



Educator Affect: LGBTQ in Social Studies Curriculum

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Abstract

Space has been opened to question heteronormativity and to address the assumption that each student in k-12 schools identifies as heterosexual. Is anything happening in this space? What affective behaviors, attitudes and beliefs do teachers who teach LGBTQ+ topics demonstrate? Conversely, what affective behaviors, attitudes and beliefs prevent teachers from teaching LGBTQ+ topics? These questions guided this qualitative research study. Data were collected with document analysis, interviews and measures of affect. This study measures affect by exploring the attitudes of teachers who include or do not include LGBTQ+ within social studies courses. Particular focus was given to teachers who implement course content that relates to LGBTQ+ civil rights within socio-historic contexts. For this study, educator affect means the emotions that influence whether to or not to include LGBTQ+ in middle and secondary school social studies curriculum.

Keywords: *LGBTQ+; heteronormativity; social studies curriculum; affective measurement*

Middle and high schools within the United States are largely heteronormative in nature—privileging heterosexual practices and assuming students identify as heterosexual (Cohen, 2005). School heteronormativity is maintained by excluding anything outside of heterosexuality. Heteronormativity goes beyond dislikes or prejudices against those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, by thoroughly permeating the school culture (Berlant & Warner, 2000). Sexuality tends not to be acknowledged as an area of diversity within schools. Even though the National Council for the Social Studies states “diversity and inclusiveness,” are core values, J. B. Mayo, Jr. asserts that “...only certain privileged forms of diversity are regularly recognized within the field: sexuality has not been a part of this group,” (2012, p.243). LGBTQ+ is often deemed as controversial and forbidden in the curriculum because heterosexuality is the implicit norm.

Schools and society are reflective of each other; within our schools we have opportunities to create a more inclusive society (Hess, 2009; Hess & McAlvoy, 2016; Mayo, 2012; Richardson, 2017; Noddings & Brooks, 2016). Almost anything related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning (LGBTQ+) is vacant from social studies curriculum. Thus, preserving heteronormativity in schools and social environments (Parkhouse & Massaro, 2018; Mayo, 2012). According to current political rhetoric, science posits two distinct unchangeable genders, male and female (Green, Benner & Pear, 2018). It is not clear what science is being used to back up this binary gender assertion. Science shows us that each human being is not born with exclusive female or male genes, urinary system, endocrine glands and hormones (Ettner, Monstrey & Coleman, 2016; Reiner & Gearhart, 2004). Current political sentiment is in direct contrast to LGBTQ+ civil

rights changes that were made just a few years ago. Support for same-sex marriages was realized with the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision by the United States Supreme Court, in 2015. Inclusivity and unprejudiced school environments for transgender students were addressed with the *Dear Colleague Letter: Transgender Students*, from the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, in 2016. We seemed to be reconciling heteronormativity with additional forms of gender and sexuality. Current events give the impression that any gains made for LGBTQ+ civil rights are being withdrawn. A concern is that the current climate could silence anything outside of the expected heteronormativity.

Sexuality and gender have been taboo subjects in our schools. The *Dear Colleague Letter: Transgender Students*, established equal access for each student in our schools regardless of the individual's gender identity. This letter authorized transgender students' place in schools. The letter and the legal status of same-sex marriages opens space to question heteronormativity and space to address the assumption that each student identifies as heterosexual. Is anything happening in this space?

What affective behaviors, attitudes and beliefs do teachers who teach LGBTQ+ topics demonstrate? Conversely, what affective behaviors, attitudes and beliefs prevent teachers from teaching LGBTQ+ topics? These questions guided this qualitative research study. Data were collected with document analysis, interviews and measures of affect. This study measures affect by exploring the attitudes of teachers who include or do not include LGBTQ+ within social studies courses. Particular focus was given to teachers who implement course content that relates to LGBTQ+ civil rights within socio-historic contexts. For this study, educator affect means the emotions that influence whether to or not to include LGBTQ+ in middle and secondary school social studies curriculum.

Literature Review

In schools “...(hetero) sexuality is the unspoken conversation” (Mayo, 2012, p. 245), as a result LGBTQ+ topics are often deemed controversial and forbidden in the curriculum. Some teachers find ways to move beyond the heterosexual culture by implementing LGBTQ+ topics into the curriculum despite the controversial and forbidden nature of these topics. The literature review addresses the following areas that are relevant to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics into the social studies curriculum. The literature review begins with a discussion of heteronormative classrooms, school environments and curriculum, then moves into critical pedagogy to face fear, then defines affect and concludes with matters related to measurements of affect.

Heteronormative Curriculum, Classrooms, School Environments

A binary gender norm, male and female heterosexuality, is perpetuated within our schools in the curriculum, instructional practices and overall heteronormative culture (Mayo, 2016; Mayo, 2012; Martino, 2009). Classrooms are sociocultural spaces where students, teachers and curriculum interact. Explicit rules and implicit sanctions of the classroom, as well as the school environment, are continually reproduced through the interactions of students, teachers and curriculum (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). The existing binary assumes that students identify as heterosexual and embody gender binary behaviors. Mollie V. Blackburn and Jill M. Smith suggest that heteronormativity is dependent upon the acceptance that heterosexuality is the norm (2010). Thus positioning human beings who identify as LGBTQ+ as abnormal and having less value than human

beings who identify as heterosexual. Abnormality devaluing takes place through intentional and unintentional action towards human beings who are outside of the gender binary.

The heteronormative school environment is sustained by the curriculum that is taught. Appropriate curricular changes to embed LGBTQ+ into the social studies curriculum have been suggested by scholars through the years. Heterosexuality is not normal for each human being, for that reason, social studies curriculum should change to reflect reality (Chandler, 2015). It is appropriate to include LGBTQ+ in social studies courses that teach the following; the three branches of our government, the way checks and balances function and Supreme Court decisions (Hess, 2009; Hess & McAvoy, 2016, Mayo, 2016; North, 2015; Sleeter & Grant, 1999; Wayne, 2016). According to Diana Hess, it is appropriate to teach same-sex marriages as a constitutional and policy issue (2009). Supreme Court decisions are appropriate for classroom curriculum. The 2015, *Obergefell v. Hodges* Supreme Court decision supports same-sex marriages and as a result significantly impacts LGBTQ+ civil rights (*Obergefell v. Hodges*). Deplorably, recent United States History suggests that civil rights changes aren't achieved directly after a Supreme Court decision. For example, the struggle for racial civil rights was not realized directly after the Supreme Court made the decision in the case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas* (Halberstam, 1998). Diversity and civil rights become a part of schools as a result of the *Brown vs Board of Education of Topeka Kansas* decision (Sleeter & Carmona, 2016). Teachers control the curriculum at the classroom level; when teachers include LGBTQ+ topics they communicate justification for LGBTQ+; which is significant because schools are reflective of society (Hess, 2009; Hess & McAvoy, 2016). Placing LGBTQ+ into the social studies curriculum is applicable when teaching about the constitution and the ways that our government functions.

The curriculum that is taught in schools tends to be found in textbooks that leave out anything related to LGBTQ+. Most textbooks inaccurately depict LGBTQ+ people and/or show them in perverted ways (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008; Sleeter, 2011). Textbooks indoctrinate perceptions about who we are as Americans, the path to become America, and help plot the future of our country (Sleeter & Carmona, 2016). The call has been out for forty years or more to include marginalized groups such as LGBTQ+ in textbook content and into curriculum (Sleeter, 2011). Thankfully, there is a growing body of literature that addresses the mistaken notion that human beings are all heterosexual males and females (Colley, 2017; Maguth & Taylor, 2014; Mayo, 2015, 2013, 2012; Hess, 2011, 2009; Mayo, 2016; Parkhouse & Massaro, 2018; Sleeter & Carmona, 2016; Wayne, 2016). According to Diana Hess, it is time to listen to experts in the field and implement a more inclusive curriculum (2018).

Critical Pedagogy to Face Fear

Paulo Friere challenged us to stop oppressing marginalized human beings (1970). According to Friere, students are not empty vessels to fill, but rather students bring their own experiences and knowledge to the learning. Teachers empower students by welcoming in diverse experiences and knowledge. Friere suggests teachers see themselves alongside of their students rather than seeing teaching as a top down activity. Being alongside students and co-creating the curriculum and the school environment with students helps stop oppression (1970). According to Prentice Chandler, paying "...attention to intersecting positionalities..." is essential in order "...to replace current curricular and pedagogical habits" (Chandler, 2009, p. 280). Teachers who pay attention to intersecting positionalities and replace current curricular and pedagogical habits are transformational teachers who prepare students to create a world that ought to be (Stanley, 2010). Inhibiting

transformation are those who prepare students for the world as it is (Stanley, 2010). Teachers who “transmit” perpetuate oppression by silencing and demoralizing human beings who are outside of the expected social norms (Chandler, 2015; Friere, 1970; Stanley, 2010). Even though teachers may want to act upon the injustices that students experience, fear of consequences and repercussions perpetuates inaction (Chandler, 2009; Passe, 2010). Friere seems to suggest that teachers face the fear with a critical perspective. Taking on the fear with a critical perspective means that teachers disarm subversive power, challenge an antiquated notion of knowledge, promote “...identity and be motivated by an ethos of justice” (Amthor & Heilman, 2010, p. 145). Some teachers face the fear to rise up to Friere’s challenge. These teachers recognize that an individual’s gender identity and sexuality are aspects of the individual’s intersecting positionalities and do not define the value or character of the person as a whole.

Defining Affect

Affective characteristics are attitudes, appreciations, emotional sets or biases, character, interests, values, fears, threats, inclinations, self-esteem, opinions and morals. Affective characteristics are aspects of an individual’s personality (Thurstone, 1928; Miller, Linn & Gronlund, 2013; Gronlund & Brookhart, 2009; Guskey, 2015; Fiske, 1971; Kifer, 1977; Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964; Anderson & Bourke, 2000). Affect is complex and multifaceted (Fiske, 1971; Kifer, 1977; Thurstone, 1928). “...labeling of certain reactions as affective...is to point out aspects of these reactions which have significant emotional or feeling components” (Tyler, 1973, p. 1). Values and beliefs impact the process of learning and teaching. Teacher affect impacts student performance (Miller, Linn & Gronlund, 2013; Gronlund & Brookhart, 2009; Guskey, 2015; Thurstone, 1928; Tyler, 1973). Affect, “emphasizes a feeling tone, an emotion, or a degree of acceptance or rejection” (Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1964, p. 7). Affect includes the extent to which a teacher accepts or rejects an issue. A teacher’s perceptions and tone are components of a teacher’s affect. As stated earlier, fear, which is a feeling within the Affective Domain, impacts whether a teacher chooses to teach LGBTQ+ topics or not. This study collects affective data about teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, fears, hesitations and perceptions about implementing LGBTQ+ into their social studies curriculum.

Measuring Affect

Affective measurements tend to be considered personality measurements and include measurements of feelings, sentiments and attitudes (Thurstone, 1928; Fiske, 1971). According to Donald W. Fiske (1971), when we measure affect we make inferences about affect based on observable behaviors. Quality affective measurements discern the degree of acceptance, indifference, or rejection of a well-defined construct (Fiske, 1971; Thurstone, 1928). Fiske teaches us to define the affective construct that is being measured before attempting to make any measurements (1971). Affective measurements are harder to make if the construct is not well-defined (Thurstone, 1928; Fiske, 1971; Guskey, 2015; Kifer, 1977). Measuring affect is a complex task which cannot be determined solely “...by any single numerical index” (Thurstone, 1928, p.531). Teachers tend to shy away from measuring affect because of the complex nature of affect (Anderson & Bourke, 2000; Guskey, 2015). Affective measurements make distinctions among behaviors such as awareness of a belief versus acting on that belief (Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1964). Affective measurements are intended to measure observable behavior.

Concluding Literature Review

“Teachers, students, and curriculum all reflect social locations and positionality (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ableness) and these affect perceptions and learning” (Amthor & Heilman, 2010, p.145). Teacher beliefs about including LGBTQ+ issues into social studies curriculum is an affective attribute examined in this study. Fear is an emotion that permeates this research study. This research builds upon studies that examine incorporating LGBTQ+ topics into social studies classroom curriculum and addresses the following research questions:

1. What affective behaviors, attitudes and beliefs do teachers who teach LGBTQ+ topics demonstrate?
2. Conversely, what affective behaviors, attitudes and beliefs prevent teachers from teaching LGBTQ+ topics?

Methodology

This qualitative study is grounded in phenomenological design. Phenomenology is a method through which an individual’s experience with a phenomenon is contextualized to represent the universal experience (Van Manen, 2006). Experiences collected from each individual participant are then examined and the description details the, what and how of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). This study seeks to examine the affective perceptions of social studies teachers in middle and secondary education in regards to how they incorporate or do not include LGBTQ+ topics in their social studies curriculum. There are usually between three to fifteen participants in phenomenological research (Moustakas, 1994). In this study we used criterion sampling (Miles, Huberman, Saldana, 2014). An email was sent out to Kentucky Social Studies Educators inviting participation in this study. Participants had to meet the following criteria: 1) currently be teaching in a school; 2) teach social studies courses; 3) teach in a middle school or secondary school. Eight participants were selected to conduct interviews with from the twenty completed surveys. These eight participants teach in different private or public schools and represent different genders. Table 1 displays demographics about teacher participants. Participants ranged in years of teaching from one year to fifteen years. Additionally, each school presented its own challenges as well as strengths for the teachers to teach LGBTQ+ issues. Examples of these challenges include low student performance, students struggling with access to resources and political limitations.

Table 1: Participant Overview

Alias	Grades Taught	Courses Taught	Description of School
Jackson	High School 11 th and 12 th	World History Sociology	Catholic High School
Rustin	High School 9 th , 10 th , 11 th , 12 th	US History Civics to Humanities to Western Civilization	Alternative School, described as a last chance school Inner City School
David	High School 9 th , 10 th	Civics	Title 1 school 70% students of color

Jessie	High School 11 th	US History	Diverse ELL Homeless students
Elizabeth	High School 9th, 10th, 11th	AP European History AP Human Geography Us History	Very diverse Rural School
Jennifer	High School 9 th , 11 th , 12 th	AP Human Geography IB Histories of America IB 20 th Century topics	Most diverse school in district
Erica	High School 11 th and 12th	US History AP Government AP History Psychology	Free and reduced lunch 40% African American
Morgan	Middle School 7 th	Ancient History Current-Events	Few underrepresented groups

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected with document analysis, teacher interviews and a questionnaire to address single method biases (Maxwell, 2013). Using document analysis along with interviews and the questionnaire blended and triangulated data collection methods (Patton, 2001). The data were collected in a cooperative effect by the researchers conducting the study. Kentucky's Social Studies Curricular Documents, Content for Assessment 4.1 for middle and secondary social studies as well as the Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies for the Next Generation, which are currently being developed, were the documents that were analyzed. These Kentucky curricular documents were searched for key words; sexuality, gender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. Additional terms; culture, diversity and multicultural, were added to the second level of document analysis.

Participants initially completed an electronic questionnaire. The questionnaire asked for demographic information and about the following; inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics in curriculum, teacher comfort in teaching LGBTQ+ topics, perceived appropriate grade level for including LGBTQ+ topics as well as the presence of LGBTQ+ students in the classroom. The electronic questionnaire is Appendix A.

At the end of the questionnaire participants were asked whether or not they would like to participate in a semi-structured interview. Each of the eight participants participated in and approximately one-hour semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interviews were conducted to examine how affect impacts or prevents inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics in social studies curriculum. Teachers were asked about experiences in their classrooms involving incorporating LGBTQ+ topics into the range of classes they teach. Additionally, they were asked to share perspectives on barriers and comfort to include LGBTQ+ topics. Each interview was audio recorded and

transcribed verbatim. It was specifically asked if LGBTQ+ issues were addressed in Kentucky's Social Studies curriculum. This question was asked to triangulate data themes. In the interviews we also asked probing questions about topics or units when LGBTQ+ issues could be taught.

We used Nvivo software to analyze the data in a multi-stage approach across type and source. The data were coded and used deductive categories developed by both researchers through in-depth conversations. Eventually, analysis shifted to an inductive process, comparing and reducing codes until we reached consensus. Throughout the analysis process both researchers explored their own bias and experiences as they related to including LGBTQ+ topics in the curriculum. These discussions included questioning our own positions as a cisgender straight woman and a cisgender gay man. The researcher's philosophical beliefs were examined to critical determine if these beliefs manifested within data collection and analysis. Early stage coding identified categories that described teacher's inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics in social studies courses, how students, parents and administration supported or limited inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics and the impacts of teacher training. These categories were examined to identify patterns of affect impacting teacher engagement with LGBTQ+ topics in the classroom. Late stage analysis involved further condensing these patterns to reveal implications for how LGBTQ+ topics may be further incorporated into social studies curriculum despite affect. Analytic memos were used throughout analysis to examine teacher affect and context, identify phenomenon and themes as they emerged and to test evidentiary warrants (Maxwell, 2013).

Limitations

The absence of teacher observations is a noticeable deficit within this study. Observations would have allowed for the researchers to witness the actual teaching of LGBTQ+ civil rights and relationship issues as well as affect that limits or promotes inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics.

A second limitation of this study was "reactivity" (Maxwell, 2013, p.124), which acknowledges the effect of researcher presence on participants. The researchers sought to remain neutral during the interviews to ensure participants felt comfortable to answer questions openly and honestly. Because questions asked about the participants comfort level and the appropriateness of including LGBTQ+ topics, the researchers did not want participants to feel pressure to answer based on the researcher's bias. This study was focused on Kentucky social studies curriculum and broadly examines experiences and perspectives from teachers. Examining educators across the nation would be an important next step to understand how cultural context of location impacts affect and inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics in social studies curriculum.

Findings

Teachers who participated in this study reaffirm the heteronormative nature of schools. "My administration has stated same sex couples are not able to attend dances together. They decided to go as a group of friends instead of going against the policy" (Morgan, Personal Communication, March 26, 2015). School policies that don't allow same gender couples to participate in school activities position students who identify as LGBTQ+ as abnormal and less than heterosexual students (Blackburn & Smith, 2010).

Social Studies teachers hesitate to include LGBTQ+ issues in the curriculum due to the heteronormative nature of schools and because LGBTQ+ topics, such as civil rights, are not in Kentucky's curriculum. Fear about including LGBTQ+ issues is an affective attribute discussed

by participating teachers. Findings are organized into three sections; document analysis and two sections about the affective themes that emerged from the interviews. The two affective themes that emerged are: 1) Teachers are fearful. The fearful section is organized into two components; a) fear of how administrators and parents will react, and b) fear about ways to incorporate LGBTQ+ into social studies; 2) Same gender female relationships seem to be more publically demonstrated in the schools where these teachers taught contrasted to same gender male relationships.

Document Analysis

Kentucky's Social Studies Curricular Documents, Content for Assessment 4.1, for middle and secondary social studies as well as the Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies for the Next Generation, under development, were analyzed for the document analysis. These Kentucky curricular documents were searched for key words; sexuality, gender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. These terms are not in these documents. Culture, diversity and multicultural were then added to the document analysis word search. 2, from sixth grade Social Studies, presents the only references to gender and culture in Kentucky's curricular frameworks.

Table 2: Kentucky Social Studies Standards

<p>SS-6-CS-U-5 Students will understand that an appreciation of the diverse complexity of cultures is essential in our global society.</p>	<p>SS-6-CS-S-5 Students will compare examples of cultural elements (e.g., language, the arts, customs/traditions, beliefs, skills and literature) of diverse groups in the present day, including non-western cultures within the United States, in current events/news using information from a variety of print and non-print sources (e.g., media, literature, interviews, observations, documentaries, artifacts)</p>	<p>SS-06-2.1.1 Students will explain how elements of culture (e.g., language, the arts, customs, beliefs, literature) define specific groups in the global world of the present day and may result in unique perspectives.</p>
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The only standard relevant to gender from Kentucky's Social Studies high school curricular framework is,

SSHHPS1 Students will demonstrate an understanding of the interpretative nature of history using a variety of tools (e.g., primary and secondary sources, Internet, timelines, maps, data): investigate and analyze perceptions and perspectives (e.g., gender, race, region, ethnic group, nationality, age, economic status, religion, politics, geographic factors) of people and historical events in the modern world (world civilizations, U.S. history). (Combined Curricular Document SSHHPS1)

Analysis of these documents suggests that LGBTQ+ issues are not presently included in Kentucky's existing curricular documents. Extending the analysis to gender and culture lead to locating the few curricular mentions quoted above. To triangulate the document analysis, participants were asked in the interviews if LGBTQ+ topics are included in Kentucky's social studies curriculum. The unanimous response was, no.

Teachers are Fearful of Administrator and Parent Reactions

"I am not sure I am willing to lose my job"
(Jackson, Personal Communication, March 13, 2015)

Fear is a pervasive emotion that the eight teachers shared. Teachers fear that their administrators or parents would react negatively to inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics in social studies courses. Elizabeth, high school teacher, explained that there is risk associated with "stepping too far out" to support a cause (Personal Communication, March 18, 2015). Morgan, seventh grade teacher, states "the biggest roadblocks include support of administration, conservative community members or stake holders who are not open to discussing differences and LGBTQ+ topics" (Personal Communication, March 26, 2015). Morgan went on to say, "I am open to teaching LGBTQ+ issues and willing to do it, but I would be one of the few and standing alone. That is scary. Supporting different is scary" (Personal Communication, March 26, 2015). Jackson made a similar assertion, "Anything different is always going to scare somebody" (Personal Communication, March 13, 2015). These teachers are afraid to incorporate LGBTQ+ issues because these issues are controversial and challenge the heteronormative sexual nature of schools.

Teacher's discussed their fear of being confronted by school administration if they engaged with LGBTQ+ in any way. Rustin, who identifies as a gay male, has experienced ridicule, discomfort and shared that his job could be in jeopardy if he is open about his sexuality in the school. He discussed how important it is for him to make the classroom comfortable for all students, and particularly for students who identify themselves as LGBTQ+. Rustin provided the example, "I have had a couple of openly gay students. They were relentlessly picked on from individuals within the school framework itself" (Personal Communication, March 13, 2015). Jennifer, high school teacher, articulated her concern about how the administration would react to teaching anything controversial by explaining that she gains approval from her principal before engaging in anything controversial. She also sends letters home to parents explaining the ways the controversial topics relate to course curriculum before she engages students (Personal Communication, March 22, 2015). Elizabeth added to the administrator issue by stating that "LGBTQ+ are not included where I am at, we are in a conservative school...The administration is very religious and conservative" (Personal Communication, March 18, 2015). If confronted by administration about incorporating LGBTQ+ into civil rights, Erica shared that she would use her school district's curriculum pacing guide to support her actions. "Pulling in examples in a holistic manner to show different groups that have experienced civil rights" (Erica, Personal Communication, March 26, 2015). Teachers fear consequences by their administration if they incorporate LGBTQ+ into their social studies curriculum. When teaching LGBTQ+, or other controversial issues, these teachers have strategies to ensure administrative support.

Rustin, Jennifer, and Erica each faced their fears and included LGBTQ+ topics in their courses. They overcame this fear out of what Erica described as an "imperative need" for the content as it "empowers students to reflect and grow and consider difference" (Personal

Communication, March 18, 2015). Rustin is driven by the philosophy that, “We are less likely to terrorize our community if we know what’s going on in it (Personal Communication, March 13, 2015).

Fear About How to Incorporate LGBTQ+ into Social Studies

Participants provided content specific examples about the ways they include LGBTQ+ issues. Table 3 summarizes the ways that the teacher participants do incorporate LGBTQ+ topics into their social studies classes. Teachers discussed challenges of being afraid of how to incorporate LGBTQ+ issues.

Table 3: LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Social Studies

Course/Topic	Description of Content
Ancient History	*Pharaohs disguised gender
Civics	*Personal Identity *Gender Identity *Federalism, state vs national rights Same-Sex Marriage currently is a state right
Current Events	*Supreme Court Decision Same-Sex Marriages *Kentucky’s Bathroom Bill
European History	*Single Party Rulers genocide of LGBTQ+ humans *rulers with LGBTQ+ relationships
Geography	*Coolness Factor (“cities that are perceived to be young and hip and places to be where the night life is great, restaurants are cutting edge but if you do a mash up which is a process of overlaying data on top of data which is different the correlation you’re going to see is more prevalent the gay and lesbian community is the higher the coolness factor is “(Personal Communication, March ##, 2015) *culture *conflict resolution *compromise *cooperation
Government	* Supreme Court Decision Same-Sex Marriages
U.S. History	*Civil Rights Movement *Stonewall Supreme Court Decision *Black Feminist Thought

Jackson stated, “I would be open to it, but I haven’t been prepared to teach LGBTQ+ issues. It is not something you are prepared to teach, but instead it is something you are taught how not to discriminate against or how to handle if bullying happens” (Personal Communication, March 13, 2015). Jackson’s lack of comfort was shared by several of the teachers. The teachers discussed feeling uncomfortable with questions or comments that students could bring up in class that may be unanswerable. Most of the teachers except Rustin, who identifies as gay, expressed concerns about being able to mediate the conversations.

Another teacher, David, who had entered the classroom in the past two years, discussed how quickly controversial issues can go awry and the impact it can have on one's confidence, "I was teaching about Ferguson and before I knew it my students were yelling at me. I would worry the same thing might happen with LTGBQ [sic]" (Personal Communication, March 13, 2015).

Several teachers discussed strategies to establish safe dialogue when engaging students in LGBTQ+ issues. Elizabeth a seasoned teacher suggested, "I don't have a problem teaching it (LGBTQ+ topics). You have to have it really structured. I am also not one to just jump in and force it. I will say let's take time and discuss...It has to be strategically implanted" (Personal Communication, March 18, 2015). This statement was indicative of the need to control classroom content tightly for fear that parents would hear something that happened in class out of context and think the teacher was trying to influence students.

It seems that facing the challenges and facing the fear (Chandler, 2009; Passe, 2010), are worth it because overall the teachers believe students are interested in these issues. LGBTQ+ issues relate to accepting diversity and being inclusive which moves us away from the heterosexual norm.

Same Gender Female Relationships Contrasted to Same Gender Male Relationships

Participating teachers seem to share the perception that same gender female relationships are more publically expressed in the schools contrasted to same gender male relationships. Each teacher shared examples of interactions with females in same gender relationships but shared hardly any or no interactions with same gender male relationships. Many discussed female couples holding hands and kissing in these schools. Male couples are not seen in these schools as much as female couples. "In the environment like these students are more comfortable coming out as lesbian versus gay. Perceived masculinity may be a result of this." (Rustin, Personal Communication, March 13, 2015). Erica asserted, "I don't know that I have ever seen or it is extremely rare, for young men to express sexuality" (Personal Communication, March 24, 2015). According to Morgan, "I have seen a prevalence of girls expressing their sexuality more so than boys. I think it is out of fear the boys are probable not willing to come out because they are afraid people will pick on them" (Personal Communication, March 26, 2015). Female same gender relationships seem to be more publically demonstrated than same male gender relationships.

Discussion

Within the heteronormative culture LGBTQ+ is different and it is time to include sexuality within diversity (Mayo, 2012) to change this erroneous norm our society has been perpetuating. Several teachers, Jessie, Jackson, Morgan, David, Elizabeth and Jennifer articulated LGBTQ+ topics as different. They referred to LGBTQ+ students dressing differently and express themselves differently. These words clearly demonstrate that even the teachers, who are in support of LGBTQ+ students' authentic expressions of their sexuality, feel that anything other than heteronormativity is abnormal. The students these teachers teach are biologically growing and developing while in these middle school and high school classrooms. They are becoming aware of their authentic sexual identities during this time of their lives (Mayo, 2012). Heteronormativity stifles and isn't inclusive. These teachers believe students are ready to engage in LGBTQ+ civil rights. "If anyone is open to it, it is the kids" (Morgan, Personal Communication, March 26, 2015). "My impression with the school is that students were comfortable to be out... I always felt that the kids

felt comfortable with their own self. It is so relevant and timely” (Erica, Personal Communication, March 24, 2015).

LGBTQ+ civil rights issues immerse students and teachers to shift heteronormativity to include LGBTQ+ gender expression. “...when schools include previously forbidden topics in the curriculum, they send a message that legitimizes the topic” (Hess, 2009, p. 113). Teachers are finding ways to face the fear and lack of social studies curriculum to include LGBTQ+ civil rights.

There is a huge disconnect with curriculum and with public awareness and with teachers with these students with these identities and with these concerns. They don’t understand that they are following along the same path as the bigots who didn’t want blacks to use the same bathroom. They’re falling into the same mentality. White people feared that and right now straight people fear that and we have found out through the decades there is no reason for fear for that yet fear persists. And I don’t know how to combat that except through my daily actions...Sanity has to prevail. I think that these LGBTQ+ issues are the next civil rights issues that are facing America. (Jennifer, Personal Communication, March 22, 2015)

“LGBTQ+ is the next movement, we have taught tolerance for ethnicities, race and now it is time for sexuality and gender” (Morgan, Personal Communication, March 26, 2015). Schools send a clear message of empowerment and care when they include controversial topics in the curriculum (Hess, 2009). The Obergefell v Hodges, Supreme Court decision to uphold same-sex marriages will nationally impact LGBTQ+ civil rights issues. It is time to empower. Despite the fears there are brave teachers who find ways to include LGBTQ+ issues into their Social Studies course content.

Conclusion

LGBTQ+ civil rights issues and expressions of LGBTQ+ relationships shift the heteronormative nature of schools to include LGBTQ+ expressions of sexuality. Confidence to teach LGBTQ+ emerges through support from administrators and parents. Teachers who feel supported by the school environment may be more likely to incorporate LGBTQ+ topics into the classroom content. Dialogue and awareness of bias would improve support. Jackson, the teacher who taught at a Catholic school stated, “we are educators, which means we should be open to life-long learning” (Personal Communication, March 13, 2015). Challenging established beliefs in order to open spaces for new perspectives is an essential aspect of life-long learning.

Lastly, affect cannot be an excuse for not teaching LGBTQ+ topics in social studies curriculum. While affect varied across the teachers we interviewed. Teacher participants consistently placed a high value on affirming the multifaceted aspects of each human being’s identity, as represented within the classroom and society at large. LGBTQ+ topics can no longer be viewed as an ad hoc topic or so controversial that teachers cannot teach them in their social studies classrooms. This means that we face down the fear and engage in controversial topics in our social studies classrooms. We ask school administrators and parents to be supportive of teaching about gender identity and sexuality. We embrace difference and explore LGBTQ+ issues in current and historical contexts so that civil rights are realized for each human being in each classroom.

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Appendix A
Electronic Questionnaire:

Age _____
 Number of year's teaching _____
 Courses you are currently teaching _____

Do you currently teach controversial topics in your social studies curriculum?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what topics do you cover?

Please respond to the following questions using the likert scale below:

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1. LGBTQ+ topics should be included in social studies curriculum at the middle school grade levels.
2. LGBTQ+ topics should be included in social studies curriculum at the high school grade levels.
3. I feel supported by school leadership to teach LGBTQ+ topics in social studies curriculum
4. I feel comfortable teaching LGBTQ+ topics in the classroom.
5. LGBTQ+ students are present in my classroom

Would you be willing to participate in an in-person interview to discuss your experiences as a social studies educator and LGBTQ+ topics within the classroom? If so, please provide the best way to contact you. This contact information will not be associated with information provided within this survey.