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Practical Applications from Theory and Research

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Training Secondary Teachers to Support LGBTQ+ Students: Practical Applications from Theory and Research

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In this essay, the author describes theory-informed methods for training Secondary teachers and administrators to support students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and otherwise outside of heterosexual and cisgender identities (LGBTQ+). Rather than focus on anti-bullying initiatives, the ideas presented here are intended to educate participants on recognizing systemic oppressions of hetero-normativity and sexism and view LGBTQ+ people from a positive perspective. Three activities are described so that readers can conduct their own trainings: a hetero-normativity scavenger hunt, a gender spectrum activity, and viewing LGBTQ+ people using a queer cultural capital lens. This essay combines ideas from social theories, education research, and the author's own experiences training pre- and in-service educators on queer issues.

Keywords: high school, professional development, social justice, LGBT issues, queer theory, gender issues

In our current tumultuous political environment, minoritized students are feeling especially vulnerable as their identities are under attack. Some state governments are offering protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+[1]) people (for example, Oregon recently passed legislation allowing non-binary people to use "X" instead of "M" or "F" as a gender marker on their identification (Serena, 2017)) while others are trying to prevent transgender people from simply using the restroom (Schmidt, 2017). The conflicting messages of such legislation can have a detrimental effect on youth so it is important that they have adults who are supportive (Movement Advancement Project & GLSEN, 2017). As a queer education activist, I work to train future and current educators on creating supportive and welcoming environments for LGBTQ+ students, coworkers, and families. This means not only acknowledging that LGBTQ+ people may face unique struggles, but also celebrating their identities fully and seeing their LGBTQ+ identities as positive, just as teachers might affirm ethnic and racial identities of their students.

Teachers and teacher educators thus need to show that they celebrate LGBTQ+ people and draw from asset-based models that recognize them as strong, resilient, and valuable. This article aims to offer practical suggestions for teachers, teacher educators, and

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[1] I use LGBTQ+ to recognize that there are myriad queer identities. The + includes intersex, pansexual, genderqueer, questioning, and other sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions that do not fit heterosexual norms. It will be used interchangeably with the umbrella term "queer" which I use here to also indicate non-heterosexual and non-cisgender identities.

education researchers wishing to provide safe and welcoming spaces for their queer students. There are things teachers can do, big and small, in their classrooms, not only to make their marginalized queer students feel safe, but celebrated for their unique strengths and differences. In this way, I aim to help teachers move from a realm of tolerance, which has the implication that there is still something wrong with LGBTQ+ identities, to one of celebration for—and not despite— LGBTQ+ identities.

This article is a narrative that draws from queer pedagogy and theory (ex. Brtizman, 1995), my own experiences in training teachers on LGBTQ+ issues, and my own scholarship on queer theory and pedagogy (Pennell 2016a, Pennell 2016b, Pennell 2016c). Britzman (1995) wrote that "queer theory offers education techniques to make sense of and remark upon what it dismisses or cannot bear to know" (p. 154) meaning not only discomfort with LGBTQ+ people and communities but also in confronting one's own complicity in heteronormativity. This article seeks to explicate some techniques so that teachers and teacher educators can confront heteronormativity in their classrooms and interrogate their own beliefs on sexuality and gender. These techniques require deep reflection on both one's current teaching techniques and the beliefs from which these techniques stem. Furthermore, reflection must go beyond the self and consider the current context of LGBTQ+ rights and local and national LGBTQ+ communities in order for teachers to grow and better support minority students (Pennell & Cain, 2016). In the contemporary political climate that is terrifying for many, it is more important than ever to keep fighting for and protecting our minoritized students.

Recognizing Systemic Heterosexism
When I first began training teachers on queer issues, I started with statistics from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) on levels of bullying, suicide, and school dropouts from queer youth (such as Kosciw, Greytak, Giga, Villenas, & Danischewski, 2016). I would include scenarios from my own teaching experiences and ask teachers to imagine what it would be like as an LGBTQ+ person in that situation, and what they would do as a teacher in each of these scenarios. I would sometimes share my own experiences as a queer educator in hostile environments working to protect myself and my students.

After a few years of this, I wanted a change. The researchers at GLSEN provide excellent resources and data, but I began to feel that by focusing primarily on the percentages of bullying and suicide I was leaving teachers with a deficit idea of LGBTQ+ youth. That is, I worried that teachers would only think of LGBTQ+ youth in terms of negative reactions to their sexual orientation and/or gender identities and not see any positive aspects of being queer. Furthermore, from talking with teachers it seems that the dangers queer youth face are more broadly known than they were in 1990 when GLSEN was founded. It is not news to many people that queer students are at increased risk of bullying and may have suicidal ideation. While teachers I worked with felt that it was helpful to hear about ways discrimination might work in schools, especially if they had not noticed this discrimination themselves, I worried that they may see these as isolated incidents and not part of a larger problem of homophobia and heterosexism. Additionally, I found myself drained after sharing personal, and painful, stories of my own discrimination. After giving such a talk I felt numb and found I could not work the rest of the day. This was not a sustainable method for teacher training, and I looked for other ways to talk about providing support for LGBTQ+ students, families, and coworkers.

I sought a way to allow teachers to see the systems in which these experiences functioned. As Boyd, LaGarry, and Cain (2016) wrote, I wanted teachers to make the leap from a

> 'self to system' approach, one in which we want to encourage students [and teachers] to discern both the personal aspects related to social justice such as the ways their socialization shapes their thinking, as well as the structural elements of oppression, where power dynamics operate in broader systemic ways. (p. 173)

In a similar vein, Kafer's inspirational (2013) work in queer disability studies criticized activities such as putting a blindfold on a seeing person so that they can experience blindness, pointing out that "although these kinds of exercises are intended to reduce fears and misperceptions about disabled people, the voices and experiences of disabled people are absent. Absent also are discussions about disability rights and social justice" (p. 5). This approach stems from a medical model of disability, in which the disability is the problem, not the cultural perception of disability as a construct. Queer scholars and activists have also cautioned against the medicalization of sexual orientation and gender identity, as there are harmful movements to "convert" queer people to heterosexuality as well as an idea that being queer is a problem (Warner, 1993; Earp, Sandberg, & Savulescu, 2014). I wondered, was I inadvertently purporting a medicalized model of LGBTQ+ people by focusing on problem scenarios and asking them to be fixed? My reflections tended towards the affirmative.

My feeling is echoed in more recent LGBTQ+ scholarship in education, particularly in queer pedagogy, as there has been a recent push to move beyond bullying (Fields, Mamo, Gilbert, & Lesko, 2014) and to share more well-rounded narratives of LGBTQ+ youth stories. Queer pedagogy uses queer as a verb (meaning interrogating boundaries of normality) as well as a noun (meaning LGBTQ+ people). In queer pedagogy, then, a number of scholars are encouraging educators to go farther than mere inclusion of LGBTQ+ identities (whether as part of a sustained curriculum or as one-time lessons) and instead interrogate and examine structures of oppression, particularly heteronormativity (Ferfolja & Robinson, 2004; Goldstein, Russell, & Daley, 2007; Loutzenheiser & MacIntosh, 2004; Macintosh, 2007). These scholars point out that instead of focusing on inclusion we must work to point out the underlying problems that create homophobic and transphobic environments. This call is like that of scholars pushing for a move "beyond food, festivals, and flags" (Skelton, Wigford, Harper, & Reeves, 2002, p. 52) in multicultural education and onto a critical approach more in line with social justice.

Kafer (2013) offered an alternative to the inclusion model in her exploration of disability studies: a "political/relational model [where activities] focus less on individual experience…and more on the political experience" (p. 9). Kafer gave an example of a group called "People in Search of Safe and Accessible Restrooms (PISSAR)" (p. 9). This group enables people to take action by going into bathrooms and measuring them for compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for wheelchair access. The survey's inclusion of accommodations for transgender and gender non-conforming people positions this group as a coalition between disabled and queer communities (West, 2010). Reading about this group inspired me to create a similar activity for educators that would allow them to check their own physical spaces—such as classrooms, school buildings, and locker rooms—to notice if they are safe and welcoming for queer students.

Heteronormativity Scavenger Hunt

I created the heteronormativity scavenger hunt to allow future educators to complete an activity that would help them recognize heteronormativity and see ways they could make immediate change in their school environments. I have conducted this activity with pre- and in-service teachers, library science students, school administrators and counselors, Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) advisors, and university faculty and staff, and it will work with anyone who works with queer youth.

First, I begin by discussing heteronormativity. If participants are not familiar with this term, I explain that our society is based around the idea that everyone is heterosexual and cisgender[2], and anyone who is not is deviating from what is considered normal. Most people, in my experience, are able to understand this definition. Next, we discuss what heteronormativity may look like in a school setting. Some standard examples I use include: (1) Often, heterosexual married teachers have a framed photograph with their spouse on their desk. LGBTQ+ married teachers may not feel safe doing this, especially in states where sexual orientation and gender identity and expression are not included in employment protection laws; (2) In advertisements for prom ticket sales, the pictures are often of heterosexual, cisgender couples. I ask for other examples, and participants have shared things like schools having Miss/Mr. X (school name or school mascot) pageants, or gender-segregated sports teams. After discussing what heteronormativity looks like, we discuss what its counter might be. Participants often come up with Safe Zone[3] stickers on classroom doors, advertisements for Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) meetings, or displays of LGBTQ+ books in classrooms or libraries.

The next step is to have participants explore the physical school (or library, or office) space and look for examples and counter-examples of heteronormativity. Participants are encouraged to take notes of their observations. This activity can also lead to a notice of gender imbalance in which participants see how much of heteronormativity also corresponds to sexism. Once, pre-service English teachers noticed a bulletin board on which several advertisements had depictions of superman or men in active roles, while only one portrayed a woman. They also noticed that the generic stick figures on warning signs were the same as the generic figures designating men's bathrooms. Participants then look for signs of LGBTQ+ inclusion: advertisements or posters from campus LGBTQ+ centers, notices about queer-friendly events, images that depict queer pairings. They check if their building has any gender-neutral bathrooms, or single-stall bathrooms that are gender segregated. When I asked future librarians to do this activity, one group noted that the undergraduate library at their institution did have a gender-neutral bathroom, but it was in the staff area, and they had to go through three people to gain access. As the participants noted, and is echoed by transgender people, these kinds of barriers make the day-to-day experiences of transgender students unnecessarily complicated. See Table 1 for further examples.

After the activity, a group discussion is necessary for reflection. We make lists of the heteronormative and queer-affirming examples that each group observed and discuss what surprised them. Typically, participants are not surprised to see that heteronormativity is ingrained in their physical spaces, but they are surprised to see how many of the examples are overlooked on a daily basis. This, in turn, allows participants

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[2] Cisgender means a person whose sex they were assigned at birth aligns with their gender identity, or internal feelings about their gender. It is the opposite of transgender.

[3] Safe Zone is a program in many K-12 schools and universities that provides training for educators and staff on creating safe and welcoming spaces for queer individuals. Participants are usually provided a sticker or sign they can put on their office or classroom door that visibly designates them as a queer ally.

Table 1: *Heteronormativity scavenger hunt examples*

Heteronormative Examples	Queer-Affirmative Examples
Posters for dances only depict heterosexual couples	Posters for dances with heterosexual and queer couples
Only gender-segregated restrooms	Gender neutral restrooms
Personal pictures displayed in classrooms or office spaces are only of heterosexual couples and families	Personal pictures displayed in classrooms or office spaces include queer couples and families
Mr. or Miss "school mascot" pageants	Safe Zone stickers
Gender-segregated clubs	Clubs and sports available to all, regardless of gender
Lack of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in school and district non-discrimination and bullying policies	Presence of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in school and district non-discrimination and bullying policies
Overhearing school staff ignoring homophobic comments	Overhearing school staff stepping in and reprimanding homophobic comments

to see how systemic heteronormativity influences everyone. From here, attendees can make action plans. Participants can brainstorm what they can do to change their environment. Ideas may include: contacting administrators about creating and labeling accessible gender-neutral restrooms, ensuring that school posters are inclusive to a diverse representation of students, displaying a Safe Zone or other queer-affirming sticker on classroom and office doors, and training others at their workplace on these issues to continue discussions of dismantling heteronormative spaces.

The Social Construction of Gender
Feminist scholars began to question gender roles and stereotypes in the early twentieth century. For example, French author Simone de Beauvoir wrote about women and femininity in the 1940s, and introduced many to the idea that both terms are social constructs. As she wrote in *The Second Sex* "no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself" (2005, p. 197). In this case, she was referring to the societal dominance of men, and that to maintain their dominance, another group (women) had to be positioned as subordinate. This idea can be expanded to other minoritized groups, such as LGBTQ+ people. Heterosexuality needs homosexuality to maintain its distinctness: heteronormativity works to create a separation between hetero- and homo-sexualities and sets up homosexuality as the "Other" (Luhmann, 1998).

Social scientists also began writing about gender norms, and, beginning in the 1960s, they questioned the essential model of gender, which argued that differences between the sexes were biological, in favor of a social construction model (Shapiro, 2012). This social construction model echoes the ideas from de Beauvoir (2005). Social scientists also began to tease out the differences between biological sex (male, female, intersex) and gender (ideas of masculinity and femininity). Gayle Rubin (1975) wrote about the conflation of sex and gender, and described this phenomenon as the "sex/gender system" which she defined as "the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into the products of human activity" (p. 159). Judith Butler's (2004, 2011, 2013) extensive writing on gender have shaped the academic and public discourse. Butler (2013) pointed out that gender relies on a system of performativity,

relating to the earlier discussion of woman as Other in that our presentation of gender must be recognized by others; for example, in order for a person to be perceived as masculine, the general public must recognize their masculine gender expression. This expression will vary across cultures: for example, at one time in U.S. history, wearing pants was seen as strictly masculine whereas now wearing pants alone is not enough to be seen as masculine. Butler (2013) also pointed out that performativity relates to heteronormativity in that in mainstream society a cisgender woman whose gender performance is perceived as feminine is expected to want a relationship with a cisgender man. Another of Butler's (2011) insights on gender is that it is regulated in our society under a normative framework that allows these regulations to feel natural. In other words, we do not question why we expect women to act a certain way (such as being nurturing) since we have been societally conditioned to think this is how women fundamentally *are.* By questioning these normative beliefs about gender, we can uncover myriad ways our society is structured around heterosexist gender norms that conflate behavior with (cis)gender identities.

Education researchers have also noted this conflation of sex and gender and have found that the belief that men are superior has led to practices such as teachers calling on boys more often than girls and of boys being assigned problem-solving tasks more often than girls (Shapiro, 2012). Because of schools' tendencies to reinforce gender stereotypes, and the fact that these stereotypes are wrapped up in a heteronormative social system that tends to see gender as within a binary of male and female, it is necessary to help teachers see how these stereotypes are socially constructed. By investigating social constructions of gender, and reflecting on how they reinforce heteronormativity, teachers can better support queer students who do not fit into gender norms.

Gender Spectrum Activity
I learned this activity as a graduate student at the University of Oregon in a class taught by Dr. Lisa Gilman. This activity could be sequenced before or after the heteronormativity scavenger hunt, and I have used it with students from middle school through graduate school. The original activity asked participants to make a list of male stereotypes and female stereotypes. These lists were written on either side of a chalkboard, and then participants were asked to place themselves along a line indicating the extent to which they matched the traits on each side. I have conducted the activity this way, but recently added another element: asking participants to make a list for societal expectations regardless of gender. I ask participants to create these lists on three different sides of the room, so as not to reinforce an idea that gender has a "center" and to show instead these ideas are fluid. This addition is my effort to resist a gender binary, as there are people who identify as transgender, non-binary, agender, and gender non-conforming. While this activity may seem at first to affirm the binary with the male and female groups, by drawing attention to the social construction of these categories it is my intention that participants will question the binary.

When beginning the activity, participants write everything they can think of regarding what and how society expects their assigned group to be, look, act, and behave. I phrase it this way because it takes away the burden of asking participants to write what they personally believe. This allows those who are unsure of their own relation to gender roles, or are afraid their own beliefs are problematic, to focus on outside expectations. Participants are reminded that if they see something problematic on the lists, they should remember everyone was asked to write about societal expectations, and that we begin the activity assuming the best intentions of everyone. This allows

people to direct their emotional responses towards society rather than their collaborators. See Table 2 for examples of these lists.

It is usually easy for participants to come up with the gendered examples. The non-gendered group may have a harder time, but can typically come up with examples based on basic morals and American expectations of citizenship. When the groups are finished, each one shares its list and other groups have an opportunity to add to them. Then, I make sure the lists are placed in a triangle configuration around the room. I ask everyone to stand, and place themselves somewhere within the triangle to gauge where they fall within society's gendered expectations. I instruct the group that you can only stand directly in front of one list if you fit every item on it, and none of the items on the others. This ensures that no one will be able to stay at one extreme: everyone falls somewhere in the triangle. Once people have placed themselves, you may want to ask one or two people to share why they chose their spot. I usually use myself as the first example, and reference specific things on each list that affected my choice.

Once participants have reflected on their personal place within society's constructs of gender, you can discuss what that means on a broader scale. What do our lists tell us about gender? About our society's role in shaping these ideas? How can we change or resist gender stereotypes? As with the heteronormativity scavenger hunt, most participants are not surprised that there are existent gender roles, but some may be surprised at how they are shaped by our societal system. When I use this activity in English courses, I often have students make two sets of lists: one for our society, and one for the society of the text we are currently reading. When I ask students to situate themselves within the triangle according to textual norms, there is usually a shift in positioning. This shift allows students to see in a concrete way that our perceptions of gender are shaped by culture and time. To enforce this in a teacher training, facilitators can ask participants to make additional lists for a school's gender norms (for example, do school uniforms differ according to perceived gender?) or a different time in school history.

Table 2: *Gender spectrum activity examples*

Males	Females	Everyone
Strong	Demure	Non-violent
Breadwinner	Housewife/caretaker	Jobs dictated by social class
Dates women	Dates men	Dating & marriage is expected
Dating multiple women is praised	Dating multiple men is "slutty"	Monogamy is generally expected in a relationship
Bisexuality is seen as weird	Bisexuality is seen as attractive	Heterosexual is the norm
Cisgender	Cisgender	Cisgender
Major in a STEM field	Major in a humanities field	College degree or other higher education
Outside chores	Inside chores	Chores

Queer Cultural Capital

Queer cultural capital is a theory I have developed to allow educators to focus on the positive aspects of queer communities (Pennell, 2016a). This work stems from Yosso's (2005) restructuring of Bourdieu's (1986) work on cultural capital, meaning the strengths, behaviors, and knowledges gained from living in a culture. For example, knowing to begin a job interview with a handshake and eye contact demonstrates American cultural capital and allows one to successfully perform in that situation. Yosso (2005) extended cultural capital to communities of color, and I in turn extended this to queer communities. Using this theory in teacher trainings can allow participants to see the unique strengths inherent to queer communities. The hope is that this new lens will then allow participants to view LGBTQ+ students in a positive light, rather than in one limited to their risk of bullying, while continuing to focus on structural issues rather than individual examples.

The framework has six elements of queer cultural capital: aspirational, familial, linguistic, navigational, resistant (as originally delineated by Yosso), and transgressive (my addition). These forms of capital often work together and inform each other: they are not distinct, but instead forms that can overlap. Aspirational capital is the ability to maintain hope in the face of oppression. Familial capital for queer people comes from close bonds with a variety of kinships: the families one is raised with as well as friends and chosen family. Queer linguistic capital is the myriad ways queer people can communicate with each other, whether by using coded language (such as the historic use of 'friend of Dorothy' to let people know you were gay), visual symbols (rainbow flags), body language and gestures (reading these constitutes a part of 'gaydar'), and creating new terms to describe one's identity and relationships (the use of 'datemate' by someone who is agender and does not want to use boyfriend or girlfriend). Navigational capital is the ability to move in systems and institutions not designed for LGBTQ+ people, such as transgender students having to navigate school bathroom policies. Resistant capital is the skills gained from resisting oppression, such as the public speaking skills students can gain from speaking to school boards about discriminatory policies. Lastly, transgressive capital is the proactive way queer people go around limits, such as anti-queer legislation or policies. Rather than being reactive like resistant capital, it is proactive and playful such as the queer dance parties recent protestors held on the street of anti-gay Vice President Pence (Villarreal, 2017). In school settings, students may read about another school district employing an inclusive non-discrimination policy and may make their own plans to proactively approach their own school district.

LGBTQ+ Narratives

These forms of capital can allow educators to examine the strengths of LGBTQ+ students and discuss the ways these strengths may manifest. If teachers cannot think of examples they have witnessed, or if trainers are afraid that using real-life examples would 'out' LGBTQ+ people in their school community, trainers can use nonfiction texts about LGBTQ+ people. Recently, there have been several accessible texts published about transgender teens: *Rethinking Normal* by Katie Hill (2014); *Some Assembly Required* by Arin Andrews (2014); *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out* by Susan Kuklin (2014); *Becoming Nicole: The Extraordinary Transformation of an Ordinary Family* by Amy Nutt (2015); and *Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender) Teen* by Jazz Jennings (2016).

I have used excerpts from the Hill (2014) and Andrews (2014) memoirs with preservice teachers, who found it helpful to have personal narratives as a supplement to

research articles about gender identity. Hill's and Andrews' biographies offer several examples of queer cultural capital, such as when the teens worked together to advocate for other transgender youth in their home state of Oklahoma and gained resistant capital, and when they used navigational capital as they went through their high school career and had to make choices for both their safety and comfort in school as well as the strength of their education. For example, when Andrews (2014) was asked to leave his private Christian school, he went to two different public high schools to find one that supported both his gender identity and his desire for a high-quality education.

Since these texts focus on teens, the narratives include discussions of schooling that can help teachers see the ways schools support—or do not—transgender teens and give them clear ideas for action. Teachers could read excerpts from these texts, or form a reading group over a longer period, and find examples of each form of queer cultural capital within the text. This will illustrate that even though the teens faced challenges due to their identities, their identities can also be a source of strength. Another benefit of using texts with queer cultural capital is that teachers may be inspired to use these texts in their high school classrooms. Then, teachers can move from these individual examples to a systemic evaluation, using a queer cultural capital framework to inform their own approaches to LGBTQ+ people and history in their curriculum. In this way, teachers can continue creating a positive environment for LGBTQ+ students that includes a more well-rounded view of them that includes a celebration of inherent group strengths.

Challenges
There are always individuals who refuse to accept a social justice stance toward education, and will resist a training that incorporates discussion of systemic oppression. I have had participants in the gender spectrum activity (both high school students and pre-service teachers) who insisted on standing at the point that corresponded to one gender. In these cases, I restate my directions and perhaps ask about specific items on each list. In my experience, these individuals usually concede and take a few steps away from the extreme, but this is no guarantee that their minds have opened. In any social justice work we often do not see the immediate results of our labor. I maintain hope that these activities can plant a seed in even the most resistant minds. Perhaps the next time they are confronted with ideas of systemic oppression, they will listen a little more.

There is also risk to those who facilitate such a training in hostile environments. When I work with teachers who want to affirm LGBTQ+ students, I always recommend that they find allies within the school community and not work alone on these issues, as well as bring in outside advocates to conduct any training or discussion that may be deemed controversial by parents and administration. These allies can accompany teachers to talk to administrators or parents who may be angry about school staff promoting a "gay agenda." If a school has a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), finding parents of GSA members who are supportive can help convince administrators or district staff that LGBTQ+ affirming training is necessary. If there is a community LGBTQ+ center or a regional advocacy group for LGBTQ+ students, teachers can contact these groups for help in facilitating trainings. These groups can provide more resources, show that there is visible community support, and draw attention away from any single teacher and instead put the attention on the training itself. Then if there are any complaints, they are more likely to be directed outside of the school.

Conclusion

It is my belief that we should offer teachers a way to recognize systemic oppressions against LGBTQ+ people as well as ways to see LGBTQ+ people for their strengths. Instead of focusing only on statistics of bullying and leaving teachers with a feeling of hopelessness, we should extend these conversations to give teachers actionable ways to improve classroom and school environments. To do this, we can train teachers to recognize heteronormativity and give them tools to dismantle it in their classrooms and schools. By asking teachers to complete a heteronormativity scavenger hunt, participate in a gender spectrum activity, and investigate LGBTQ+ experiences using a queer cultural capital framework, they will be equipped to recognize systemic oppression and norms as well as the strengths within queer communities. This may manifest in a variety of ways: including frank discussions of heteronormativity and gender roles in their own classrooms, choosing inclusive curricular material, advocating for LGBTQ+ affirming policy changes, or simply having discussions with coworkers on LGTBQ+ issues. There are many ways to be an advocate for queer students, but to go beyond inclusion and move into positive action, this advocacy must stem from knowledge of how society and our schools function within and through heteronormativity.

Acknowledgments

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