator's sense of understanding and urgency to "address a need(s) so that students experience success" (Ford, p. 1). Culturally responsive teaching is a branch of the 'multiculturalism' tree, a movement that continues to focus on a limited view of diversity.

Another relatively new branch of the multicultural, and diversity, tree is gay and lesbian students. Like race and multiculturalism, gay and lesbian issues center on issues of achievement and curriculum. However, issues of language are also seen within the literature and speak to issues of pacification. Below I outline the literature pertinent gay and lesbian issues in education.

GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER (GLBT) ISSUES IN EDUCATION

Annamarie Jagose (1997), a queer theory scholar, argues that June 27, 1969, is "a date which marks the constitution of lesbian and gay identities as a political force" (30). It is this "political force" that continues to strive for social, political, and educational

equality for gay and lesbian men and women (the date refers to the Stonewall Riots in New York City). However, educational equality for GLBT men and women would see roadblocks. These roadblocks provide the basis for my discussion of GLBT issues in education. I begin with notions of tolerance as it is paramount to looking at issues of language and curriculum.

Language and sexuality scholar, Cynthia Nelson (2009), who conducted a study of sexual identities in English language education, makes a critical point. She says, “If the underlying teaching aim is understood to be promoting tolerance, then *some* teachers...are likely to find that problematic and *may* steer clear of lesbian/gay themes altogether” (p. 59). What is important in Nelson’s statement is the use of the words “some” and “may.” Using both of those terms, Nelson highlights the inconsistency in the literature and in the education system by which educators determine to what degree they “use” diversity in their language (see chapter four) and their curriculum (see chapter five). In questioning the aim of teaching, Nelson is inadvertently questioning the role of the curriculum, especially when it becomes “problematic,” and in the same turn ‘normalizes’ or socializes the notion of tolerance in education, at least in the context of GLBT issues in education.

Paul Vogt, professor of research methods and evaluation, in *Tolerance and Education: Learning to Live with Diversity and Difference*, defined tolerance as, “putting up with something you do not like—often in order to get along better with others” (p. 1). This definition by Vogt is one instance within American education where tolerance as a concept is contextualized in a negative fashion. Tolerance from Vogt’s point of view is

not founded in understanding and acceptance of differences, but is instead grounded in difference itself and equates tolerance to a form of pacification.

Another viewpoint of tolerance (toleration) comes from Peter Jones. In his article, “Toleration and Recognition: What Should We Teach?” Jones argues,

When we self-consciously tolerate x, we possess two sorts of reason: (a) reason to condemn x as bad or wrong or otherwise objectionable, which is also *prima facie* reason to prevent x if we can, and (b) reason not to prevent x in spite of its negative character and in spite of our ability to prevent it if we chose (p. 39).

Jones’s discussion of tolerance provides an interesting dichotomy in the thinking of tolerance: we find “x” objectionable and try to change it or we “tolerate” and try not to change. Using these two options as background, I argue that there is no difference between objection and tolerance. Instead, I argue that Jones underscores an important understanding of how tolerance in American education is presented to students, and the negative message that tolerance sends to students. (Tolerance and education will be discussed directly in chapter four.)

A large chunk of the literature relating to GLBT students and issues in education revolves around curriculum (Blackburn & Buckley, 2005; Clark and Blackburn, 2009; Lipkin, 1999; Puccio, 1989; Unks, 1995). As Nelson portrays above, the debate about the inclusion or non-inclusion of GLBT curriculum hinges, to some degree, on notions of empathy and what that means for curriculum. Unks, a professor of Social Foundations at the University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, argues (1995) that “urging students to be tolerant of gays along with other minorities” (p. 39) does more harm than good. The implication being that GLBT students are categorized under the guise of multicultural

education, and thus assumes that GLBT students' needs are similar to "other minorities" which is a disservice to both GLBT students and students of other minority status. Unks' notion provides the same problem that any type of diversity 'grouping' provides: it does not take into account variables relatable only to the specific group (i.e. race and skin color, class and socio-economic status, GLBT students and coming out). This grouping of GLBT students based on that lone characteristic is much like the tracking of students due to racial- and cultural-based characteristics.

Unks goes on to say that, "Spending a few class minutes countering a handful of misconceptions or even having a special "sensitivity session" about homophobia *separates* the gay experience from the central curricular goals of the school" (p. 40). The separation of the gay experience that Unks speaks of can have a troublesome effect on GLBT students' identities and can lead to a "false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (Taylor, as cited in Petrovic, 2002, p. 150). The question that Unks and Taylor leave educators with is, "What is the meaning of tolerance?" In addition, is tolerance meant to be the "new" diversity by which educators and institutions operate on? Tolerance with respect to GLBT students is the promotion of the GLBT identity through the language of education but with no larger purpose than to create a false sense of belonging within the classroom setting. From the perspective of diversity in education, tolerance is intended to be the new multiculturalism or culturally responsiveness already "in action" within schools; it is intended to be the new "it" term by which diversity is measured as a means to show its "aliveness," or the extent by which diversity is present in schools, and stability within current American education.

Furthermore, both speak to the need of a refocused curriculum that directly discusses GLBT issues in a non-categorized, inclusive manner where “deliberate curriculum and guest speakers” (Unks, p. 37) are not the only instructional methods present. Deliberate curriculum referring to those uses of texts or speakers that serve no larger purpose than to pacify GLBT students as represented in the classroom setting.

Cynthia Nelson (2009) asks a similar question: What might it look like to think queerly...about teaching? (p. 109). Nelson clarifies what she means by saying,

“By “thinking queerly about teaching” I mean finding ways to acknowledge the range of sexual identities (lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, and so on) that is circulating...among teacher and student cohorts in the classroom” (p. 109).

Nelson’s language continues the somewhat conscious notion by educators to “acknowledge” or “tolerate” GLBT students and the issues that they present in the classroom. However, Nelson’s comment raises questions about the role of GLBT issues in the classroom. Her comment seems predicated on tolerance and mere acknowledgement. Nelson states that she wants to find ways to “acknowledge” sexual identities in the classroom but does not speak to going beyond this mere acknowledgement, which promotes a view of tolerance in that the classroom then becomes a space not of authentic representation but of mere acknowledgement; nothing more than the message of “you exist” is presented or promoted. The perception of GLBT issues, then, is that they, and the students that inhabit them, are categorically different than other students within the classroom.

Similarly, veteran educator and GLBT researcher, Arthur Lipkin’s (1999) landmark text, *Understanding Homosexuality, Changing Schools*, challenges the notion

of the curriculum and questions the exclusion of GLBT students beyond a sanitized inclusion. Lipkin argues that the role of curriculum and educators is to “help students see sexuality objectively and in all its forms” (p. 332). He goes on to state that a ‘truthful curriculum’ is what is needed in education, not one that is “sanitized” (p. 332). Lipkin highlights the need for a true or unabashed curriculum that educates students without the blinders of society or without fear of discussing sexuality as a part of adolescence and of life.

WHAT IS DIVERSITY ANYWAY?

My review of literature has allowed me to come to two conclusions. First, that the literature is expansive and contains valuable information on how diversity has been defined in the past twenty years, which programs have come from that definition, and the deficits that the current definition(s) of diversity make prominent. Second, the literature is incongruent. Much of the literature is focused on multicultural education, and while definitions of the concept are supplied, the real notion behind multicultural education seems to never become clear. In addition, how GLBT students are to be represented within education is also murky as tolerance and ‘queer-inclusive’ teaching are seen as solutions. Finally, various themes are highlighted in the literature; I break them down below.

Definitions. Within the literature, diversity is defined in many ways: diversity is culture, diversity is race, diversity is class, and diversity is GLBT. The literature that defines, and and, in many cases does not define diversity, is all categorical; it defines diversity by the categories of difference between student populations—African-American, Caucasian, GLBT, Heterosexual, and so on. While much of the literature clearly was meant to be a

support infrastructure on ways to assist students from “diverse” backgrounds, much of the literature consulted made diversity look like an insurmountable notion or task.

Diversity was phrased as an idea, a notion, a banner under which students fit. In addition, much of the literature presented competing definitions: some definitions were broad and some were categorical.

Categories. Perhaps the biggest theme within the literature was the notion of categories. As mentioned above, diversity seemingly is the “catch-all” phrase into which all students in the educational world fit. However, underneath the broad definitions come multiple categories or classifications of students, their needs, and solutions to those needs. In the literature students are categorized in multiple ways. First, there are the categories under which students fall in a broad sense: multicultural, sexual, gender, and racial. Second, there are categories within that further separate students: white, black, gay, straight, English language learner, native speaker, lower-class, middle-class, and so on.

These dichotomies present the literature as inconsistent and make defining diversity a relative impossibility. However, the literature also suggests that the dominant ideology, present with regards to diversity in education, is that categorization is an approved practice. The literature points to the fact that education uses categories in order to develop and inform curriculum, standards, and pedagogy. The implication in using dichotomies, such as cultural vs. diversity, race vs. ethnicity, and heterosexual vs. homosexual is that the educational system, albeit not all of it, believes that categorization will lead to better students and better teachers. For example, in promoting difference through race, the “goal” is to better appropriate resources to African-American (or other minority groups) students in an attempt to provide these student populations with a better

education and better educational opportunities. The problem lies in the segregating of American education and the possibility of tokenism—“Oh, you’re [insert minority group], come with me, and let me assist you,” even when assistance is potentially being offered based purely on stereotypes or generalizations about the student(s).

Curriculum. The implication to come out of the literature regarding curriculum is that there is no standardized curriculum to assist in meeting the needs of diversified students. In part, the non-standardized curriculum works to the advantage of the categorical system: education provides for the needs of each student, regardless of how they differ from their fellow students.

However, in doing so, just as the discussion of tracking and “hidden curriculum” suggests, the curriculum is uneven in terms of rigor and availability. There is a contentious debate among educators on what the curriculum should and should not do for students. For example, in the case of GLBT students, the literature is divisive on how the curriculum should be handled in relation to both GLBT students and heterosexual students. How does the curriculum make the classroom equitable?

The literature on curriculum highlights the need for a revamped discussion on curriculum and inclusion, and the need to address the grey area that is GLBT students and educators, and the issues that both validate and invalidate them.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For the purposes of my research and subsequent interest in diversity, the subject of categorization/dichotomization supplies an interesting look at the ways in which educational practice and research has been conducted over the past several decades. In particular, the categorization debate have given credence to the idea that educational

research, and in turn the policies and pedagogy that are informed by it, are in need of a refocused approach to better meet the needs of the new learners, thinkers, and identities that are present in classrooms today.

To that end, this thesis seeks to analyze, discuss, and provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the role of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) students and educators in defining diversity in the 21st century?
2. How does language—definitions, meanings, and implications of said meanings—affect diversity in education? Furthermore, what message(s) is being sent to students regarding diversity in American education?
3. What role does pacification play in creating an unequal curriculum in American education? Also, what are potential solutions to this pacification?

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As suggested in chapter two, diversity in American education is a mish-mash of policies that are intended to assist American schoolchildren in understanding what it means to be tolerant and accepting of others who are similar to or different from who they are. This very notion of diversity and its many definitions, meanings, and implications is at the heart of my research. This chapter seeks to offer an in-depth understanding of my research process: from the concept of my research topic, to participants, to source material. In doing so, I hope to examine my emerging positioning, setting, and participants.

THE ‘WHY’: POSITIONING ON “DIVERSITY” IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

Growing up, I knew diversity as a positive thing. Being a white, middle-class male, Diversity and I got along. We never quarreled or even raised our voices. In that same vein, I never questioned Diversity, and Diversity never questioned me. The benefits from Diversity were numerous as I grew up a member of, and eventual product of, the American education system. Because of Diversity, I was permitted to take Advanced Placement (AP) courses; I was involved with National Honor Society (NHS); and I was seen as a promising young man who would go far in his life. I was, in Diversity’s eyes, an everyday, “normal” student. Diversity served me well.

At the age of sixteen, in the span of one week, I came out to my family, my friends, and my school. None took the news well. My family never spoke of my homosexuality and asked that I do the same—never speak of my homosexuality. In

doing so, my family asked me to hide my homosexuality, and by extension, how I identified myself at that time in my life. This created a disconnect between my family and me and is a core reason for my outspoken disposition in relation to GLBT issues, and a justification as to why I use my own personal experiences within my writing, academic or otherwise.

My classmates were shocked; they were in disbelief that I would pronounce so openly that I was a homosexual male. It was in this moment, and the subsequent three years of high school, that Diversity and I had our falling out. Suddenly my white, male, middle-class status meant nothing. Diversity had a far-reaching effect on the latter years of my high school experience. Friends no longer spoke to me, the curriculum and textual choices in my classes no longer had anything to do with me, and the events that I had once been so much a part of no longer wanted me. As I struggled with my new status within my school, teachers and friends continued to insist that Diversity was there for me: there to talk to me, there to support me, there to help me connect with others like me. There were ‘Days’ and ‘Weeks’ in which Diversity was promoted to be there to assist me in what I felt and what I experienced, touted in front of me like a celebrity appearance that I just had to make it to.

Like many “othered” students—the multicultural student, the non-dominant race student, and the lower-class student—I understood what it was like to hang my hope on Diversity but to no avail. In this instance, Diversity saw me but was not there in the ways I needed: beyond the promise of his existence, beyond the countless “it’s okay” messages told to me from those I knew, and beyond the mere mentioning that Diversity existed; I

needed Diversity to give me a reason to believe “it gets better” (more on this in chapter four). Diversity did not.

It is from experience that I write. In pondering my thesis project, memories like the one above continued to creep into my mind. I spent a lot of time wondering what diversity was like for me, the gay male growing up in the American education system. Upon reflection, I came to the realization that the notion of diversity was like a friend who loves you for who you are until who you are does not jive with what they believe is important. I have asserted in many of my graduate courses at Colorado State University that the notion of diversity—what it is, how it is defined, and who it protects and/or demonizes—is something that has eluded me. And yet, my experiences within the education system are unique, as I am both a part of privilege and a part of the “other” status in American education. It is this dichotomy of experiences—being accepted due to my racial makeup in one breath, and being rejected due to my homosexuality in another breath—that has led me to research American education as it relates to diversity as a concept in schools and curriculum. It is this rejection, this feeling that I do not have a voice in the educational conversation or that I do not have a place in the curriculum, that inspires my writing on a personal level.

I also write from the perspective of an educator. I have taught in several classrooms, observed in many more, and have researched extensively on literature in education. My experiences within the classroom as both teacher and observer have helped to shape the lens from which I write. Furthermore, as an educator, I have openly expressed my sexuality in the classroom with mixed results. The experience of doing so

has challenged my understanding of diversity and its role(s) in American education. It is with these added experiences from which I investigate, analyze, and write.

In choosing American education, I have chosen to examine the role(s) diversity plays at the secondary level (grades six through twelve). I have set my research parameters at the secondary level as I feel that it provides the best possible scope of student experiences for my thesis writing. In saying this, I mean that the secondary experience provides a scope of the adolescent experience that directly ties into diversity and education in a manner that has implications for grades both beyond and before the secondary level. Examining how diversity affects late adolescent students could allow me to better assist my own students for whom I am training to teach. In addition, the life of a secondary student is an important period in developing a sense of identity within one's self in relations to one's surroundings and peers (Lipkin, pg. 334).

THE 'WHO': PARTICIPANTS AND POSSIBILITIES REGARDING DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

I knew early on in my graduate studies that the topic of my thesis writing would be centered on diversity. I also knew that I wanted to focus on the area of schooling that meant most to me growing up, in both positive and negative ways, and I wanted to focus on those students who, from my point of view, have the most to gain and lose from an out-of-focus view of diversity in schools: high school students. Within the larger spectrum of students, my research specifically strives to address issues of diversity as they pertain to more marginalized students--students of "different" ethnic and cultural backgrounds, races, sexual orientations, and socio-economic statuses.

In examining only high school students, I hope to better understand how diversity can be shaped to suit their needs. That is not to say that students in grades K-8 are dissimilar from those at the high school level. I decided to examine high school students instead of lower grade levels due to the range of adolescence that is presented in the high school setting. In looking at the way(s) in which diversity programs and curriculum function to serve students, it is my goal to better understand how diversity within schools assists with or works against the adolescent experience.

Beyond students, other participants in my thesis include educators: teachers, principals, assistant principals, and other school officials who hold an obligation to uphold diversity in schools. These individuals, in part, hold control of the shape that diversity takes within the school. From curriculum to after school programs, school personnel impact how diversity as a concept is implemented within the school climate. I should note, however, that my research takes into account external factors for which school personnel are not in control: funding, federal mandates, and, to a limited extent, community opinion.

A final note on educators provides a binary by which educators use curriculum as a means of diversity or promoting diversity. Some educators use curriculum to uphold a status-quo image of diversity; an image that does not move diversity toward a more inclusive curriculum; a surface-level approach to diversity. For example, an educator who uses a text such as *Freak Show* or *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* to examine sexuality for the sole purpose of being able to say, "I'm using it because I am diverse," with little understanding of what that means, does nothing more than negate the role and purpose of diversity in American education.

On the opposite end of the binary are the educators who promote diversity in curriculum; those educators who promote diversity and who examine diversity beyond difference, beyond the ‘everyday’ notions of race, class, and language. For example, an educator who uses a text such as *Freak Show* or *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* to examine sexuality as a part of a diverse community and as part of a diverse and changing school community; in addition, the use of the text would not be mere tokenism, but would assist in challenging students notions of diversity and other populations.

THE “HOW”: RESEARCH AND MOVEMENTS THAT HAVE INFORMED MY WRITING

I began my research by looking for definitions of diversity as a term. In researching I found definitions produced by many leading scholars. James Banks, a preeminent researcher and educator on multiculturalism (multicultural education) offered a somewhat broad definition of multiculturalism. Banks defines diversity as, “the wider range of racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious variation that exists within and across groups that live in multicultural nation-states” (p. 17). French sociologist Bourdieu and literacy educator Marrow hold a similar, broad definition of diversity. Marrow defines diversity as, “[a] term used in contemporary discussions about American education, is the product of a historical process of diversification of populations occupying shared space” (p. 21). These definitions were broad in nature and led me to question how diversity as a concept was nothing more than, what I call, an “umbrella term” which students fall under. With a basic notion of how diversity was defined, I began looking at movements within the larger context of diversity. In other words, the

generalized definitions gave me the categories that have long made up what diversity was, and now I went researching to make meaning of the individualized segments.

In my research process, there were three primary vehicles by which I searched: the Education Resources Information Center (E.R.I.C.), EBSCO HOST, and the Colorado State University Inter-library loan program, Prospector. In E.R.I.C., I began by searching basic terms—diversity, education, schooling—and received some promising articles and avenues. Using E.R.I.C., I did not go beyond the most basic of search terms for the first month or so of researching. My purpose in doing so was to obtain the most basic information possible. Having then read the general definitions of diversity I had already located, I then began to use the terminology in Banks' definition, and researched them individually. I used search terms such as: “diversity,” “multiculturalism,” “class,” and search phrases such as: “multicultural education,” “gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT),” “socio-economic status and education.” I used these same search terms in researching for book sources as well.

EBSCO HOST was much like E.R.I.C. with regard to search terms and phrases, but was more widely used. The same search terms used with E.R.I.C. were primarily used with EBSCO HOST. The difference between the two being that search terms and phrases had to be narrowed down to provide a more consistent return of results. For example, where “multiculturalism and education” could be used in E.R.I.C., “race and secondary education” or “sexuality and secondary education,” is used. Narrowing my search terms in the broad search engine assisted in finding more credible and specific articles and book chapters. The only problem using EBSCO HOST was that there are a lot of tangential search results that appear to be useful but turn out not to be.

Finally, using Prospector, I was able to find about forty texts that were useful in supplying not only basic definitions and understandings of diversity, but also found many supplemental texts that provided more background and understanding for my writing. Whereas in EBSCO HOST search terms and phrases had to be narrow and very specific, Prospector allowed broad search terms and phrases and still returned excellent results. Not all results were useful, but for every fifty texts, about ten-to-twenty were helpful in providing supplemental information or pointing my research in other, promising directions.

In researching, I found three categories on which diversity has been defined in terms of language, curriculum, and the larger school climate—multiculturalism, class, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT). These three overarching categories coupled with larger thematic issues provide the structure for my methodology and subsequent thesis chapters.

Multicultural(ism). As mentioned above, James Banks is a leading scholar on multiculturalism. Banks led the way with multiculturalism in that his research really was the first, that I could find, that categorized notions of difference within the student population. Banks and Banks posited that all students, despite the differences of race, social class, and so on, deserve the same quality education given to their peers. However, within the research was evidence of a problematic binary, two distinct camps pertaining to multiculturalism: one that defined multiculturalism as race and one that did not. The first camp, “Camp Race”, (Gandara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2000; Landson-Billings, 2008) firmly situates itself in the notion that race is the central component to multicultural education, and works toward helping disserved minorities, such as Black students.

However, the second camp, Camp Race and Education are Not the Same Thing (CREST), my own acronym, is an argument that race and education are not mutually exclusive. Education and Human Development researcher, Gresson III, argues that race and education are two separate entities that work together; two entities that do not need one another as many classic researchers have posited. This is a valuable association, or dissociation as it may be, because it provides a gray area, a place where education and race are not one in the same, where education and race are not discussed in mere correlation to one another. This gray area provides a framework by which the conversation involving race and education might center; no longer must the conversation center on race and education in a relationship, but now might be discussed as two singles.

Upon reading these statements and positions, I began to finally hone in on a focused discussion for my thesis. While the notion of diversity was still in my thoughts, the notion that diversity is categorical in nature began to become a recurring theme. With this realization, I began to piece together the hierarchical tree of diversity and education. Multiculturalism and race are at the top of said tree. And while notions of race certainly help me understand, in some manner, what multiculturalism is, I felt that I needed to research further on issues of culture, which, as my research shows, have become more prominent in education during the past decade. In researching “culture and education,” in Prospector, I came across the text *Culturally Responsive Teaching* by Gay, which indirectly connected to larger issues of race and diversity—how are they similar and/or dissimilar? **Culturally Responsive Teaching.** The focus of culturally responsive teaching is on culture and language, and how students from other cultures—including Africa, Brazil, Japan—will adapt and work within the American education system. Upon researching

Gay's work, and searching EBSCO HOST with search phrases such as "responsive teaching and culture" or "culturally responsive and education," I came upon Donna Ford, a scholar whose work discusses gifted and talented students with regards to culture. The importance of Gay's, and to an extent Ford's, research pertains to the further categorizing of American education. In addition, culturally responsive teaching/curriculum continued to break down said categories by sub-categorizing culture into notions of ideologies, social values, and language.

. At this point in my research, I had a firm understanding of how diversity was defined—or not—within the realm of education. I had the major players and major concepts that dealt with multiculturalism, race, and culture. Next I decided to continue my research on the categories of Banks' definition of diversity. I chose to research issues of class as they seemed to be, on the hierarchical tree, the least broad and yet a serious component of diversity discussions. That said, my research into class brought about two issues that are overarching concepts as they relate to diversity and education. In other words, these two notions could affect multiculturalism, race, culture, class, and GLBT students. The two notions being tracking and hidden curriculum. (Tracking and hidden curriculum are associated with diversity through many categories—race, class, language, sexuality. I have chosen to discuss them in relation to class as much of my research discussed both with that category in mind.)

Class. Unlike the other categories presented, class was a bit troubling to research. I initially was unsure where to begin. I used search terms such as "class" and "education" and "socio-economic status" in both EBSCO HOST and E.R.I.C. which produced some initial results, but nothing of substantive value. For a short time, the issue of class

seemed to be a dead-end in terms of research. Most of the research discussed notions of “haves” and “have nots” and issues of equity. This is problematic in that the research did not go beyond a cursory level of justification. The research also had very little to do with diversity and its relationship to class, which made it difficult to understand how class and diversity, in education or elsewhere, were related. Finally, I decided to move beyond merely looking for socio-economic status and class, and expanded my search terms to include broader phrases like “class and education,” “class and race,” and “class and multiculturalism.” I used these pairings of words as they (1) made the most sense given my previous searches and (2) because I was hopeful that doing so would help to disseminate some relationships that exist in the literature between class and race, class and multiculturalism, and class and diversity. It was within this search that the notion of tracking became a common theme among researchers. I initially began by finding a concise definition on which to rely. Fiedler, Lange, and Winebrenner (1993), define tracking further stating, “Tracking separates students into class-size groups using their perceived ability or prior achievement...there is little movement between tracks during a school year or from one school year to another” (45). This definition allowed me to see how diversity as a concept could potentially be used as a negative aspect of education rather than a positive. In addition, their definition added further fuel to the notion that tracking, in some ways, limits the needs and opportunities of students based on their “other” status(es).

After researching tracking, my next research area was its co-component—I say this because both were mutually discussed in the research I obtained—hidden curriculum. Now on the trail of categories within diversity education, the hidden curriculum helped to

further delineate said categories. On the one hand there was tracking which saw students, potentially, being held back or “tracked” into certain courses or strands of education. On the other, hidden curriculum, defined by Giroux as, “[T]hose unstated norms, values, and beliefs embedded in and transmitted to students through the underlying rules that structure the routines and social relationships in school and classroom” (Giroux, 1982, as cited in Kentli, 2009, p. 84).

Giroux’s definition of hidden curriculum posits that the American education system operates on acquired cultural norms. As I was reading Giroux, I began to really see the categorization or dichotomization present in American education. With the associated research on multiculturalism, race, and culture, categorization became a mainstay of my research. It was here that the focus of my thesis shifted from GLBT issues in education and diversity to larger contexts of diversity in American education and the implications associated with them.

The picture of diversity was beginning to become clearer. The associated definitions of diversity had allowed me to understand diversity and American education as a singular concept—both divisive and overextended—and thus allowed me to see some of the trouble spots in using the term “diversity” in the American education system; the notion of one-size-fits-all began to be the moniker by which my research took shape. However, I felt obligated, as I still do, to research and examine the reason for my thesis writing: GLBT issues in American education. This was my last area of research and the most challenging.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) Issues in Education. Understanding how GLBT issues related to the larger notion of diversity was where I began my research.

Like previous searches, I utilized E.R.I.C. and began using basic search terms like “gay,” “education,” “homosexuality,” “tolerance,” and “curriculum” in pairs. For the first few searches I found nothing. However, with the input of “curriculum” the results became more numerous and more troubling. The fact that much of the research in the academic world is predicated on notions of tolerance and curriculum was troubling to me (more on this in chapter four). For GLBT students and educators, it appeared that diversity was solely a curricular pursuit (one might argue forced), with the occasional article on bullying or “Diversity Day” (perhaps due to my use of E.R.I.C.). This is opposed to diversity, with regards to GLBT students and educators, being more than a once-a-year text or ‘Week’ that highlights the varying student population; beyond a curricular pursuit would mean creating a genuine assessment of the school climate and implementing ‘diversity’ on a grand, more everyday scale.

In finalizing which categories of diversity I would focus on within my thesis, I chose to create a new category for GLBT issues in education. My initial subgroup or subcategory of diversity was put in its own category as a means to argue that GLBT students, educators, administrators, and the issues that pertain to them go beyond curriculum, go beyond hollow notions of diversity, and I wanted to honor that notion beyond a cursory discussion of diversity.

As the literature discusses, diversity has had many incarnations within the educational world, some positive and some, arguably, negative. However, the literature seems to disagree with itself. The literature sends the message that diversity is a positive despite its obvious failings. However, the literature also says that there is much division within education about what diversity is and its role in education as a whole; is diversity

“Diversity Week” or a once-a-year textual selection? To that end, what is the message of diversity? What are the implications within that message? Who are the messengers of diversity and what is their intent? The answers to these questions are of necessary importance for diversity in education, and in establishing a firmer, more focused view of diversity and its role(s) in American education.

**CHAPTER FOUR: IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES—MESSAGE,
MESSENGER, AND DIVERSITY IN AMERICAN EDUCATION**

“It gets better.”

The recent GLBT-related suicides in the United States has prompted a series of video messages from the famous (Chris Colfer of *Glee*) and the powerful (Hillary Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State). “It gets better.” As both note, the world for GLBT students gets better beyond the adolescent stage, beyond the eyes of one’s peers, and beyond the walls of the American education system (K-12). “It gets better.”

Life will become more than a kid calling you “faggot” or “queer”; indeed, “it gets better” with time. While the slogan is catchy and memorable for adolescents across America, both in and out of school, the slogan itself is problematic in two areas: (1) the use of the word “it” and (2) the viewpoint by which “it gets better” serves as a positive message to those GLBT students and faculty facing harassment and ostracism in American schools.

The use of the word “it” is quite vague and leaves much to be argued about in terms of meaning and, more importantly, intent. Within the context of the message, the “it” implies that life gets better. The audience—the presumably GLBT student or faculty member—similarly is allowed to provide their own context for what the “it” is or is not in their lives. The inferred intention of the phrase is to provide a sense of hope to those GLBT students who are being bullied. The “it” is ambiguous to allow a universality of the phrase, which I would argue downplays its very intent to provide hope to its audience.

On that same note, the viewpoint by which “it gets better” is touted is also problematic. Yes, celebrities and political officials have come out and made ad campaigns stating that “it” gets better and that GLBT students and faculty should just hang on and make it through. More surprisingly is that the slogan is used to pacify the audience’s notions of the present. By pointing the audience to the future, there is no discussion of today, of right now. Thus, “it gets better” provides language that is meant to console and offer hope, yet does so at the cost of the now and the current problems facing its audience in American education. The message, then, loses its poignancy and becomes another slogan used to pacify GLBT students and faculty. For those students and faculty members listening and hoping of a brighter day, the question must be asked: who holds the power in this dynamic between messenger and audience?

While I believe that the intent behind the message and the messenger(s) is just and admirable, the power that these messengers—the celebrities and the politicians—hold outweighs the message, sullyng the very intent of the message. No longer is the message that life gets better, but that Celebrity X or Politician Y endorses this message and thus it is accepted and to be honored; the fact that the message takes meaning when someone famous speaks it or is heard speaking it should be cause for concern; *the messenger should not be the message.*

Similarly, the viewpoint of the message should neither be that of the rich and the powerful, unless they are currently within the education system, nor should it be solely those GLBT people who have survived the adolescent experience—Chris Colfer from *Glee*, Ellen DeGeneres from *Ellen*. For “it gets better” and other messages to provide

any measurable sense of purpose, student(s) must be able to find both the message and the messenger *relevant* and *relatable*.

My reasoning for opening this chapter on language with this discussion of GLBT students and faculty and “it gets better” is to present the major principle on which this chapter is written. The message of American education needs to be authentic and direct. The world around education changes and the language of education should too. American education should do more than recycle itself in an attempt to meet the needs of its ever-changing student population. Language changes and varies, and education as an institution in American society must get onboard with clearer and more forceful language if it is to remain relevant not only to students but to society as a whole. The message can no longer be centered on groups and can no longer position itself within difference.

DIVERSITY DEFINED: PROBLEMS—USING THE PAST TO *GUARANTEE* THE FUTURE

As discussed in previous chapters, diversity as a term is one that is used to promote an understanding of the differences that educators and students face in their daily academic lives. Diversity as a concept has been made the ‘holy grail’ in education, symbolizing understanding for students and educators alike facing prejudice in their academic pursuits. However, the use of diversity both as a term and as a concept within the educational lexicon is problematic. Diversity in today’s educational system serves no larger purpose than to alleviate the notion that problems do not exist within schools; that we are diverse in both our practice and our ideologies. “It gets better,” is one such example. The slogan does nothing more than cover up the fact that GLBT students are being bullied with little to no resolve. The slogan offered does not address the root of the

problem, but instead attempts to mask the problem by addressing not the cause but the effect.

One of the broadest and most influential definitions regarding how diversity is defined in education comes from James Banks. Banks defines diversity as, “the wider range of racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious variation that exists within and across groups that live in multicultural nation-states” (p. 17). The definition Banks provides is problematic in a couple of areas. First, the definition is vague. The notion of diversity being the “wider range” of x, y, and z is not clear. In addition, the second half of Banks’s definition names “multicultural” in reference to the scope of his definition; further blurring the lines of both the definition and its purpose. His use of “multicultural,” opens his definition up to a continued criticism as “multicultural” has many connotations within education—both positive and negative. Banks’s use of ‘multicultural’ calls into question how “multicultural” differs from the list of variations in the definition, and how “diversity” and “multicultural” are different in definition and purpose.

Second, the definition suffers from multiple layers. By this I mean that the definition is too multi-layered to be of any usefulness to educators. The definition opens itself up to “racial,” “cultural,” and “linguistic” areas of discussion, but does not specify in what ways, if any, each of them is important or valued within the broader notions of education. Thus, the message, in relation to education, of Banks’s definition becomes lost within its indirectness. For example, using Banks’s definition of diversity, is Student A, an African-American student who speaks Ebonics, just as accepted or less accepted in terms of school climate than Student B, who is a Hispanic student classified as an English

Language Learner (ELL)? Judging solely from Banks's definition, the message being sent is that both students are equally 'accepted' in the larger school climate. However, the message of Banks's definition becomes muddled behind the many 'layers', and thus for Students A and B, the notion of acceptance appears to be nothing more than an "everyone is invited" invitation with no real understanding of how Student A and/or Student B exist within the larger school climate. My point being that Banks's definition is too mainstreaming—it seeks to appeal to too many audiences—in its reach, and sends the message that difference, not the individual is what is relevant in the American education system. Thus Student A and Student B are known for their differences and not their individual skills, talents, and/or personalities. The inferred message education sends by acknowledging and affirming Banks's definition is that the part (the student) is not as important as the whole (the school).

Banks's definition of diversity is vital for discussions on how language and diversity intersect, both at the societal level and the educational level. And while it underscores the vagueness of the language presented, it also fails to accommodate a current notion of diversity as presented within education. Banks's definition fails to introduce current educational elements such as: sexuality, gifted and talented students, and class. Banks' use of the word "multicultural" at the end of his definition appears to be his attempt at providing a means to justifying and defining diversity in education, but his use of the word only provides a disconnect between his message and his audience, leaving the question of how 'diversity' and 'multicultural(ism)' in education are different from one another, if at all?

PROBLEM ONE: MULTICULTURALISM AS DIVERSITY

Multicultural [education] is defined by Banks and Banks (1993) as “the idea that all students—regardless of their gender or social class and their ethnic, racial or cultural characteristics—should have an equal opportunity to learn in school” (p. 3). It is easy to confuse, in terms of language and purpose, diversity and multiculturalism as they have, for so long, been synonyms for one another. (Banks and Banks, 2004) Multiculturalism, as Banks and Banks’s definition might infer, offers the ‘one size fits all’ understanding of diversity within education. That is where the problem begins with respect to the message that education is sending regarding multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is touted *as* diversity. The problem with this continued notion being used in education is that no one definition exists that pinpoints what multiculturalism is in education and how it relates to, replaces, and/or co-exists with diversity as a larger concept.

The definition that Banks and Banks provide justifies educational policy on notions of difference. Banks and Banks use the same materials to create the same type of building, just with a different name—two doors enter into the same enclosed room. Bricks such as “race,” “language,” and “culture” are all used to construct what “diversity” and “multiculturalism” are in American education. The problem is that both doors lead to the same experience for every user (student) regardless of individual experience; thus, the ‘experience’ of education under Banks and Banks’ definition is singular, focused on differences between users, and not on the *experiences* of the users.

In questioning the message of multiculturalism as diversity, I question the messenger’s intentions. Is multiculturalism truly serving students when every building with regards to diversity looks the same? The language of Banks and Banks would

suggest that it serves all students—all races, all cultures, all languages, all ethnicities. An argument could be made that the multiplicity of multiculturalism, as presented by Banks and Banks, ruins its chances at helping any students. Whereas multi-layered refers to the many layers or audiences that “multiculturalism” and “diversity” reference, multiplicity refers strictly to the fact that the definition has more than one possible purpose and/or message; the definition attempts to serve too many users (students).

“Multiculturalism” does not have a clear, direct purpose or message. One message being sent is that the purpose of “multiculturalism” is that everyone can fit into the “building,” through one of the doors presented—come one, come all. The problem with this notion is that it is too simplistic. Banks and Banks, while attempting to create an educational landscape that supports all learners, have, in fact, created an educational landscape where all users of the building, regardless of how they are similar or dissimilar, are *forced* into one of two nice, neat doors at the front of the building. The implied message to users: the purpose of this “building” in American education is to classify all users based on two methods of construction—diversity and multiculturalism—however, the current educational population proves this untrue.

For example, take gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) students who do not fit solely into one of the doors that Banks and Banks offer in their definition, but rather are a mixture of each of the doors—GLBT students come from all races, cultural backgrounds, socio-economic backgrounds, and linguistic variations. How then are GLBT students classified within Banks definition? What quality equals diversity for these students? With their inclusion in the debate in education, GLBT students have widened the scope of what “multiculturalism” and, by extension, “diversity” are as a

concept and their purposes in the American education system, and in doing so have laid down a challenge, intentional or not, to education: *change your way of constructing to better accommodate current education students, their identities, and their possibilities; provide multiple doors that lead to different experiences for your users.*

The purpose of Banks and Bank's building could also be scrutinized. On the one hand, the surface level purpose of the building is to provide access to education for every user, despite any difference they may have to their educational counterparts (i.e. black students compared to white students). However, in setting up this purpose there is an inherent power struggle being set up between those students that need the building and those that do not.

For example, race is a crucial factor in educational talks—how black students learn, their home environment vs. education environment, language (if applicable)—are all discussions being had by leading researchers in education, educators, and administrators—and multiculturalism is seen as the answer; the mechanism by which students of color are be given the chance to perform at their highest levels and with their white counterparts. While it is understandable for educators to want to discern how to assist students who are underperforming, the disservice to students comes in light of the comparison between races, sexes, and sexualities. In choosing multiculturalism as the answer, educators are sending a negative message to their intended users that achievement in a singular context is not as important as achievement in relation to other classmates. No longer is one student enough to show change in American education; instead, achievement must be seen in mass quantities in order for education (and society) to believe that education is making a difference. Education, then, transforms from an

institution that values the individual to an institution similar to a caste system where students are grouped based on their perceived notions of achievement; tokenism on its grandest scale within American education.

This creates an educational environment where a student matters only if she or he is, perceivably, at a disadvantage compared to classmates. If you are African-American or come from a background that is not as favored as your classmates, then you run the risk of being seen as, by default, needing help to achieve. This makes the very purpose of “multiculturalism” and “diversity” as Banks and Banks have outlined not about the equal education of all students, but education with a price. On an institutional level “multiculturalism” and “diversity” are no longer about inviting students into the building for the sake of their knowledge gaining or skill learning, but about inviting them in for the purpose of sending a message that says that education is an “equal opportunity” institution. The student is no longer priority; rather, the message that education sends through using the student is priority—“look at our student population...we care!”

I argue that the materials on which education’s building has been built need to be examined and analyzed in order to best understand how to rebuild itself for the future, moving beyond the two-door, one destination scenario currently used in education. Education should construct buildings based on more than difference and more than generalities. In order for education to matter, the building that is “diversity” and “multiculturalism” must be torn down, reduced to rubble, and sifted through to ascertain what from the old building could be or should be included, if anything. This must be done to better equip students with a model of education that looks at inclusivity, rather than categorization, as a means of transformation (more on this in chapter six).

It is this need for education to do more than rely on the past and to be more than the place where diversity exists that drives the need for these buildings. Education must produce buildings that send a message to students (and faculty and society) that says education is more than diversity in saying; education is diversity in action.

The debate among educators as to how to define multiculturalism, what it includes, and what it means for education over the past several decades has created a divisive educational landscape, which is evidenced by the many varying definitions “in play”. In having multiple definitions, such as the case with diversity as a concept, the impact and purpose of multiculturalism is diminished; without a clear understanding of what multiculturalism is, it cannot be the agent of change it is intended to be. The debate regarding multiculturalism centers on two perspectives of thought with regards to multiculturalism, and both center on notions of race.

PROBLEM TWO: RACE AS MULTICULTURALISM AS DIVERSITY

The original, and arguably the most prominent, layer in multiculturalism is race. At the time of multiculturalism’s inception, educators were looking for ways in which African-American students could achieve as well as their white counterparts. While the heart of education was in the right place, the means by which education went about helping African-American students was disheartening. As multiculturalism became a mainstay in American education, more and more layers were added: culture, class, language acquisition, and sexuality (in some cases). In continuing to add so many layers, multiculturalism as a conceptualized notion in education lost sight of its core message: to offer education, despite difference, to all students. What began as a place for students who would not otherwise have had learning opportunities to gain knowledge and skills

has over time morphed into crowded classrooms where students jockey for position and the right to be more than “that” student. However, with regard to multiculturalism and diversity, two perspectives exist, both of which position race at the center of their arguments.

The first perspective (Gandara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2000; Landson-Billings, 2008) looks at multiculturalism as a means to discuss, analyze, and initiate change based upon race and nothing more. Race, is the singular identity marker that has brought about multiculturalism, and is the single entity on which multiculturalism should be thought. The problematic notions that surround this perspective’s understanding of race is in defining multiculturalism by race and race alone, multiculturalism becomes race within education. With this comes the implication that students who are not racial in some way (i.e. Caucasian) are at an educational disadvantage. In this perspective, multiculturalism serves no purpose other than to stereotype again all students, despite race. Race becomes the measuring stick by which education is understood. Multiculturalism *as* race then is nothing more than racism hidden behind “multiculturalism.”

The second perspective (Gresson), which argues itself as more pragmatic, sees race and education as partners to one another. Race is not more important than education, nor is it seen as the only characteristic by which multiculturalism is founded upon. Rather, race and education operate to help each other but they are not mutually exclusive to one another. In this perspective, race and education are two entities working together to help students achieve, but are not reliant on each other for student success. Race does not equal multiculturalism, but is merely a foundational element on which multiculturalism is based.

While it would be wonderful to say that the second perspective differs from the first, that is not the case. From the outside looking in, the second perspective seems to disagree with the notion that race is multiculturalism. Nevertheless, the second perspective, in justifying how education and race are separate entities, is still a victim to the same fate of the first perspective. In arguing the separation between race and education the second perspective sends the message that race and education are not mutually linked, rather they assist one another in the creation of a multicultural school atmosphere. This cannot at any time be the case. For example, Black History Month is a month out of the year where race and education “join forces” for the betterment of the school society, and to send messages about the importance of black contributors to American education and society. The problem lies in the very notion of Black History Month. With the creation of and use of Black History Month, race and education become dependent on one another to send a message to students (and educators) that black people and their contributions are relevant. Education becomes the messenger and race, as a conceptualized understanding of ‘black,’ becomes the message. Thus, education and race are not separate from one another, but are in fact linked to one another just as they are in the first perspective. The second perspective declares ‘separate but equal’ but the message remains the same: race and education are dependent on each other in education.

The message that both perspectives send students is that race is part of education, is used to classify students, and to make students of a specific racial makeup feel relevant for one month out of the year. Either way, race should not be part of multiculturalism nor education as a whole. How race is utilized within education needs to be rethought in order to make students feel like they matter. Students can no longer be looked at through

a lens of skin color. In reimagining race in education, educators must also examine multiculturalism as a component in educational talk and processes. The time to reframe the door of multiculturalism, and by extension diversity, has come.

Beyond issues of race and multiculturalism, a new group of students (and faculty members) has emerged to challenge the notions of diversity in American education. This movement, many argue, began in June, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in New York City (Jagose, p. 30). On this night, GLBT people stood up for their rights to not be discriminated against for being who they are as individuals. This disobedience ushered in the Gay Rights Movement in America. Since that time, GLBT people have been fighting for gay marriage, equal employment opportunities, non-discrimination clauses in reference to workplace, insurance benefits, etc. Within education, the movement is similar, with students and educators alike fighting for equal rights: non-discriminatory clauses in their contracts and school contracts, rights to take someone of the same sex to school functions without penalty, curricular freedoms to teach GLBT-themed novels and texts.

This group, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT), of students defies older definitions of diversity and multiculturalism in many ways—not belonging to one race or culture, speaking a single language, or coming from a similar background—and challenges past discussions of diversity. This group of students and educators presents a new challenge to how diversity is defined within education, and a new viewpoint is necessary to meet the challenges and needs these students both present and inhabit.

PROBLEM THREE: TOLERANCE AS DIVERSITY

The discussion of GLBT students in educational realms is becoming common practice in education today, but mostly in relation to pedagogical practice (see chapter five). While some might argue that more GLBT persons can attribute to the increased visibility of GLBT issues in education, I offer two additional justifications. First is the mere expansion of visibility of GLBT persons in American society as a whole. GLBT people are no longer relegated to the dark rooms where many suspected they dwell doing ‘bad’ things. Now, GLBT people are standing up for who they are as individuals and a community, crushing the stereotypes that for so long have been lobbied against them, and living lives just as their heterosexual counterparts (marrying in some fashion, having children). Second, the landscape of American education has changed, and GLBT students, educators, and families, have helped to usher in that change. GLBT students are sending a message to education by standing up in an attempt to gain equal opportunities in education and to put an end to feeling ostracized and “othered” as they walk the halls. GLBT students are using their voices like never before to denounce the ways in which education, and the general society, have viewed them: sick, not ‘normal’, and different. For example, Constance McMillen, a Mississippi high school student who wished to take her girlfriend to her high school prom stood up and spoke up after she was told no by the administration and her prom was canceled. The cancellation sent a message to McMillen, and to GLBT students everywhere, that she was not valued as an individual in American education. While McMillen did not receive her prom as she would normally be afforded, the very act of her standing up and fighting for her rights as an education student shows one example of the GLBT student population fighting back. The need for GLBT students

to fight back stems the perceived message (“Diversity Week”, “it gets better”) that education does not care about who GLBT students are and their struggles. As such, GLBT students are no longer accepting the reason that they are different or that they are not similar to those students around them. Instead, GLBT students are now choosing to do something about the prejudice being seen in American education.

However, in GLBT students beginning to put their feet down in American education, something equally negative is being produced: tolerance. Education, in responding to the voices of GLBT students, has produced the GLBT-centric version of multiculturalism and/or diversity in tolerance. While tolerance is generally thought of as a positive aspect of education—the idea that students and educators alike are learning about other students and their identities—it is not with regard to GLBT students. Tolerance, like race, is a smokescreen by which the American education system hides its unknowledgeable understanding of GLBT students while at the same time providing a false sense of relevance to GLBT students. Education is the cat and GLBT students are the mouse.

Paul Vogt (1997), in *Tolerance and Education: Learning to Live with Diversity and Difference*, defined tolerance as, “putting up with something you do not like—often in order to get along better with others” (p. 1). Vogt’s definition is interesting in that the language provides a negative context in which to place tolerance. Tolerance in relation to GLBT students does not hold a positive connotation as is typically seen within education. Instead, tolerance with respect to GLBT students is “looking the other way” on a grand scale while using the message of ‘tolerance’ in education as something to hide behind. Thus, the language of tolerance and the message of tolerance are incompatible. The

language of tolerance suggests that GLBT students are merely casualties to the lack of understanding that education has with regards to who they are. Whereas the message of tolerance suggests that education fully supports and invites GLBT students into the ranks of American education.

Another viewpoint of tolerance (toleration) comes from Peter Jones (2010). In his article, "Toleration and Recognition: What Should We Teach?" he argues,

"When we self-consciously tolerate x, we possess two sorts of reason: (a) reason to condemn x as bad or wrong or otherwise objectionable, which is also prima facie reason to prevent x if we can, and (b) reason not to prevent x in spite of its negative character and in spite of our ability to prevent it if we chose" (p. 39).

An example that underscores Jones' two forms of reason regarding toleration is "Diversity Week." "Diversity Week," from the perspective of toleration, is a mixture of both lines of reasoning. Reason A posits that "Diversity Week" in some way is not "approved" by the general school climate, which could be argued true in that diversity, as is implied in the name "Diversity Week," only lasts one week; one week in which to underscore the power of diversity and its purposes in schooling. However, Reason B also comes into play in that the very existence, the very need of "Diversity Week" implies that there must be, at some level, an objection or "negative character" to those groups represented. Specifically, in American education, the very act of identifying as GLBT or including/proposing curriculum that includes GLBT texts and activities is most widely considered a "negative" as being GLBT is not yet widely accepted within the educational culture of America. As such, the two camps of reason Jones suggests possible, with respect to GLBT students and "Diversity Week," converge and the act of the 'Week,' in

some parts, is seen as objectionable, yet the ‘Week’ is allowed to continue despite objections to promote the notion that schooling in the United States is “diverse” and “tolerant.”

This is not to say that all schooling in America fits within the two ways of reasoning, as many schools and districts are providing safer and more affirmative places for GLBT students to gain knowledge and express themselves. Similarly, the placation of GLBT students and their issues could be seen as a positive in that GLBT students are being discussed, brought to the forefront of educational conversations happening in schools, and any discussion, despite the outcome, is more than welcome in American education. To this, I agree: discussion is a good starting point toward an inclusive model of education on which schooling and GLBT students and educators and begin to reconcile their differences and work toward equality and acceptance within American schools.

I discuss tolerance in relation to GLBT students not because they are the only student group who is “tolerated,” but because their relation to diversity and education is somewhat of a new phenomenon (see Banks and Banks, 2004). Within the larger diversity debate, the GLBT student (and educator) population has been the last to be “accepted” in the family, though one might argue that their acceptance was with a hesitant smile; tolerance is the representation of that hesitation in the eyes of education.

In many ways, tolerance is now taken the place of diversity as a whole in relation to GLBT students. Curriculum, school programs, and discussions pertain to how to teach other students to tolerate the difference that being a GLBT student provides. In this manner, tolerance taking the place of diversity—as a construct—is serving a negative

purpose in education. Teaching students that to be diverse means to tolerate their fellow classmates, and as Vogt says, “put up with,” their differences is teaching students diversity is equivalent to knowing that differences exist, but doing nothing to challenge or interrogate those differences. Diversity, then, becomes a passive element within education rather than an active one. This is problematic in that students are not learning what it means to be diverse authentically, but are learning that diversity is context-specific.

An example of this problematic notion of tolerance and diversity can be seen in a student who uses the phrase “that’s so gay” in class. The student is speaking to classmates and begins to utter the phrase “that’s so gay” but stops short of saying “gay.” The student looks around at the GLBT student sitting in the class and awkwardly silences himself/herself. The GLBT student leaves the room for a moment and the student continues their previous thought and outwardly says “that’s so gay” to several classmates. Here the student has not learned that using phrases like “that’s so gay” is offensive in any context, but has rather learned that tolerance is merely relevant when it is offensive to someone in the room. Specifically in this example, tolerance is not a factor in the student’s mind unless the GLBT student is sitting within earshot. Tolerance is context-specific not authentic which is evidenced by the continuation of “that’s so gay” once the GLBT student left the room.

The goal of diversity in education should not be the construction of tolerance. Teaching students to tolerate others for the sake of doing so is merely sweeping the problem under the proverbial rug. That is to say that the problems facing GLBT students will not just disappear on their own; there is no one quick-fix to making GLBT students

feel a part of the American education system. Below I offer two possibilities of ways to approach tolerance in education.

Possibility One: Across the Curriculum Discourse. I argue above in some small measure that conversation is one key to discussing tolerance within education. I do not mean conversation amongst just teachers and administrators or teachers and parents or singular departments. Rather, what is needed is the need for across the curriculum discourse. This discourse would see departments talking with one another about how to better integrate GLBT issues in their classrooms (see chapter five). But more so, the discourse would allow the possibility of engaging and analyzing what tolerance means in education outside the classroom. What does tolerance look like in the hallways of Fort Collins High School or East Central High School? This discourse would allow for the opportunity to engage in that discussion. Lipkin (1995) argues for a discourse that echoes my suggestion. He states:

What is required is sustained and serious academic discourse within disciplines of the school. Students need to understand the nature of sexual identity, the long history of same-gender attraction, and how it has been expressed in different times and cultures. They should know about past and current etiological research. They need to analyze how the homosexuality of a historical figure or an author might have influenced his or her life or work. They need to know something about the history of the gay/lesbian community in the United States as well as current issues in gay life (p. 40).

What Lipkin argues for is the complete immersion into the American education system of GLBT issues and histories. I agree with Lipkin that students having knowledge of GLBT

issues and history is an important step to creating a discourse in education. What is key with Lipkin's argument, to which I agree, is his use of the words "sustained" and "serious." Too easy would it be to begin these conversations in the classroom, say over a singular text or experience, and then to move on without mention of GLBT issues again. To do so would relegate GLBT students and the issues that matter to them to the margins. Education must take on GLBT issues seriously and as more than something used once or twice a year (see Chapter 5).

My agreement with Lipkin comes with a condition: the immersion of students into a discourse concerning GLBT issues must serve a purpose. That purpose must be more than getting students to understand or to "know something" about GLBT people because if that is the purpose of the sustained discourse than it is not better than the tolerance it fights against. The discourse between disciplines and in classrooms must create relevance in the lives of students and in the classroom space (more in chapter five) in order to be effective and tolerance-transforming.

Possibility Two: ALL GLBT Classes. Tolerance is based on an identity binary. The way I construct tolerance, you are either gay and need to be tolerated or you are not and presumably do not need to be tolerated. Using that notion of identity, I argue that one possibility is the creation of all GLBT classes. Here students would be GLBT and their Allies (Allies refers to those that are supportive of GLBT students and is not limited to other students; faculty may also be Allies) which would render identity, at least in regards to the need for tolerance, irrelevant. In arguing for a safe and equitable school environment, Roffman (2000) argues,

promoting a safe and equitable school environment does not mean the school is acting to promote any particular sexual orientation or gender identity, any more than maintaining a safe and equitable environment in relation to race, ethnicity, gender, or religion means promoting a particular race, ethnicity, gender, or religion. To the contrary, by insisting on a level playing field for all students, schools attempt to create a situation in which aspects of an individual's personal identity are essentially rendered irrelevant to the learning environment, not endorsed by it (p. 132).

The creation of all GLBT classrooms would help to promote a “level playing field” where GLBT students and Allies could engage in a discourse about GLBT issues, both those pertinent to the students and the larger school community. Also, students, and arguably faculty, would have a space—similar to a Gay-Straight Alliance—where they could learn about GLBT history, movements, and could begin expanding their own identity as an individual. Furthermore, any student who enrolled in the class(es) would do so out of choice, thus eliminating the idea that GLBT students and Allies are marginalized through such classes. The class(es) would allow any student to join so long as they understood that the course will deal heavily with issues of sexuality; also, the creation of all GLBT student classes would be unlike a ‘track’ in that they will not be constructed with the idea that the students in the class(es) are at a disadvantage. Rather, the class(es) will be created and organized around the idea that sexuality is a valuable form of identity for adolescents.

The concerns with this possibility, however, are “can we do this for everyone?” and “why are they so special?” The answer to these questions I do not have. Instead, I

hope that this possibility is a good starting point in the discourse that Lipkin suggests is needed. The two possibilities listed above are meant to be alternatives to tolerance in the classroom. And while each has its own purpose in the classroom, each provides a chance for students and faculty to unit around diversity and around providing a safer, more affirming atmosphere for student learning and development in the future.

PROBLEM FOUR: SLOGANS AND CATCHPHRASES AS DIVERSITY

I began this chapter with a discussion of the language being used to assuage GLBT persons' fears of life during adolescence. The slogan of "it gets better" has been tossed around over the past several months in hopes of assisting GLBT students with difficult life situations and circumstances. Using "it gets better" as a banner phrase for GLBT students and adolescents raises an important question: What is the phrase really saying? As discussed in detail at the start, the language does not say anything more than hold on and life will get better. However, the message says that we, as a society, do not know how to broach the experiences you are going with, and thus the slogans continue.

In this context, the slogans are an attempt by education and society to mask their inability to relate to and/or help GLBT persons. The problem then is masked by the slogan, which is meant as an effort to appear knowledgeable about GLBT persons; the slogan is meant to negate the need for action or analysis on the part of society, and arguably education. Freire (1970/2000) states that, "posing reality as a problem does not mean sloganizing: it means critical analysis of a problematic reality" (p. 168). It is the lack of critical analysis that portrays education's lack of knowledge of how to approach GLBT issues. Homosexuality—and other "deviant" behaviors—is often thought to be outside the realm of understanding for those that do not participate. "It gets better," then,

is the justification for not having to examine GLBT life, history, or struggles. “It gets better” suffices in education and in society as “critical analysis.” Rather than confront the situation, “sloganizing” as Freire called it occurs and the deproblematization of reality and of challenging one’s understanding of a group of students, of faculty, of people is implemented. No analysis needed; rather, we (education and society) will continue not understanding or seeking to understand by attaching ourselves to an arguably positive message. The hope is no further questions will be asked.

Phrases and slogans such as this are dangerous to education as they do nothing more than mask the limited understanding that the messengers, in this instance education, has of GLBT students. Students in American education look to school as the place where they can be understood, especially if a home life is volatile and unsupportive, and the use of slogans such as “it gets better” provides students with a sense of belonging and understanding, as if those that are saying it have lived it. However, in doing so, the slogan could have the opposite effect in the student, leading that student to feel even more hopeless than before the false sense of promise and understanding was presented.

My experience as a homosexual student, for example, is one example of this veiled attempt at understanding. As a student in the 1990s and early 2000s, I came out prominently in high school, at the age of sixteen. At the time, my closest friends and family denounced me in some fashion and I was very much alone. From an education perspective, I was tormented, teased, and bullied. And similar to today’s educational landscape of “it gets better,” I, too, was offered a similar message that was focused not on the notion that life will get better, but on the notion that there is “nothing wrong with me.” Repeatedly I was told I was fine and not to be scared, some teachers even offered

up the names of family members that they knew who were GLBT to help alleviate my fears that I was an “it” living amongst the “them.”

Indeed, even as “it gets better” takes flight in the American consciousness, its impact on students is doing little as students, particularly GLBT, are still killing themselves in record numbers. Slogans and catchphrases are not the answer to the perceived problem of how to deal with and understand GLBT students. Rather, slogans and catchphrases do nothing more than offer the illusion that GLBT students are understood, accepted even, when in actuality GLBT students are being treated to the lowest-common denominator: language. American education is throwing words, messages at GLBT students in hopes that that will be enough; after all, American education would have GLBT students believe that the words and messages being thrown at them are in some ways contrary to the words and messages thrown at them before “it gets better” or “you’re not alone.” In actuality, the messages are the same as they have been for the last two decades. Despite the dressing-up of the language and the mass visibility to which the message is being delivered, the message in American education is still one of the unknown, and out of that unknown American education has offered tolerance as the backbone of their efforts. The thinking being that if American education tolerates then it accepts, that diversity for all practical purposes is alive and well. Unfortunately for American education, the audience is not listening to the messages of “hope” being offered, and instead are giving themselves their own sense of hope—death.

POSSIBILITY: LANGUAGE AS CHANGE

The language of diversity has long served to reinforce the same paradigms, programs, and philosophies of education. However, as the 21st century has begun, the

time for new paradigms, programs, and philosophies has come. No longer can educators rest on the notion that the past worked and thus the future will too. Education must get up, stand up, and help its students, its users achieve for *themselves*. To do so, education must first find a common ground in the language that both repudiates generalizations regarding diversity and seeks to find solutions to the messenger-message disconnect.

The language of education, and thus the subsequent message(s) of education, suggests that education is at a cross-road, stuck between what has been and what could be. The old paradigms of multiculturalism and race can no longer be the mainstay of diversity in American education. Rather, education must change just as the world around it, and its users, change both in terms of language, message, and messenger. Educational language must demonstrate its knowledge beyond the simplicity of multiplicity, and that knowledge must be for the good of education's user, not itself. Education can no longer exist as a single building entity, clinging to the two-door approach that has worked so well in the past; education must find a way to make itself relevant once again in the eyes of its users.

In order to do so, the message and language of education must find mutual ground. The message of education cannot be to educate all while the language of education argues against that with definitions that are decades old and placations that do nothing more than cover-up the very users who seek its, no our, knowledge, compassion, and understanding. The first step to promoting diversity in education—in whatever form that might look like—is in the language. The language must reflect the user of education in that it must give credence and acknowledgement, even on its most basic level, to its users, must do more than offer diversity as a one-size-fits-all model. Education must

reconcile and demonstrate, in terms of language and in terms of message, what its role will be in 21st century American society.

CHAPTER 5: CURRICULAR COGENCY—MOVING TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

“It’s AIDS blood!” I heard a student shout shortly before class was to begin. I had arrived my customary ten minutes early and was preparing the daily agenda on the board when I heard the outburst. “Don’t touch it; you’ll get AIDS” shouted another student, laughter ensued. I continued writing the agenda on the board. Finally, after prolonged jokes and, what students perceived to be amusement, I turned around and looked at my students, thinking my involvement would be enough; I was wrong. Students continued laughing and making jokes about the “blood” that sat on one of the desks. I positioned myself on the table at the front of the room and began watching the reactions of my students as they filed into class, spectacle and all. The five minutes before class began was devoted to nothing other than the consistent joking about AIDS, homosexuals; the implication that the two were related. I sat there. Silent. I thought about chastising the class, creating a lecture that discussed HIV/AIDS infection, the history of homosexuality, and how words affect others. In the end, I did nothing; I just went on with my teaching.

My thinking on being silent was that I did not wish to upset the balance of the classroom—I was teacher of composition, they were students of composition; what role did homosexuality and AIDS have in the composition classroom? Here I allowed myself, at the potential risk of students in the class, to uphold an oppressive model of education by placating my students, and in doing so, allowed the perceived status quo message—

AIDS and homosexuality go hand-in-hand—to continue. Gonzales (2010) realizes this same “peril” stating:

In the name of keeping order in the classroom, one peril that I may have fallen prey to is using constructs of teaching and learning that reproduce oppressive models. The truth is, they are really hard to escape. As the teacher, I had a certain degree of authority; both privileges and responsibilities came with this authority, privileges and responsibilities that students lacked. Such is the status quo of the classroom. The status quo is hard to change, and it is not easy to enact sudden changes (or at least not without repercussions) (p. 76).

I begin this chapter on curriculum, diversity, and education with this anecdote to highlight central questions this chapter seeks to answer: (1) How is pacification used in relation to diversity?, (2) How is pacification related to curriculum, and (3) How can education move beyond pacification toward *inclusive* curricular practices? In this chapter I look at two forms of pacification—recognition and hospitality—and how they relate to a multicultural/racial curriculum and a GLBT curriculum. Embedded within each, I look at identity as a means of problem and possibility in diversified curriculum. Finally, I offer several suggestions on ways to provide a diversified curriculum in education.

WHAT IS PACIFICATION?

Pacification, as I term it, refers to both the lack of credence and understanding given to certain student populations, primarily due to a lack of knowledge of said populations. Pacification, then, occurs when educators use their curricula in an attempt to assuage the identities of student groups by using curriculum (text, afterschool program, movie, YouTube clip, music, and so on) as means of false understanding. Using notions

of language from Chapter Four, an example of pacification would be the slogan “it gets better.” “It gets better,” is used to say “we [education] get you [marginalized GLBT students and faculty].” And while some might argue that pacification creates a space in which educators can promote an understanding, despite limited knowledge, of marginalized student groups, I argue that pacification seeks to contain diversity in the curriculum, leaving some students groups in a perpetual status of “other.” I present two forms of pacification—recognition and hospitality—to demonstrate the way(s) in which American education responds to two different marginalized student groups.

RECOGNITION IN MULTICULTURAL AND RACIALIZED CURRICULUM

As has already been established, multicultural and racialized notions of diversity primarily deal with the ways in which various subsets of student populations (various ethnicities, and various cultural backgrounds) achieve (Gamoran, 1992; Gresson, 2008). Furthermore, a central debate regarding multicultural and racialized curriculum focuses on how multiculturalism, and the populations it represents, will be adequately and positively represented in the curriculum without relying on tokenism or stereotypes of students. Many of the curricular answers have focused on special programs to better assist students from poor backgrounds, disadvantaged cultures, or other similar circumstances in advancing their education both in and out of school. Programs such as Upward Bound, Read180, and Response to Intervention (RTI) have all been forged with the understanding and intent to better prepare students for the world of academics and the world that exists beyond academia. In a similar vein to these programs, culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000; Ford, 2010) has been established as a means of

understanding and accommodating multicultural—and racial—student populations. Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as

[U]sing cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches *to* and *through* the strengths of these students. It is culturally *affirming* and *validating*. (p. 29)

The goal of culturally responsive teaching, to promote relevance in the lives of the student groups it attempts to reach, is echoed by Brown (2007) who says that culturally responsive teaching is

[B]ased on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of students they are more personally meaningful, have a higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly (p. 60).

While the *purpose* of culturally responsive teaching—to gain a better understanding of a student’s cultural background in order to construct a relevant learning environment and curriculum—is admirable, and arguably necessary, I question the *practicality* of culturally responsive teaching in the classroom, and argue that culturally responsive teaching promotes cultural relevance, but does so as a means of recognition, not as a means of a diversified curriculum or learning experience.

Before I continue, I should define and exemplify what I mean by recognition. Recognition as I use it refers to Leagaard’s (2010), a philosophical researcher, definition. He states that, “The act of recognition then consists in either an acknowledgment of the equal status that members of minorities actually have, or becomes a matter of positively

bestowing equal status on them” (p. 33). For example, the use of slave narratives within the language arts classroom to merely highlight the experiences of the African-Americans during slavery, without further discussion and insights into the *significance* of the experience and how it relates to students and their lives, demonstrates recognition by creating a pseudo-relevance to student experiences using the idea that highlighting creates an equal status standing. How, then, does recognition relate to culturally responsive teaching?

As Gay points out, culturally responsive teaching is meant to *affirm* and *validate* student identities by constructing a curriculum that seeks to create relevance between what students are taught and their background. The foundation of culturally responsive teaching is predicated on notions of identity, and that students can affirm their identity if they see their experiences in the curriculum—texts they read, papers they write, movies they watch, and so on. However, the very act of needing to affirm or validate student experiences problematizes culturally responsive teaching. The affirmation and validation inherently establishes a binary of equal and less than equal, with the culturally diverse students arguably in the latter category. Culturally responsive teaching, one might argue, then situates itself within the guise of diversity, but is little more than an attempt pseudo-equality of culturally diverse students in classrooms.

As mentioned above, culturally responsive teaching is grounded in identity. One such need for identity development is the need for students to see themselves in the curriculum. Gonzales (2010) echoes this stating,

It’s important to read texts dealing with issues affecting students. Adolescents are trying to figure out who they are and what they believe. They connect with

identity issues...They are interested in their worlds...Reading about diverse characters not only helps diverse students find themselves in literature, it also helps all students develop empathy for others, including people very different from them. (p. 67)

The question lies in the use of identity on the part of culturally responsive teaching, and whether or not its use is authentic to the student experience. Some might argue that the mere covering of an experience—whatever it may be—in the classroom creates an authentic learning environment, and thus students can construct their own identity based on their experience.

The problem with this take on culturally responsive teaching and identity is that it presupposes that one experience in the classroom will reach every student. This reinforces the notion of recognition by equating all student experiences as equal. And in equating all student experiences as equal, culturally responsive teaching then relies on a collective method of identity formation, where the ‘experience’ in the curriculum is not diversified but streamlined as a means of pacification; a curricular vacuum where all students are equal regardless of experience(s), and where identity is fixed based on this “equality.” Diversified education, in this setting, does not exist.

ACTUALITY IN MULTICULTURAL AND RACIALIZED CURRICULUM

The problematic nature of recognition is not only the lack of [diversity] education provided to students, but also the ease in which recognition is possible. It is too easy to read a text, to share an experience, or to examine a document and generalize the experience and the way(s) in which students are affected. Similarly, it is quite easy to study cultures, races, languages, etc. in a passing fashion with no real discussion of how

the Civil Rights Movement has affected modern-day race relations or how Ebonics use effects the identity of those students who rely on it in everyday conversations in both positive and negative ways in the classroom. It is too easy to participate in recognized practices.

Recognition must be counterbalanced by *actuality*. By actuality, I mean the use of curriculum that goes beyond the mere recognition of multiculturalism (in whatever form the curriculum and multiculturalism may take), and seeks to provide an authentic experience where students learn about backgrounds and cultures and engage with the curriculum to assist in forming their own thoughts and opinions, and by extension their own identities.

An actualized multicultural curriculum would use slave narratives in the language arts classroom to do more than recognize the experience of the slaves in America, and would connect the experience to students in the classroom and their experiences. Furthermore, the curriculum would approach the subject matter with diversity in mind, meaning that all viewpoints, not just the minority or the marginalized student populations, would be represented in the curriculum; learning from all viewpoints, with all cultures and experiences in mind. With that in mind, I turn now to GLBT issues in the curriculum and not issues of equality but issues of hospitality.

THE GREAT GAY APOLOGY: GAY AND LESBIAN ISSUES IN THE CURRICULUM

The sudden notice of GLBT students and faculty is lauded by many as a step in the right direction; a step toward all voices and all viewpoints being a part of the conversation; a step toward equality. While the inclusion of GLBT issues and texts in the

curriculum appears to be happening, I question the change held by education in relation to GLBT issues. As Tierney (1997) points out, ‘queers’ have not often been a point of discussion or notice,

However, far too often queers are relegated to commentaries within the parentheses, if at all, so that we are double silenced—by the mainstream and by those out of the mainstream who would rather not have to consider the messy topic of queer life (p. 74).

Much like multiculturalism, this sudden change of status from marginalized to visible within parts of education to include those populations that once were invisible is curious, and what is more curious is what this change says about curriculum and diversity in American education and education’s intent. On the one hand, the change seemingly has allowed education to begin discussing GLBT issues in relation to curriculum—use of GLBT texts and programs—and the larger educational community—after-school programs and equal rights with respect to prom and other school functions. On the other hand, is this inclusion truly moving away from the commentaries that Tierney discussed or is it a new form of commentary within education? I argue that the rise of GLBT issues in the curriculum is not a move away from the commentaries; it is a move for the sake of hospitality (pacification), not for recognition (equality).

HOSPITALITY WITH RESPECT TO USING GLBT TEXTS AND EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULUM

As Leagaard defined, “The act of recognition then consists in either an acknowledgment of the equal status that members of minorities actually have, or becomes a matter of positively bestowing equal status on them” (p. 33). Recognition,

then, seeks to confirm equality by either having it outright or attaining it via those that already have it. While it would be easy to say that recognition is the cause for the emergence of GLBT texts in curriculum, the use of GLBT texts, from my experience, has been relegated not to the commentaries, but to the perfunctory, the use of a text to say “Look, I’m using this text! Go diversity!” by educators in American education. Arguably this is a good first step in the classroom as it exposed students to GLBT issues and promotes visibility, and works toward the goal of recognition or anointing equality to GLBT persons. Using GLBT issues in the curriculum in this manner is not an attempt to create an equal status in the classroom or the curriculum, but is a means of *hospitality*.

I want to offer three definitions to underscore the positive connotation that hospitality typically has and to highlight the difference in how I use the term. In an educational setting, Shady and Larson (2010) argue that hospitality is when “[T]he teacher, as host, seeks to create a space in which students, as guests, can feel supported and safe as they travel the path of development and learning” (p. 82). Bennett (2003) expands on this and relates it not to the space but the participants in the space stating that “being academically hospitable means letting others know they matter as fellow inquirers.” (p. 48) Finally, Palmer (1983) echoes Bennett stating “hospitality means receiving each other, our struggles, our newborn ideas with openness and care” (pp. 73-74). Hospitality then is exemplified as a positive experience where the free exchange of ideas occur in a space of non-judgment and supportiveness; hospitality from these examples symbolizes equality.

The use of hospitality with respect to GLBT texts and experiences in the curriculum does not use this approach as I see it. Rather, hospitality as I use it refers to

education's attempt to insert the texts and experiences of GLBT persons into the curriculum to appear diversified to onlookers from outside the education setting, to those within the education setting who believe GLBT-related curricula is valuable to the experiences of students and education alike, or to those that identify as a GLBT person. The use of hospitality in the curriculum is not about creating a space where teacher and students engage in conversations about topics of sexuality for the sake of expanding the space and welcoming new members. No, the use of hospitality, specifically with GLBT texts and experiences, is the promotion of a faux equality where the texts and experiences are used, but are used with the understanding that the end goal is not to broaden minds, not to create a space of equality, but to promote the continuation of marginalization through false action. The false action being that a GLBT text or experience is used in the classroom to promote diversity, when really the action is meant to signify, rather intentionally, that the use of the GLBT text or experience is equivalent to diversity, regardless of whether diversity is the true intent or not. Here, then, the marginalization and commentary existence of GLBT persons continues as the curriculum is used to pacify the existence of GLBT persons but little more with regard to the classroom.

Using the example of "AIDS blood" from the start of this chapter, I can demonstrate this means of hospitality. I could have stopped my class and my students and began to lecture on the severity and inappropriateness of their comments. But in doing so, my purpose would not have been the active inclusion of GLBT issues in the classroom space; instead, it would have symbolized my anger and disappointment in my students' commentary. My need for using the experience would not have been learning and dialogue, but merely to identify the group of students who might be listening to the

comments and offended by them. Similarly, if I am teaching a course and the word faggot is repeatedly used, as it has been in my experience, and I stop class and chastise the student(s) for its use, but do nothing further (alternatives include: make them research the etymology of the word ‘faggot’, give a presentation on hate speech, etc.), then the experience becomes nothing more than false action—I chastise to appear diverse, to appear to value those students who may be offended, and to appear to create a space that does not tolerate non-diverse commentary. The above highlight possibilities of hospitality in the curriculum and the classroom. Using the experience(s) of GLBT persons not for the enrichment of students or the classroom space, but merely to highlight that GLBT people exist or to highlight the apparent acceptance of GLBT persons and the issues that are pertinent to them (i.e., AIDS blood and use of ‘faggot’). I do not argue that this occurs in all classrooms in American education. I argue that this occurs in some classrooms, that I have experienced it as a student, a teacher, and an observer, and that we as educators must work toward inclusion in the curriculum not toward hospitality (see below for more on inclusivity).

Beyond the hospitality of curriculum lies another problem with respect to gay and lesbian texts and experiences in the curriculum—the move from “GLBT” to “queer”.

THE PROBLEMATIC NATURE OF “QUEER” AND “QUEER-INCLUSIVE” CURRICULUM

As discussed earlier, the use of categorization in education is a common occurrence. From the race, class, and culture of multiculturalism to the gay, lesbian, and bisexual of GLBT, looking at education as a means of categories or dichotomies is

problematic. With respect to gay and lesbian issues in the curriculum, there is a movement away from the categorizing “GLBT toward “queer-inclusive” curriculum. Blackburn and Buckley (2005), two teacher educators, posit that education must move toward “queer-inclusive curricula” stating:

We deliberately argue for queer-inclusive curricula rather than LGBTQ-inclusive curricula. An LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum would expose students to certain authors and texts, but a queer-inclusive curriculum would educate students about the interconnections among sexuality, identity, and literature (p. 202).

Blackburn and Buckley’s assertion that the movement from a categorizing notion of curricula—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ)—in favor of a wider notion of “queer” will help assist in curriculum being less about homosexuality and more about the relationship between sexuality, identity, and literature is intriguing. Two problems exist with Blackburn and Buckley’s proposal: (1) the use of the term queer and (2) its ability to implement change.

The Term Queer. The use of the term queer in Blackburn and Buckley’s proposed viewing of curricula is intriguing. In their need to go from categorization to broad term, Blackburn and Buckley change the focus of curriculum, in relation to GLBT texts and experiences, from one of codification (GLBT) to one of non-codified. Susan Talburt (2000) also argues that codification is a step in the wrong direction stating, “To codify queer, like codifying curricular knowledge, is to doom ourselves to repeating the terms of our identities, to keeping ‘the space of the possible’ small and contained” (p. 10). While I would firmly agree that codification limits the realm of the “space” as Talburt calls it with respect to curriculum, I disagree with the idea that queer is the solution for a couple

of reasons. First, queer as a term in academia is a contested one with no singular definition in which to turn to for a clear understanding of its meaning and purpose. Jagose (1997) reiterates this saying, “Clearly, there is no generally acceptable definition of queer; indeed, many of the common understandings of the term contradict each other irresolvably” (p. 99).

Queer as a term has no definition and by extension no identity attached to it. The problem becomes defining queer in relation to the curriculum and its use in the classroom. Is queer a less codifying term but still synonymous with GLBT(Q)? If the answer is yes, then the switch from codified to non-codified is irrelevant in relation to curriculum, and merely changes terms but not purpose (more on this below).

Second, the lack of a firm, identifiable definition gives rise to the lack of an identity to which queer is affixed. While some would argue that its lack of identity is exactly what makes queer powerful and purposeful, the lack of identity makes queer contestable with regard to who queer represents and how queer represents ‘them’. Jagose continues to complicate queer saying, “By refusing to crystallise in any specific form, queer maintains a relation of resistance to whatever constitutes the normal.” (p.99) Queer, then, becomes a term related to resistance and not related to inclusivity. Its identity then hinges on individual use in the curriculum in a time in education where identity—and arguable solidarity—is crucial.

Beyond the hospitality of curriculum lies another problem with respect to gay and lesbian texts and experiences in the curriculum—the move from ‘GLBT’ to queer.

Queer as an Agent of Change. Beyond the problematic notion of definition and identity comes the ability of ‘queer’ to actively promote change within the curriculum.

While queer, at first glance, provides a positive change to how curriculum is viewed—from a homo-centric endeavor to an identity-centric endeavor—a problem still lies in the fact that changing from GLBT to queer-inclusive does little more than change ‘potato’ to ‘patahto? The ability to enact change lies in the ‘relationship’. Blackburn and Buckley argue that the change allows curriculum to be seen as a three-way relationship between sexuality, identity, and literature. In changing from acronym (GLBT) to broader term, however, the relationship becomes murky. If sexuality is a component of the relationship, then ‘queer-inclusive’ as a term and as a movement could be seen as only associated with homosexuality and associated movements. Also, the use of literature as part of the relationship codifies, in some part, where queer-inclusive curriculum is to be used, which then, as Talburt argues against, creates a small space and an even smaller purpose in the curriculum.

While Blackburn and Buckley’s proposal is in some ways a step in the right direction—curriculum as inclusive rather than curriculum as limiting—the use of the word ‘queer’ presents too many problematic possibilities to be a possible solution to hospitality in the curriculum. And perhaps there is no true solution, yet, to the problem of hospitality and pacification in American education curriculum. However, below, I outline three areas in which educational changes might assist in ending recognition and hospitality for diversified student populations.

REMOVING PACIFICATION FROM THE LESSON PLAN: THE GOALS OF CURRICULUM IN RELATION TO DIVERSITY

One of my mentors, education professor Dr. Rod Lucero, told me, “The goal of curriculum has traditionally been to teach content.” The goal of curriculum in a

traditional sense no longer applies to the current American education system. To teach to the “traditional” goal of curriculum would be to, arguably, return to what Freire (1970/2000) calls the “banking” model of education (p. 72). To do so would see teachers merely “depositing” knowledge into their students and then sending them on their way. Curriculum would then be relegated to what is in textbooks and lectures and not its implications or analyses. While this form of curriculum and instruction worked for previous generations, it is unfeasible to think of it in a current educational setting. Too much has occurred in education—desegregation, No Child Left Behind, emergence of a diversified student population—for “banking” to work in the same manner as it had in previous decades. In addition, and again arguably, our goals have expanded with respect to curriculum. Yes, the goal of curriculum is still in part to teach the content, to ensure that students leave classrooms with knowledge of square roots and the Civil War and with knowledge of Poe and Expressionist art, but now curriculum includes so much more: identity development, differentiation, learning styles, and technology, that it begs the question, what is the goal of curriculum in education today?

While the answer to that question is contestable, I write to propose that the goal of curriculum should be to promote thinking and synthesizing, analyzing and experimentation; the goal of curriculum should be the fostering of critical thinking and the ability to examine one’s background and experiences within the curriculum in order to come to an independent, individual conclusion; the goal of curriculum in education should not be superficial equality, but true equality for all students in American education.

In the pursuit of these goals, I offer three suggestions by which education can begin working toward an inclusive, equality-based curriculum for all students. These are merely suggestions and I do not propose that they solve all curricular issues in education, but merely that they address, in some part, the issues contained within this chapter. Similarly, the suggestions may address specific student groups—black, white, gay, straight—but are intended to be wide enough in scope to be utilized in addressing curriculum as a whole.

Suggestion One: Systematic Inclusion. In discussing ways to overcome heterosexism in the classroom, John Petrovic (2002) argues for what he calls “positive systematic inclusion” which requires three components:

- (1) The positive portrayal of GLB individuals and their families in the curriculum when this is relevant to the content at hand
- (2) The presence of GLB positive age-appropriate materials in the classroom
- (3) The censorship of the people (adults) who represent the school as an institution in promoting the misrecognition of their present and future GLB students (p. 151).

I expand Petrovic’s reference to ‘GLB’ to a more common, expanded identification for gay and lesbian people, ‘GLBT’. The inclusion of GLBT texts and experiences in the curriculum, even “when relevant” is a step in the right direction toward an equalized curriculum. The system combats notions of pacification and hospitality by inserting GLBT issues into the curriculum when the curriculum calls for it (e.g., when analyzing a text in English or learning about a GLBT painter in art). The curriculum, then, is expanded under this inclusive measure but not in an obtrusive or hospitable way; it uses

the experiences of GLBT people as a tool to promote relevance in the classroom. The curriculum becomes the focal point of the classroom not notions of homosexuality found in texts and experiences.

Beyond the scope of GLBT people, positive systematic inclusion can also be used in relation to other marginalized groups in education. For example, in discussing the cultures of various students, the systematic inclusion approach allows the culture to only be a *part* of the curriculum. Thus, the focus is not solely on affirming or validating the backgrounds and experiences of the students through the curriculum, such as the case with culturally responsive teaching; instead, the experiences provide moments in the curriculum where it is pertinent to discuss the background of students, but the curriculum is not reliant on nor solely based on background (or sexuality or race or any other marginalizing status).

Suggestion Two: Understand that Dichotomies and Binaries are Present and Work to Break Them Down. As Tierney argues, “Societies are sliced into dichotomies: black/white, queer/straight, and so on. One key challenge is to realize that multiple dichotomies intersect and often have competing demands” (p. 76). Tierney’s argument here is to understand that dichotomies exist and that within them lies several groups striving for their own interests. I would also argue that in addition to dichotomies, binaries are also present within the curriculum in American education. My suggestion then is two-fold. First, education, and society at large, must acknowledge that the existence of dichotomies and binaries affects how curriculum is situated. While some might argue that a differentiated curriculum is the equivalent of this acknowledgement, this is incorrect. Differentiation seeks to instruct based on the idea that all students learn

differently due to backgrounds, learning styles, and so on. Differentiation does address issues of dichotomies and binaries, but only in so much as it affects the learning and instructing of the curriculum.

I speak to the idea that the curriculum in American education today teaches toward these dichotomies and binaries. Blackburn and Smith (2010) highlight such an example of a gay/straight binary in their discussion of schools use of *Romeo and Juliet* in the curriculum. They state,

Requiring adolescents to read a text focusing on a heterosexual couple and to identify with those characters as heterosexuals presents only one option, that of an unchangeable binary: You are either Romeo or Juliet, a boy attracted to a girl or a girl attracted to a boy (p. 627).

While I do not argue the use of *Romeo and Juliet* in the classroom as a valuable and accessible piece of literature, I do contest that the message its use sends promotes a heterosexual/homosexual binary within the curriculum, and arguably implies in the classroom that one must be heterosexual just as the characters are in the play.

Second, with the acknowledgment comes the goal within education to work toward an end to, and teaching toward, these dichotomies and binaries within the curriculum. This could take several forms: introduction of inclusive texts in the curriculum that host to several student populations (gay, transgender, multiracial, and so on); guest speakers embedded within the curriculum that speak about their life as an “other” as a means of empowering those students in the margins; creating relevance in student life by using current events to highlight various “othered” groups, their histories, and their impact on student life and life outside of academia.

Some in education are striving for these changes and similar changes within the curriculum. 'Some' is a good first step toward an equalized curriculum that focuses not on the differences, the binaries, the dichotomies, but that focuses on the ways in which curriculum can teach about all student populations in a manner that does not favor one over the other.

Suggestion Three: The Relationship between Education and Society.

Society, in many ways, is the pulse of American education. It is society that sends their students to educators and expects that their students leave us smarter, more capable individuals. However, the relationship between education and society is a contentious one. Many of the decisions made by American education are made with the best interest of society's children in mind. But I would be remiss if I did not argue that many of those same decisions are made at the request of society and its acceptability (what society will and will not accept) with respect to education. Curriculum, one could also argue education as a whole, is up to what society deems appropriate in the curriculum. The relationship between education and society then becomes not about reciprocity—send education your students and we will return them wiser and prepared for their future—but about the power of society over education.

It is understandable to some degree the power that society has over education; after all, education is supported (controlled) by members of society in various ways (finances, governance). That aside, the function of education is to educate students and to better prepare them for the world outside of academia. To that end, I argue that the relationship between education and society must be modified. Education, in constructing an equal curriculum, must look at what is best for *all* students, not just those that society,

in some form or another, deems appropriate. This might mean the inclusion of GLBT texts or the inclusion of an alternative text to *Romeo and Juliet*. Whatever this modified relationship might materialize into, one thing is for certain: education cannot be afraid to do what's right for all students at the risk of losing some.

The curriculum of American education is not without its faults. Nor is the curriculum without its successes. The goal now becomes creating a curriculum that is diverse and that honors all student voices regardless of background. Creating a curriculum that does not breed binaries and dichotomies, but that breeds equality and a level playing field for all. Curricular cogency is possible in American education, and I strive toward cogency as a student, a society member, and an educator.

**CHAPTER SIX: READING THE PAST, WRITING THE FUTURE:
PURPOSE, POSSIBILITY, AND POTENTIAL IN AMERICAN EDUCATION**

I began my writing on diversity in education with a simple, yet packed statement: diversity and American education is problematic. Throughout my writing I have attempted to unpack my meaning behind the phrase by interrogating what diversity in American education represents conceptually, linguistically, and curricularly. I have argued for a conceptual notion of diversity that is not based in categories, dichotomies, or binaries; for a message of diversity that is clear and equal for all students; and for a curriculum that challenges the status-quo and argues for equal representation. This final chapter, then, has two purposes: (1) to present major themes pertinent to my purposes for writing and (2) to offer possibilities toward a transformative education system.

ANALYSIS OF OVERARCHING THEMES

Throughout the course of my research and writing several themes have emerged regarding diversity in American education. Below I summarize the major themes found within my research and writing. I do so for two purposes: (1) to provide an analysis as a background for my recommendations in the next section of this chapter and (2) to come to a deeper understanding of the themes in relation to my purposes for writing.

Theme One: Diversity Upholds an Oppressive Model of Education. One of my purposes for writing on diversity in education dealt with wanting to discern how diversity as a term, has been and is used in education. Diversity as a concept has been defined in numerous ways. Beyond Banks' categorical definition of diversity, diversity has also

been defined in relation to its components—race, language, class and so on. In defining diversity in these ways, education has produced a *term* that is universal. As a *concept*, however, diversity becomes a symbol of power and oppression. Diversity is powerful as it acts on behalf of the dominant groups in society while it, at the same time, oppresses the non-dominant group(s); what is acceptable is a part of diversity and what is not acceptable is not a part of diversity. What is considered dominant or oppressive can be traced to society. For example, multiculturalism is an accepted approach to diversity because the dominant norm in society supports the idea that we all have a background by which we approach education and learning. Sexuality, on the other hand, is not accepted as a part of diversity (though it is changing somewhat) because the dominant norm in society says that education is not meant for discussions of sexuality, whether it be hetero- or homosexuality, as that is not an intended purpose for schooling. Thus, diversity, I argue, cannot go beyond notions of difference and categorization because it is in a constant state of flux, attempting to uphold the dominant while subverting the oppressed.

Tierney (1997) speaks to the idea that oppressed groups are both a part of the dominant norm (diversity as a concept) while related to it as well (diversity as a term). He argues, “One similarity of oppressed groups, then, is that we exist in relation to dominant norms, and at the same time, we also often reside within a dominant norm” (p.77). Sexuality, for example, is a part of the dominant norm from a terminology standpoint. Arguably when most people think of the term ‘diversity’ in relation to education, they think of groups based on category, sexuality included because various sexualities exist in education. However, sexuality is also in some way related to diversity

as some scholars are starting to include it conceptually; meaning that sexuality in relation to student achievement and curriculum is becoming part of the dialogue.

Theme Two: Language as a Production of Power. In examining the language used in relation to diversity, I discovered that, much like diversity as a concept in education, language is also used as a means of power; however, the power upholds the status-quo. I spoke much about “it gets better” in Chapter Four and I would like to return to it now. “It gets better” I argued does nothing but mask the misunderstanding or non-understanding by the dominant group of the oppressive group (e.g., GLBT students, faculty, and associates). Taking it a step further, “it gets better” not only acts as a means of non-representation but also acts as a production of power. Peter McLaren (1995) argues, “Language transmits the moral order of indirect discourse that has already been put in place by the dominant social collective. All language acts are, therefore, “acts of power,” in so far as they are linked to “social obligations” (p. 110).

McLaren makes an important point here that directly relates to “it gets better” and other linguistic aspects of diversity. Thus, the language of messages like “it gets better” serves two purposes. First, the language serves a social obligation on the part of diversity and education. They appear sympathetic to the plight of those oppressed and “it gets better” affirms this; education, then, seems to be behind and in support of the oppressed groups. Second, as McLaren states, the language of “it gets better” continues the “indirect discourse” of the dominant. Meaning that “it gets better”—and similar language—while, arguably, an affirmative action, is indirect as it does not seek change but merely seeks to pacify. The message, and by extension the messengers, then are

affirming by obligation but not beyond. The language then becomes a product of power: the dominant sends the message but does so for appearance *not* for enacting change.

I should state that my conclusions are not meant to generalize that all language, as McLaren argues, falls into this appearance vs. change binary. As I mentioned previously, language changes and varies, and thus the language that upholds the dominant power or ideology within education can change at an instant. So, while I conclude that the sloganizing that “it gets better” portrays is a negative in today’s educational landscape, I must also conclude that its existence within education, and language similar to it, is a first step at defying the dominant ideology within education; time will tell if education moves away from “it gets better” for a more inclusive educational language.

Theme Three: Curriculum as Comfortable. Throughout my research on using curriculum to promote change in the classroom, the notion of fear came up repeatedly: fear to use a GLBT text, fear to be “that” teacher, fear to move beyond what was already approved in the curriculum. Fear deterred transformation and upheld the comfortable, the known. Fear is, as I argue, part of the cause of pacification within the curriculum. Educators are fearful of going beyond the limits of what the current educational structure, arguably a heteronormative structure, says is ‘okay’, and thus use of GLBT-centric texts, or other non-standard texts, is a non-option for some educators. Curriculum then becomes about comfort and not about challenging the ideologies of American education.

In addition to the fear for educators is that to use a text that deals with sexuality, is to be labeled as part of that sexuality. Kinney (2010), educator and queer-researcher, speaks to this fear stating,

However, as I select print texts for class, I feel torn between the desire to read queer-inclusive literature as a way to promote equity, and the fear...[I]f we read *any* queer-inclusive literature, students will dismiss as the gay teacher who teaches *only* gay stuff (pp. 64-65).

Identity then comes into question in the curriculum. However, I must argue that it is not the identity of the educator that should be a part of the equation when choosing or ‘accepting’ curriculum for use in the classroom. Rather, the identities of the student’s in the classroom should be at the forefront of curricular decisions. To that end, the fear seen within the literature speaks to the opposite. Fear is used in relation to the educators and not the students. The curriculum in the classroom is chosen not for its ability to broach and analyze unacceptable or uncomfortable issues within education (e.g., sexuality), but is chosen due to its ability to maintain the ‘comfort’ in the classroom; if there is no discussion of uncomfortable topics, then no one will be uncomfortable. This is not to say that all curricular choices are made to uphold this notion, but much of my research showed that this was one of the determining factors in choosing curriculum. That said, curriculum *should not* be comfortable, but rather should challenge students and educators in the classroom.

Theme Four: [Homo] Sexuality is still Marginalized. One of the key purposes for my writing involved understanding how homosexuality has emerged in and been discussed within education. While I have spent a great deal in each chapter discussing this issue in relation to diversity, language, and curriculum, I do not feel that I have come to a satisfactory conclusion. While the research and my analysis of it clearly show signs that homosexuality is emerging as a serious talking point, I do not feel comfortable with

concluding that homosexuality is a part of diversity within Education (the capital 'E' marks the reference to education as a whole entity in America).

While scholars, researchers, and educators are focusing on sexuality issues within education, and attempting to push it to the 'front lines', the role Education—as an American institution—has taken with regard to GLBT issues, leads me to the conclusion that sexuality is still marginalized. Both the language and the curriculum demonstrate an attempt on the part of individuals to create change within Education, but Education has remained steadfast in opposition. In remaining primarily unchanged on its position, Education, sends the message to GLBT students that homosexuality is not valued or “normal.” McLaren (1995) argues, “[T]he question of sexual identity is a crucial area for schools to address critically in renewing their social contract with the public” (p. 121). Sixteen years later, Education has not come to terms with how to treat [homo] sexuality in its schools, even when around 60% of American say they are comfortable with homosexuality (Gallup, 2007). Instead, Education has become a more volatile place for GLBT students, and all students whose sexuality is outside the 'norm'. While there are some making strides within Education—using GLBT texts, examining alternative sexualities in the classroom—they are not representative of Education. It is for this reason that [homo] sexuality continues to be a marginalized within Education, and I see no true end to marginalization being the 'norm'.

Each of these themes sees diversity as a means of power and oppression. Below I offer two possibilities on how to end or alter this dynamic within education. I offer these possibilities not as solutions but as considerations by education and society alike. If the

goal of education is to serve all students, then the current educational system with diversity needs changing.

POSSIBILITY: ARGUING FOR CHANGE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

Possibility One: Dialogue. Dialogue may seem like an obvious solution, we all have to talk to one another after all. However, I do not mean dialogue as a means of general conversation or as a series of meetings that educators sit through in attempts to change their school building. Dialogue can no longer be just about one school or one student, but must be universal within all of education and with all students in mind. Freire (1970/200) argues,

True dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking—thinking which discerns indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them—thinking which perceives reality as a process of transformation, rather than as a static entity—thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself...without fear of the risks involved (p. 93).

Dialogue then is not just the process of thinking and talking about what *could* be changed, but is the process of talking about what *will* be changed; dialogue and dialoguers that see the conversation as a necessary step toward action and change. In addition, dialogue cannot be contained within the walls of academia; dialogue cannot be about academics for academics. Dialogue must admit new voices into the conversation and into the action of transformation. I argue that in order for true transformation to occur within education, the dialogue must include students who will hold the same power as non-students. Eric Rofes (2005) argues similarly stating:

If schools are about preparing people to become activist citizens in a democracy, then schools must be recognized as models of authentic participatory democracy. This means that children and adolescents must have a voice and a vote on all the central matters involving curriculum, pedagogy...and the power dynamics circulating among groups of peers. (p. 138)

Dialogue, then, is not about the mere possibility of change with students in mind, but is change *through the use* of student voices. Student voices must be recognized as holding equal power within the dialogue happening in education. Furthermore, the voices in the dialogue must be representative of all student bodies within education—gay, straight, white, black, jock, nerd, and so on. Only when the dialogue and the power to transform education are equal among all players, can true transformation take place. Only then can the power dynamic of marginalized vs. oppressed be broken, and only then can true democratic education become a reality.

Possibility Two: Transforming the Educational Structure. Within my study of diversity as a concept within education, one thing has become clear: diversity upholds a power struggle within education between the dominant and the oppressed (marginalized). If the role of education is to provide equality for its students, then the structure of American education must transform, and diversity as a term, as a concept, and as a marker of power must receive its curtain-call within education. I propose an educational structure based on inclusivity where notions of marginalized, dominant, oppressed, affirmation, and validation are no longer central to a student's identity, education, or success.

Inclusive education would then seek to abolish notions of categorization, putting all students on an equal playing field. Furthermore, as Freire argues, notions of marginalization would not seek to ‘integrate’ but to ‘transform’. Freire states:

The truth is, however, that the oppressed are not “marginals,” are not people living “outside” society. They have always been “inside”—inside the structure which made them “beings for others.” The solution is not to “integrate” them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become “beings for themselves (p. 74).

This is a key underpinning of inclusive education. Where diversity asked the question: “How will we represent _____ students in our classroom?” inclusive education asks: “How might _____ students see themselves in our classroom?” The difference lies in the power of education. Diversity sought to represent students where inclusivity seeks to have students “see” themselves in education; diversity presents a passive power to students while inclusivity presents an active power to students.

In addition, inclusive education sees education not as a puzzle—how each part fits within the larger whole—as some might argue diversity does, but sees education as a means of supporting and benefiting all students. Reforms would not seek to be additive in nature, with each reform directed at a different group of students hoping to create an equality, but would come to understand how the reforms needed within education might best benefit all student groups (Rofes, 2005). Reforms would then seek to not separate or divide themselves by difference, but would seek to work for *all* student groups. Thus, educational reforms would not be geared just for those perceived to be ‘in need’, but fashioned so that all students would benefit from what they have to offer. Reforms would

seek equality both in scope of student populations and in purpose. Equality is the marker of inclusive education not difference.

Both possibilities work in tandem to one another. In order to have a true educational transformation, there must be dialogue about what needs changing. Similarly, with dialogue must come, as Freire argued, action or transformation. As I said above, these are possibilities—regardless of how idealistic—of how to counter-balance the role of diversity within American education. They are meant to provide food for thought and a means of dialogue.

CONCLUSION

I began writing about diversity in education because I wanted to make a difference. And I hope to make a difference in three areas, all of which I have discussed in my writing. I hope I make a difference to the conversation, to education, and to myself. Let me say, however, that I write with no clear answer or solution in mind. I write merely to begin the conversation and see what transpires as a result.

First, I hope that the writing I have done impacts, in some small part, the dialogue that may or may not be happening with respect to diversity in education. I hope that my voice, as limited as it may be, serves as an initiating spark to those that read my writing to do more for the profession that they have claimed to be their love. I hope that my voice prompts educators, parents, students, administrators, and society members to do more than sit back and watch education, but to also get involved, to join as active participants in transforming American education.

Second, I hope that in my teaching and in my practice that I can make a difference to students who were once in my position: the teased, the teasers, the scared, and the

suicidal. In doing so, I hope that I get the chance to work with those whose opinions are similar to and different from my own. And in having those conversations, I hope that I can make a difference, either directly or tangentially, with a student, with a colleague, or with education as a whole.

Third, and finally, I hope that my writing makes a difference in who I am as an educator and as a person. I am often criticized for taking a rather cynical or harsh view of the world, both in education and out, and while this writing may not do much to alleviate that label, it has made a difference in me and my view of education. I started my writing of this thesis wanting to fight for the gay and lesbian students in American education, wanting to “slam” education for all that it is not doing, and wanting to find a means, any means, of helping students. As I finish my writing, I realize that I was writing with the wrong purposes in mind; change must not be a single voice, but a collective voice. Only through the collective voice may conversation exist, and only then can transformation happen.

I hope to create change and be change not only because it is my goal as an educator and as a person, but also because I see day-after-day the problematic nature of diversity. I walk the halls of a high school and see the teasing, the poking, and the ridiculing that occurs for those that are deemed “different.” I have watched on the news as student after student kills themselves due to being called “faggot” or “ugly” or for merely being who they are, unafraid and unapologetic.

In writing about diversity in education—its histories, movements, and possibilities—I have become convinced that education must be unafraid and unapologetic. It is with this idea that I conclude my writing about diversity and education

in American education. The conversation surrounding diversity can only be as strong as those that are participating. Diversity must be more than posters and clubs, 'Days' and 'Weeks'. Diversity *must* be a dialogue and education *must* lead that dialogue. The time for transformation is now. The time for action is now. How will those with a vested interest in American education respond?

Bibliography

- Ansalone, G. (2003). Poverty, tracking, and the social construction of failure: International perspectives on tracking. *Journal of Children & Poverty* 9 (1).
- Banks, J. (1989). Multicultural education: Characteristics and goals. In J. Banks & C. Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Banks, J., & Banks, C. (Eds.) (2004) *Handbook of research on multicultural education*, 2nd Ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Banks, K.H., (2009). A qualitative investigation of white students' perceptions of diversity. *Journal of diversity in higher education*, 2 (3), 149-155.
- Bennett, J. (2003). *Academic Life: Hospitality, ethics, and spirituality*. Bolton, Massachusetts: Anker.
- Bernstein, B (1982). Codes, modalities, and the process of cultural reproduction: A model. In M.W. Apple (Ed.), *Cultural and economic reproduction in education* (pp. 304-354). London: Routledge.
- Blackburn, M.V. & Buckley, J.F. (2005). Teaching queer-inclusive English language arts. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 49 (3), 202-212.
- Blackburn, Mollie V. & Smith, Jill M. (2010). Moving beyond the inclusion of LGBT-themed literature in english language arts classrooms: Interrogating heteronormativity and exploring intersectionality. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53(8), 625-634.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Boykin, A.W. (1994). Afroculture expression and its implications for schooling. In E.R. Hollins, J.E. King & W.C. Hayman (Eds.), *Teaching diverse populations: Formulating a knowledge base*. (pp. 243-256). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Brown, M. (2007). Educating all students: Creating culturally responsive teachers, classrooms, and schools. *Diversity Dispatch* 43 (1), 57-62.
- Clark, C.T. & Blackburn, M.V. (2009). Reading glbt-themed literature with young people: What's possible? *English Journal* 98 (4), 25-32.
- Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society*. Ontario, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.
- Davidman, L., & Davidman, P. (1997). *Teaching with a multicultural perspective: A practical guide*. New York: Longman.
- Fiedler, E.D., Richard, E.L., & Winebrenner, S. (2002). In search of reality: Unraveling the myths about tracking ability grouping and the gifted. *Roeper Review* 24 (3), 108-111.
- Ford, D. (2010). Culturally responsive classrooms: Affirming culturally different gifted students. *Gifted child today* 33(1), 50-53.
- Freeman, R. (2004). *Building on community bilingualism*. Philadelphia, PA: Carlson
- Freire, P. (1970/2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum Publishing.
- Gallup Poll (2007). Poll regarding morality of homosexuality*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/27694/Tolerance-Gay-Rights-HighWater-Mark.aspx>

- Gandara, P., & Maxwell-Jolly, J. (2000). *Teaching and California's future: Preparing teachers for diversity* Santa Cruz, CA: Linguistics Minority Research Institute, Education Policy Center, University of California-Davis, and the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning.
- Gamoran, A. (1992). Is ability grouping equitable? *Educational Leadership* 50 (2).
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gonzales, J. (2010). Risk and threat in critical inquiry: Vacancies, visions, and vacuums. In Mollie V. Blackburn, Caroline T. Clark, Lauren M. Kenney, & Jill M. Smith (Eds.), *Acting Out!: Combating homophobia through teacher activism* (pp. 74-87). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gresson III, D (2008). *Race and education*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Hoffman, D. (2000). A model for helping schools address policy options regarding gay and lesbian youth. *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy*, 25, 130-136.
- Hyland, N. (2006). Detracking in the social studies: A path to more democratic education? *Theory into Practice* 45 (1): 64-71.
- Jagose, A. (1997). *Queer theory: An introduction*. Washington Square, New York: New York University Press.
- Jones, P. (2010). Toleration and recognition: What should we teach? *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 42 (1): 38-56.
- Kentli, F.D. (2009). Comparison of hidden curriculum theories. *English Journal of Educational Studies* 1 (2): 83-87.

- Kinney, L. (2010). Being out and reading queer-inclusive texts in a high school english classroom. In Mollie V. Blackburn, Caroline T. Clark, Lauren M. Kenney, & Jill M. Smith (Eds.), *Acting Out!: Combating homophobia through teacher activism* (pp. 56-73). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2008). "Yes, but how do we do it?" Practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. In W. Ayers, G. Ladson-Billings, G. Miche & P.A. Noguera (Eds.), *City kids, city schools: More reports from the front row* (pp. 162-177). New York: New Press.
- Leagaard, S. (2010). Recognition and toleration: Conflicting approaches to diversity in education? *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 42 (1): 22-37.
- Lipkin, A. (1999). *Understanding homosexuality, changing schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- (1999). The case for a gay and lesbian curriculum. In Gerald Unks (Ed.), *The gay teen: Educational practice and theory for lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents* (pg. 38). London: Routledge.
- Marrow, L.M, Robert Rueda, and Diane Lapp. (2005). *Handbook of research on literacy and diversity*. New York: Guilford Press.
- McLaren, P. (1995). Moral panic, schooling, and gay identity: Critical pedagogy and the politics of resistance. In Gerald Unks (Ed.), *The gay teen: Educational practice and theory for lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents* (pp. 105-123). London: Routledge.
- Mitchell, L.A. (2009). *Becoming culturally responsive teachers in today's diverse classrooms*. Presented at American Educational Research Meeting, July 2009.

- Nelson, C. (2009). *Sexual identities in english language education: Classroom conversations*. London: Routledge.
- (2005). Transnational/queer: Narratives from the contact zone. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 21 (2), pp. 109-117.
- Nieto, S. (2002). *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives for a new century*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Oakes, J (1990). *Multiplying inequities: The effects of race, social class, and tracking on opportunities to learn mathemtics and science*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
- Pai, Y. (1990). *Cultural foundations of education*. New York: Merrill/Macmillan.
- Palmer, P. (1983). *To know we are known: Education as a spiritual journey*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.
- Pascoe, C.J. (2007). *Dude you're a fag*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Petrovic, J.E. (2002). Promoting democracy and overcoming heterosexism: And never the twain shall meet. *Sex Education* 2 (2), 145-154.
- Puccio, P.M. (1989). *Teaching the literature of lesbian and gay experience: An assimilationist view*. Presented at National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention.
- Rofes, E. (2000). Bound and gagged: Sexual silences, gender conformity, and the gay male teacher. *Sexualities*, 3(4), 439-462.
- (2005). *A Radical rethinking of sexuality & schooling: Status quo or status queer?* New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

- Shady, S. & Larson, M. (2010). Tolerance, empathy, or inclusion? Insights from Martin Buber. *Educational Theory*, 60, 81-96.
- Shapiro, J. P., Sewell, T.E., DeCette, J.P., (1995). *Reframing diversity in education*. Technomic Publishing Company.
- Sleeter, C.E., & Grant, C.A. (1988). *Making choice for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class, and gender*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Splinder, G., & Splinder, L. (Eds.) (1994). *Pathways to cultural awareness: Cultural therapy with teachers and students*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Talbert, S. (2000). Introduction: Some contradictions and possibilities of queer thinking. In Susan Talbert & Shirley R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Thinking queer: Sexuality, culture, and education* (3-13). New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Tierney, W. (1997) *Academic outlaws: Queer theory and cultural studies in the academy*. London: Sage Publications.
- Unks, G. (1995). *The gay teen: Educational practice and theory for lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents*. London: Routledge.
- Vogt, P. (1997). *Tolerance and education: Learning to live with diversity and difference* (p. 1). London: SAGE Publications.
- Wexler, P (1982). Structure, text, and subject: A critical sociology of school knowledge. in M.W. Apple (Ed.), *Cultural and economic reproduction in education* (pp. 304-354). London: Routledge.