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Queering beyond pronouns: The necessity of indigenizing learning communities

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Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project (or thesis) has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

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Dr. Monisha Bajaj   Date

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS|DEDICATIONS

To the Ohlone peoples. To the unceded ancestral Ramaytush and Lisjan Ohlone Lands. To my ancestors, known and unknown and the Spirits who guide me. To the feminine, the masculine, the genderless and genderful energies of my pasts and futures. To Kiyoko. To my mentors Dr. Bajaj and Dr. Jimenez. To my professors Dr. Mora, Profe Dream, Dr. Argenal and Dr. Blundell, Dr. Norris and Profe Dani. To Skye & Little G. To Kohana & Lily. To my family, chosen and origin. To my fellow learners. To IME. To the Tigers. To me.

To Water: life, teacher and god.

In the words of Cornum (2019): "There is a genre of land acknowledgement that expresses gratitude to the Indigenous occupants of wherever such and such an art gallery is located for being caretakers of the land, without acknowledging how the actual practices of care taking and stewardship are unable to take place to their full extent under occupation. How can we care for land that has been overlaid with private property?" With that said, I urge my fellow settlers to pay their Land taxes. The Sogorea Te' Land Trust is where I pay Shuumi, which is only one way in which I will work to further the rematriation and retheytriation of the stolen Lands in which I live. Join me: https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/pay-the-shuumi-land-tax/

ABSTRACT

Learners who do not see themselves reflected in schooling face mental health, social and academic hardships. While centring marginalized identities and pursuing efforts to queer learning spaces is vital, it cannot end with attention to gender and sexuality. In order to best serve learners and community members, learning environments must commit to indigenizing as well. This paper culminates in a handbook which seeks to provide best practices for engaging with learners and holding space, as well as includes a sample curriculum and resources for further development. This handbook is focused for educators on unceded ancestral Ohlone Lands, and centres the importance of language, and Land and water as ways to queer and indigenize learning spaces. This handbook is not comprehensive and will need to continue to be developed to give further insight for administrators as well as centring other marginalized identities more explicitly.

EDITORIAL NOTES ON APA GUIDELINES

Capitalization of white: In opposition to the style guide of the American Psychological Association, I will not be capitalizing the "w" in "white." There are several reasons for this, and I want to thank my classmates Ominira Mars and Christina Ung for working with me to workshop my language in describing why. While Black and Indigenous peoples can have strong commonalities due to culture and/or history and the shared experience of discrimination due solely to the colour of skin, white people do not. White people do not share a common history, culture nor experience of facing oppression and discrimination due to skin colour (despite whiteness and white skin influencing systemic oppression and discrimination). Furthermore, white supremacists capitalize the "w" in "white," and I want to be explicit in my conveyance of the illegitimacy of these beliefs and upsetting white supremacy however possible. Language is a powerful tool in upsetting or maintaining the status quo. In my practice of racial justice, I believe that capitalizing Black, Indigenous and Brown serve in amplifying BIPoC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) voices, particularly in whitestream spaces of academia. My refusal in capitalizing white also serves to remind [us] that whiteness is an illegitimate social construct and the normalization of it continues to be the deadliest threat our world faces. While I understand that language and the surrounding conventions are fluid and change, it is for these reasons that I will maintain a lower "w" throughout the entirety of this paper unless the sentence starts with the word.

Spelling: As an English-born settler on these Lands, I learnt much of my spelling in the 'English' way (i.e.,: colour, honour, organisation, centre etc.). As my work discusses the importance of allowing students to bring their cultural language into learning spaces without

being expected to assimilate, I will not be changing my spelling to match the APA/US guidelines.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

There have been various moves over the years to shed light on and amplify the voices of those who problematize our schooling system (see Grande, 2004/2015; hooks, 1994/2012; Freire, 1968/2018; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999/2012); scholars have further shown the importance of allowing students to bring their full selves into learning communities and the effectiveness of culturally responsive, sustaining and inclusive pedagogies (see Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Gay, 2000; Alim and Paris, 2017). Schools are inherently political. Paulo Freire (1968/2018) calls upon us to help students to read the word so that they can read the world. He says "education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which [people] deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (Freire, 2018, p.34). How can we expect children to read the world if the word does not reflect it?

Kincheloe (2004) affirms Freire's stance that "the impassioned spirit is never neutral" (p. 5) and "schools not only reflect social stratification but extend it" (p. 8). We are all operating in an oppressive and subjugating system, it is our choice whether we allow our classrooms to be sites of oppression by co-signing them by remaining politically 'neutral.' When students do not see members of non-dominant groups in learning spaces it can lead to bullying. Reasons most often reported for being bullied include physical appearance, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, religion and/or sexuality (NCES, 2019). When students experience bullying (cyber or otherwise), they are nearly

twice as likely to attempt suicide (Hinguja & Patchin, 2018). One way in which educators and facilitators within learning communities address this is by employing anti-hegemonic or critical pedagogies.

At the core of these pedagogies is an act of queering; however, determining what queer is or isn't can look like many things. By its very nature, queer is meant to elude any attempt of definition (Motschenbacher, 2010, p.6). Queer escapes definition, but you know it when you see it, or when you experience it. Linguistically, it is a signifier without a signified (using Saussure's terms). Queer subverts "whatever constitutes the normal, the legitimate, the generally accepted" (Sicurella, 2016, p. 81). Queer changes its meaning over time to subvert the norms and adapt to whatever it needs to be. This is exactly what makes queer so effective: it's indeterminate and elastic (Jagose 1996, as cited in McGonnel-Ginnet, 2002, p. 138). Like queering, critical pedagogies are what subvert the white supremacist hetero cis patriarchal normativity. Critical pedagogies are those which centre the marginalized, that include the excluded, that empower the oppressed and amplify voices that are silenced. This is what makes critical pedagogies queer. However, often, these theories are missing the necessary element of decolonial pedagogies and indigenizing praxis. The colonial settler state and occupation of Lands and waters is at the core of every single challenge that [we], on Turtle Island or specifically the Lands known as the United States of America face. Indigenous epistemologies, theories, and approaches are vast, complex and ever-evolving. I do not argue that Indigenous theories or pedagogies need to queer, but queer theories and absolutely need to indigenize.

Indigenous scholars and Native feminists like Arvin, Tuck and Morrill (2013) define terms they use to discuss these in-depth epistemologies and approaches. For

example, they define "Native feminist theories as those theories that make substantial advances in understandings of the connections between settler colonialism and both heteropatriarchy and heteropaternalism. Native feminist theories focus on compound issues of gender, sexuality, race, indigeneity, and nation" (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 11). Indigenous approaches are able to see the connections here, whereas many proclaimed queer theorists exclude the importance of Indigeneity within their theorizations. Queer theorist, Edelman theorizes that "no future" could be a radical tool in disrupting the hegemony as the concept of "the child" is a way to perpetuate existing social order (Edelman, 2004, as cited in Arvin et al., 2013, p. 24). Contrarily, Smith (2010) posits that:

> [a]n indigenous critique must question the value of "no future" in the
> context of genocide, where Native peoples have already been determined
> by settler colonialism to have no future. If the goal of queerness is to
> challenge the reproduction of the social order, then the Native child may
> already be queered. (p. 48)

There is no one way to interrupt the hegemony, nor is there one way to queer. That being said, [we] cannot truly queer our learning communities if we do not centre Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing. Whetung and Wakefield (2019) provide an authentic discussion on "Colonial Conventions" in *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Longview* by Tuhiwai Smith, Tuck and Yang that "forced me to think more carefully about how the research ethics process re-embeds colonial understandings of relationship, respect and responsibility" (Whetung & Wakefield [of

Colonial Conventions], 2019, p. 149). They (re)imagine how research could look if instead of asking "'How will you minimize harm?', we asked, 'How will you be responsible to this knowledge and this community with the next seven generations in mind?'" (2019, p. 151).

Indigenous epistemologies and approaches to education, schooling and research are queer because they don't just stop at recognizing the past and institutional contexts of how [we] got here today, but interrupt it by (re)creating possibilities. This approach is starkly different to whitestream, colonial and imperialist approaches to schooling and education. Whereas whitestream schooling perpetuates hegemonic approaches to understanding history, Indigenous schooling provides context and counter narratives to dominance. Whereas whitestream education is rooted in denial, a separation of the past and now (with seemingly little to no thought of the future), Indigenous education sees past, now and the future as not only deeply intertwined but vital to the work. Colonial knowledge tries to exist outside of time, context and space and tries to hold itself up as 'just the way it is.' Indigenous knowledge queers time, and queers our understanding of space, especially through Land and water.

The centring of Land and water in Indigenous ways of knowing has a lot to teach the rest of [us] and is fundamentally queer. Colonial understandings and whitestream schooling hold that there are worthy teachers (who are often wealthy, white cis people). These people are the 'bosses' of the classroom whose purpose is to pass information they deem necessary. Within the banking model, students are empty waste baskets filled with the knowledge of the omniscient teacher who passes them along the factory line in neat little boxes. There is no love here, no complexity of identity, and certainly is

hierarchical. Core tenets of Indigeneity education are relationships, reciprocity and that water and Land are teachers. Tuhiwai Smith et al. (2019) remind us that "Water is self-determining. You're not going to go to the lake in August (a hot month) and tell it to be an ice cube. If we love water in all the various ways that it takes, then we can love our family in all the complex ways that they exist" (p. 3) As mentioned, there has been plenty of research that shows the importance of allowing students to bring their full selves into learning communities and the effectiveness of culturally responsive, sustaining and inclusive pedagogies (see Ladson-Billings, Hammond and Gay, Alim and Paris). However, the centring of water as this teacher is impactful in an entirely deeper way. This is not about tolerance, this is about love. This queers our understanding of who holds knowledge, and how we can access it but also who we consider a 'who.'

Indigenous scholars, thinkers and peoples urge us to think about the interconnectedness and overflowing of these lessons. Water can teach us so much about ourselves, and how to love those in our communities. Styres (2019) explains that to break down the colonial approaches to schooling and decolonize narratives, storytelling and literature, we must centre Land (p. 25). She quotes "[Land] holds all knowledge of life and death and is a constant teacher...the land constantly speaks. It is constantly communicating. We survived and thrived by listening to its teachings--to its language--and then inventing human words to retell its stories to our succeeding generation" (Armstrong, 1998, as cited in Styres [of Literacies of Land: Decolonizing Narratives, Storying, and Literature], 2019, p. 26). How and where we help our learning communities learn and understand truths is just as important as any other aspect in our learning communities. By listening and centring the Land, we understand the world

around us and by extension ourselves. As Casey (1996) (re)minds us, "we are not only *in* places but *of* them" (as cited in Styres [of Literacies of Land: Decolonizing Narratives, Storying, and Literature], 2019, p. 27).

Whitestream and colonial/imperial schooling is based in hierarchy, transactions and rigid normativity. If the goal of learning communities is to build values of knowledge, trust, reciprocity, and community: we must centre, honour and amplify Indigenous understandings of water and Land as teachers. As Land and water adapt and persist, so then must people. [We] do not receive these lessons from water and Land to simply say thank you and allow the continued colonization and extraction of minds, bodies, resources and knowledge, but rather we must take these lessons and use them to resist, (re)create and (re)imagine the future.

When knowledge, ways of knowing, language, Land and water and bodies of Indigenous peoples have been stolen and deemed inferior, the continued act of existence is subversive, defiant, and inherently queer. Re(x)istence is a term, similar in many ways to survivance (by Vizenor, 1998), used to describe how certain marginalized and targeted communities and ecosystems still existing is an act of resistance (Oliveira & Marques, p. 2016). I learned of the term in a private speech by Charlotte María Sáenz (2020) in which she offered:

> an initial description of *cuerpo-territorio* as an indigenous epistemology, a
> philosophical and pedagogical methodology that is rooted in the quotidian
> eco- social sacred life practices and cultural knowledges of many
> Mesoamerica [I]ndigenous peoples, as well as others in the long territories
> of *Abya Yala*, continent in which we stand...[by using] ideas and language

from various decolonizing praxes including the theorizations of decolonial

feminists and [I]ndigenous women's struggles.

And, if [we] seek to centre Indigenous epistemologies in [our] learning communities,

[we] need to first critically understand the history of colonialism and its existing

coloniality, centre and celebrate elder knowledge and pre-colonial knowledge, understand

Land/water as teachers, and centre and amplify the voices of Indigenous peoples who

shepherded them. The challenge becomes, then, how does a facilitator in a learning

environment queer their curricula and community so that it includes and embraces

community members most often erased and marginalized?

Background and Need

Constructions of race, gender, and sexuality as we know them are due to

colonialism (Bryder, 1998). Every society has experienced different identities outside of

the binary in various ways. Speaking specifically about gender (identity and expression),

nonbinary identities have never been a monolith; but, the majority if not every society has

had gender identities outside of the binary in precolonial times (Picq & Tikuna, 2019).

These identities were forcibly silenced and erased from whitestream knowledge but

continue to persevere today. Language plays a large role in this. Terminologies around

sexuality, sexual practices, gender identities or expressions or roles are cultural. The

meanings behind these things undoubtedly get lost when they are simply translated or

interpreted. Binaries that are so present in colonial languages of Europe do not allow

space for the wealth or spectrum of Indigenous identities or practices.

It is not these idioms that are untranslatable, but rather the cultural and

political fabric they represent. Indigenous sexualities defy contemporary

LGBT and queer frameworks. Queer debates do not travel well, whether

in space or in time. The idea that a person is homosexual, for instance,

stems from contemporary assumptions of sexual identity and is only

possible after the invention of homosexuality. (Katz 2007 as cited in Picq

& Tikuna, 2019)

The exclusion of these identities has led to anxiety, depression and suicidal

ideations in the people who hold them at a far higher rate than their

heteronormative or cisnormative peers (Scandura et al., 2019). This exclusion has

also led to rates of crime and violence against nonbinary folx at alarming rates.

All of these challenges have impacted Black and Indigenous nonbinary peoples to

the greatest degree.

On another side, when culturally responsive, sustaining and relevant pedagogies,

as well as queer pedagogies, have been employed, students holding these identities have

expressed mental wellness and have achieved more academic success (Kosciw et al.,

2018). There are various ways in which learning community facilitators can create and

maintain environments that are inclusive for all of their students. Situating ourselves

within the historical context of nonbinary identities across geographic location and

racial/ethnic identities, and understanding the detrimental impacts of perpetuating

(intentionally or unintentionally) the erasure of nonbinary folx are important. Exploring

the ways in which we can ensure representation, centre our students' identities, queer our

language and who holds authority as teacher are vital. However, too often, scholarship

done in effort to explore Critical Pedagogies and/or Queer Pedagogies is done in a way

that ignores the intersectionality of identities and perpetuates a banking model of

education. Queer pedagogues are the worst for this. Efforts to queer schools are done with a particular focus on sexuality and with no real analysis to ensure that other identity markers like ethnicity, race, Native language, religion, (dis)ability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, etc. are encompassed. This work seems to be predominantly focused on white gay kids, with maybe a footnote about Black and Brown gay kids who may have a different experience and very little exploration around different experiences of gender or folx who experience their identity in nonbinary fashions. This is the gap my project seeks to fill.

Purpose of the Project

This project creates a handbook for educators to queer and indigenize their learning communities in respectful ways. The project is broken down into four sections: best practices in working with students (in any subject), a curriculum example created for a first year high school level class, a training for educators and a compilation of pre-existing resources and organisations to support.

Theoretical Framework

Queer and decolonial theories are used as a theoretical framework for this field project. Queer theories, and the word queer for that matter, is elastic. It is not something that will ever be stagnant. It means different things for different people; "Queer, for many folks, is about resistance—resisting dominant culture's ideas of 'normal,' rejoicing in transgression, celebrating the margins, reveling difference, blessing ourselves" (Nguyen, 2011). There have been, and continue to be, many influences on queer theories. Some of the most widely agreed upon theoretical ancestors that have led to the queer theories as we know them are postcolonialism, radical movements of people of colour, feminism,

post structuralist theory, gay and lesbian movements, AIDS activism, a variety of sexual subcultural practices and Native theories.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999/2012) work with *Decolonizing Methodologies* has served as a theoretical framework for me throughout this project and throughout any other project I undertake going forward. I look in large part to Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2012)'s work *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* where she has taught me what Indigenous peoples have been saying for centuries regarding how "Imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized" (p. 1). While Tuhiwai Smith's seminal work has done, in immeasurable ways, more for the understanding of research, it applies and has been applied also to education.

Much like education, Western research systematically ignores Indigenous ways of knowing by claiming that research findings will benefit Indigenous communities. What these researchers are missing is that the colonial relationship of asymmetrical power maintained in classical and empirical research studies often causes more damage than any possible benefit. Moreover, these findings often reflect Western epistemologies: the logic behind the recommendations is incongruent with Indigenous ways of knowing, and the resultant "reforms," irrespective of their liberal and progressive intents, hold little hope for meaningful change. In Decolonizing Methodologies, Smith (2012) creates a conceptual model for an Indigenous research agenda. The framework is circular, with four

"tides" or layers: survival, recovery, development, and self-determination. The circle has four directions: mobilization, healing, decolonization, and transformation. (Louie et. al, 2017, p. 20)

This recognition of the importance of decolonizing or indigenizing education spaces is discussed in greater detail by Allen (2012) when he writes that this work can serve as "a blueprint for the primary work of Indigenous studies . . . centring Indigenous concerns and perspectives within academic research paradigms and localizing Indigenous theories and analytic methodologies" (p. xx).

One of the fundamental aspects of queer theories, as I use them as a theoretical framework, is the concept of *survivance* as put forth by Indigenous scholar Gerald Vizenor (1998), member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, White Earth Reservation. Eve Tuck, Aleut scholar, builds on this concept of survivance when she discusses the necessity of suspending damage when discussing Indigenous peoples. Tuck argues that when research in Indigenous communities must not "fetishize damage, but rather, [celebrate their] *survivance*" (Tuck, 2009, p. 422). Vizenor (1998) explains that survivance,

means a native sense of presence, the motion of sovereignty and the will to resist dominance. Survivance is not just survival but also resistance, not heroic or tragic, but the tease of tradition, and my sense of survivance outwits dominance and victimry. (p. 93)

It is with this concept that I situate queer theories. Indigenous community members and scholars, and specifically those that we know as 2-Spirit have persevered to bring wisdom and truth to this work.

Furthermore, there have been scholars from a variety of backgrounds who have added to our understanding of control, oppression, hegemony, resistance, resilience, and all that it is to (be) queer. I base my research in the influences of scholars like Sandy Grande (2004/2015), Eve Tuck and her co-scholars (2009, 2012, 2013, 2019), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2012, 2019), bell hooks (1996, 1994/2014), Audre Lorde (1984, 1997), Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014), Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), Judith Butler (1990), Michael Foucault (1972-1977/1980) and Heiko Motschenbacher (2010, 2011, 2016). Foucault and Butler are often credited with being the foreparents of queer theory due to Foucault's (1972-1977) exploration of control over bodies and biopower, and Butler's (1990) understanding of sex, sexuality and gender being separate and the performative nature of gender. Lorde (1984/1997) and Anzaldúa (1981-1987) have been fundamental in the understanding of intersection of race/ethnicity, sex, gender and sexuality. Ladson-Billings (1995 and 2014) and hooks (1996, 1994/2014) have been crucial at looking at the ways in which we can create inclusive and liberatory learning communities. Motschenbacher (2010-2016) and hooks (1994/2014) have been fundamental to my understanding of language as a tool for this liberation and inclusivity. Grande, Tuck and Tuhiwai Smith's contributions to my understanding of indigenizing and decolonizing education and research are immeasurable.

Significance of the Project

This project may be of interest to students, families, teachers, professors, administrators, practitioners of therapy, student affairs professionals, researchers in the field of identity and education, as well as queer linguists and settler-educators looking to employ

decolonial pedagogies in their classrooms. It may hold significance for them because it provides tangible action or practices, theory and resources for further learning and a ready-made curriculum to begin use immediately.

Limitations of the Project

This project has several limitations including researcher bias and subjectivity particularly due to my positionality as a white settler. There are also limitations in this project due to the curriculum being made specifically with a cohort of students in mind who attend a predominantly white Catholic private school that markets themselves as "all-girls" living and learning on the unceded ancestral Ramaytush Ohlone Lands. While I will do my best to provide alternatives, I recognize that access to some of the resources I pose may be challenging for educators in different communities or with different accessibility needs.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this field project and thesis, I write about abolitionist practices, decolonizing, holistic learning, indigenizing, Indigenous epistemologies, Indigenous knowledge, Land, queering, whitestream, etc. I also put brackets around pronouns like [we] or [our]. Below I define some of these terms to lay the foundation for this project.

- Abolitionist teaching: "Abolitionist teaching tries to restore humanity for kids in schools... Abolitionist teaching looks different in every school. It comes from a critical race lens and applies methods like protest, boycotting, and calling out other teachers who are racist, homophobic, or Islamophobic. It's also about Black joy and always putting love at the center of what we're doing." (Love & Stoltzfus, 2019, para 1-3)

- Cis/Hetero-normative: Whereby cisgender or heterosexuality is upheld as the standard. Both are upheld through representation (or lack thereof) which constructs preconceived notions around what gender or sexuality is or is not.

- Decolonizing:

    - Land back: The act of rematriating the Lands and water back to the Indigenous peoples (see Tuck & Yang, 2012).

    - "the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches. Decolonization involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches, and rethinking Western biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being." (Mason et. al, 2018, glossary of terms)

- Folx: Using an "x" in words to describe people insists on the reminder that nonbinary peoples exist. While 'folks' encompasses all people (regardless of gender), too often nonbinary, Trans* or nonconforming peoples are erased from the narrative. By adding the x, I am deliberately insisting on the reminder that [we] exist. It is not about assimilation.

- Holistic Learning: "engaging the four knowledge domains that interweave all aspects of learning: emotional (heart), spiritual (spirit), cognitive (mind) and physical (body)." (Mason et. al, 2018, glossary of terms)

- Indigenizing: "the process of naturalizing Indigenous knowledge systems and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. In the context of post-secondary education, this involves bringing Indigenous knowledge and

approaches together with Western knowledge systems. It is a deliberate coming together of these two ways of being." (Mason et. al, 2018, glossary of terms)

- Indigenous Epistemologies: "theory of knowledge that is based on Indigenous perspectives, such as relationality, the interconnection of sacred and secular, and holism. The emotional, spiritual, cognitive, and physical dimensions of knowledge are common in Indigenous epistemologies." (Mason et. al, 2018, glossary of terms)

- Indigenous Knowledge: "knowledge systems embedded in relationship to specific lands, culture, and community." (Mason et. al, 2018, glossary of terms)

- Indigenous Pedagogies: "the method and practice of teaching that focus on the development of a human being as a whole person, learning through experience, and recognizing the important role that Elders have in passing on wisdom and knowledge." (Mason et. al, 2018, glossary of terms)

- Queering: The act of subverting the hegemony by centring the marginalized, amplifying the silenced and questioning normative lessons. I argue that in order for queering to be fully realized, it must also be indigenizing.

- Whitestream: While I learnt of this term from Sandy Grande, it was coined by Claude Denis who adapted it from the feminist notion of "malestream." While society is not necessarily white in "sociodemographic terms, it remains principally structured around the basis of white, Anglo-Saxon experience" (Grande, 2003, p. 330). See also Claude Denis, *We Are Not You: First Nations and Canadian Modernity*.

- White supremacist hetero-cis-patriarchal coloniality (sometimes shortened):
  Society in the country known as the USA (and others, but for the purposes of this,
  I will only be discussing the Lands colonially known as the USA) has been
  entirely structured through colonial structures and concepts of binaries. These
  binaries are often seen through masculine and feminine. This impacts every single
  part of life and upholds a hierarchy of power and control. We see this through
  white supremacy culture (and anti-Blackness), heteronormativity, cisnormativity,
  the subjugation of Land, and the normalization of settler-colonialism.

- [We] or [Our]: This is done with the recognition that I am writing from the
  positionality of a white settler on these Lands. Calls for what [we] must do is
  speaking to other peoples who hold this positionality or who resonate with these
  calls.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Queering learning communities is necessary to interrupt the effects of white supremacist hetero-cis-patriarchal coloniality. Specifically focusing on the ways in which we can use language to queer these spaces is particularly important as mental wellness, physical safety and academic success has shown to improve in nonbinary students when they are presented with representation, engaged with student centred storytelling, and nonbinary grammar approaches. There is a hefty body of scholarship that supports this, and particularly the need for a focus on nonbinary peoples. In contrast to media claims that nonbinary identities are a new phenomenon, and predominantly found in white teen communities in the West, nonbinary and gender variant identities have been present and active since precolonial times on every habitable continent. The exclusion and erasure of these identities has adverse effects on mental health and physical safety of members of queer communities, with particularly dangerous impacts on Black and Indigenous queer peoples. Contrarily, by centring queer identities and approaches to learning, students are able to experience holistic learning in a way that they could not otherwise. However, there are various ways to "queer" one's learning community. Queer theories, particularly through Decolonial and Critical Race lenses, can be used to frame this body of scholarship. Queering learning communities and language is thus not only possible, but necessary to interrupt the effects of white supremacist hetero-cis-patriarchal coloniality.

Review of Theoretical Frameworks

Queer theories claim the necessity of questioning binaries, challenging normativity and examining power relations. Queer by its very definition, or lack thereof, is always adapting. It resists against the norm and thus is not something that can always be pinned down to one thing. This section includes a brief history of queer theories which includes Audre Lorde's (1984/1997) original scholarship describing how unexamined privilege results in categories that don't look at intersecting identities partnered with Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) that describes 'borders' constructed between binary identities. It explores Michael Foucault's (1976) work that claims sexuality is produced by certain societal institutions, and the ideas developed by Judith Butler (1990) which argues that one cannot be categorized into a homogenous category and that gender is something that is performed. It is enhanced with the work by bell hooks (1994) which argues for teaching students in a way that transgresses racial, sexual and class boundaries to achieve liberation. The claims from Heiko Motschenbacher (2016) argue for queering linguistics to achieve these goals. It is entirely guided by seminal work of decolonizing methodologies by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2012) which articulates indigenized approaches to research and schooling. This progression of thought is important because it demonstrates the necessity of contextualizing various identity markers in order to combat normativity and recognize various power dynamics present. Exploring sexual identities without gender identities or expressions or without racial identities ignores the full picture.

Audre Lorde (1984/1997) illustrates that the body is situated within a web of identities and power relations. This is vital to this foundation because her work discusses how these aspects of identity are categorized in order to be controlled. She argues that in

order for capitalism to thrive, identities must be placed in a binary. Gloria Anzaldúa

(1987) who conceptualizes the borders that are placed between these binary identities is

foundational in incorporating geographic location and both physical and mental borders

through this work. In particular, she describes the U.S.-Mexico border as "*es una herida*

abierta where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 3).

She views this 'open-wound' as a way to "break down the subject-object duality"

(Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 80). Anzaldúa argues that the goal of writing is to bridge these binary

categories and ways of thinking in order to heal the world. Her work argued that it was

through writing and thinking that one would be able to liberate, transform and interrupt

binary classificatory systems. Whitestream history conditions us to see human differences

in basic opposites and where "the good is defined in terms of profit rather than in terms

of human needs, there must always be some group of people who, through systematized

oppression, can be made to feel surplus, to occupy the place of the dehumanized inferior"

(Lorde, 1997, p. 374). Anzaldúa pays special attention to the way that storytelling,

writing and thus language, has the ability "to transform the storyteller and the listener

into something or someone else" and thus, viewed "the writer, as shape-changer, [as] a

nahual, a shaman' (1987, p. 66).

Some foundational seminal work that articulates queer theory includes Michael

Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1976), and the work of Judith Butler (1990) in her

seminal work *Gender Trouble.* I find both works to be vital to queer theory but think that

it erases the pivotal and critical work done with theorists of colour in this realm to view

the two as the creators of queer theories. Foucault argued that sexuality was not

something that could be uncovered but rather something that produced certain forms of

knowledge stemming from societal institutions. This scholarship builds off of Jeremy

Bentham's 18th century idea of the *panopticon*. The idea is that if in a prison the guard is

sitting in the centre and could be looking into any cell at any given time, prisoners would

monitor their own actions and behaviour. If we link this to the surveillance of today,

Foucault argued that people monitored and managed their own behaviours out of fear of

rejection or stigmatization from society as a whole. He argues that this is related to

neo-liberal politics wherein problems in society are often placed at the feet of the

individual. His scholarship is vital because it introduces the concept of *biopower*.

Biopower, Foucault argues, is the way in which governments govern the bodies of

citizens through "bodily discipline" and seek normality in order to ensure productivity.

This original scholarship is important because it explains how the concept of sexuality

became an identity category needed to be controlled for the sake of the economy in

regard to levels of productivity and levels of purchasing as a result of insecurity.

However, Foucault did not believe it was a one way power relation, because wherever

there is power, there will be resistance. In any discourse, things are both opened up and

closed down.

      Butler's work builds on this, as well as work from Lorde and Anzaldúa (and

others) to discuss the problem of treating "women" as a homogenous group. Her work

argues that this identity is not a defining feature, especially when one holds other

marginalized identities. She built on this by arguing that when we hold the idea of

"women" as stable and homogenous, we risk reifying oppression and inequality. Her

fundamental argument is that generalizations should not be made especially because

when one does (particularly in regard to civil rights) it still ends up enforcing a binary

and thus retains power dynamics. Butler's idea of the heterosexual matrix was revolutionary in the way that people understood sexuality, gender and sex. She argued that bodies do not determine genders, and genders do not determine sexualities. Building on this, she suggests that gender is performative, or in other words, is our actions (our behaviours and expressions) rather than those things being a result of our underlying gender. This was crucial in paving the way to understand that gender is something that is fluid and can change over the course of one's life.

bell hooks (1994/2014) builds on this, especially when it comes to how to teach students to transgress these identities. She argues that education is the practice of freedom, theory is liberatory and that language is a crucial part of exploring and expanding how we understand the world around us. Much of hooks' work builds off of liberatory practices put forth by Paulo Freire (1968/2018), and she takes the ideas of the binary as holding a fundamental position in the way we understand schooling. In fact, hooks argues that "the objectification of the teacher within bourgeois educational structures [seems] to denigrate notions of wholeness and uphold the idea of a mind/body split, one that promotes and supports compartmentalization" (hooks, 2014, p. 16). She argues that it is this split that "reinforces the dualistic separation of public and private, encouraging teachers and students to see no connection between life practices, habits of being, and the roles of professors" (hooks, 2014, p. 16). This calls to mind Foucault's ideas around biopower, and Lorde's proposal of capitalism requiring binaries. When wholeness of self is not invited into the classroom, and students are asked to compartmentalize and separate themselves from their teacher and various identity markers, it is easier to control and force them to fit into the mould in which capitalism

requires of them. hooks builds upon Anzaldúa in that she offers forth how language can resist and disrupt this. She argues that "like desire, language disrupts, refuses to be contained within boundaries" (hooks, 2014, p. 167). When she explores how access to language can interrupt these power dynamics, she calls upon another critical queer theorist, Adrienne Rich when she uses the line from Rich's poem "This is the oppressor's language, yet I need it to talk to you" (hooks, 2014, p. 167). hooks proposes that in order to combat normativity, namely, white supremacist hetero-cis-patriarchal coloniality, we need to allow for the "rupture of standard English" in order to forge "space for alternative cultural production and alternative epistemologies -- different ways of thinking and knowing that [are] crucial to creating a counter-hegemonic world-view" (hooks, 2014, p. 171). This work is pivotal because it stresses the importance of allowing accessibility to words and different languages in order to identify and deconstruct the identity categories we see. It is only through this work that we are able to interrupt binaries that serve to uphold hegemonic oppression.

One theorist who has seemingly built on this is queer linguist Heiko Motschenbacher. Motschenbacher argues that queer is meant to elude any attempt of definition (Motschenbacher, 2010, p. 6). Fundamentally, language is at the core of this challenge. The words we use and how we use them are in a unique position within the educational system because they both create a student's world around them, while also allowing students to create their own. Motschenbacher argues that normativity is both upheld (particularly through the "linguistic construction of essentialist, binary gender categories" (Motschenbacher 2014, p. 250) and resisted and reclaimed. He argues that the binary is (re)created through language to maintain and stabilize heteronormative systems

in which the masculine and feminine are held as opposites, and to be attracted to each other, and where the hierarchy between the two lifts the masculine (Motschenbacher, 2014, p. 250). As Motschenbacher explores in both English and German, "every time speakers of writers use binarily gendered forms, they reinstate the discursive formation of the heteronormative system" (2014, p. 250). Motschenbacher looks at how queering language could impact schooling in particular. He argues the most fundamental goal of inclusive education is to "provide positive learning conditions for all learners in a class and to eliminate barriers (not just in the physical sense) that may have detrimental consequences for (language) learning" (Motschenbacher, 2011, p. 166). Recognizing that students, even those who share identity markers, are not homogeneous (including in their learning) should not be considered a teaching obstacle rather as added value to the community. This queer perspective should be centred in the classroom and that by "using a Queer perspective[...]is not so much a matter of deciding what is Queer, but of choosing to view certain behaviours in a non [cis-]heteronormative light or from the perspectives of the sexually marginalized" and the linguistically marginalized (Moschenbacher & Stegu, 2013, p. 520). Allowing students to use their own languages and grammars (whether it be dialect, Indigenous, or slang) allows students to actively resist white supremacist hetero cis patriarchy.

This work would be glaringly incomplete if it did not highlight the seminal work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2012) in decolonizing methodologies in research. Tuhiwai Smith's work sought to decolonize research methodologies and promote Indigenous self-determination in a way that could be universally applicable to any other realm. Numerous Indigenous scholars have shown this within education and have noted that

purely relying on colonial (aka Western) methods and epistemologies in learning communities marginalizes Indigenous students (Battiste, 2013; Ermine, 1995; Little Bear, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith 2012; Hanson et. al, 2017).

In summary, queer theories articulate the need to disrupt power structures being fundamentally at the feet of interrupting binaries. This includes Audre Lorde's explanation of binaries and capitalism with Gloria Anzaldúa's understanding of borders due to binary identities and the importance of language, Michael Foucault's idea of biopower, and Judith Butler's proposal of gender and performativity, bell hooks' claims around importance of education and identity and Heiko Motschenbacher's call for queering linguistics. The following sections describe this research and justify the claim that in order to create an inclusive, and just world for youth, we must centre nonbinary identities and ways of knowing in our classrooms.

Nonbinary identities have existed, currently exist and will continue to exist

Research demonstrates that nonbinary, gender variant and gender-nonconforming identities are not new nor a fad. These identities that have existed pre-colonization and on every habitable continent. This includes research that illustrates the presence of nonbinary identities in the Lands many know as the United States of America or more generally as the West, research that explores the existence and roles of nonbinary, gender variant and gender-nonconforming community members in various global societies historically and research that articulates continued existence of nonbinary, gender variant and gender-nonconforming people today. This is important because as facilitators or

members of learning communities we must situate ourselves historically to recognize the humanity, historical context, and contributions of these identities.

To begin, research illustrates that, although identity terms rapidly evolve and concepts around gender are relatively new, nonbinary genders, sexes and sexualities have existed in the geographic locations known as the United States and what is known as the West. It is important to separate this history from that of other culturally specific identities in an attempt to disrupt the pattern of colligating Indigenous identities, and ways of knowing into Western categories that perpetuates coloniality and a colonial mindset. Evidence of identities in the West can be found in McNabb (2018) who claims that though there is a "shaky lineage of nonbinary ancestors throughout history," it is possible to trace and certainly not new (p.13). Similarly, Meyerowitz (2002) demonstrates a history of how the concept of sex has changed in the United States and Stryker (2004) who explores Trans* activism historically. Sexual behaviour and gender identities were less than clean categories in the early 19th century, despite rising visibility and research into people interrupting gender expectations. Perceived genitalia led to an assigned sex which determined gender roles which complemented another to ensure procreation and societal and marital harmony. Anyone who disrupted these predetermined gender roles was conflated with confused homosexuality and labelled as an invert (McNabb, 2018, p. 14).

Only after the pivotal work by German physician, Magnus Hirschfeld in 1910 was 'cross-sex identification' distinguished from homosexuality and the West saw pioneering sex altering surgery through the 20s and 30s until the rise of the Nazi regime (Meyorwitz, 2002, pp. 18-19). Before 1952, there were few case studies and fewer known of those that

had 'cross-sexual' surgeries, or that were living in a gender nonconforming manner. However, in that year, Christine Jorgenson became the public face after her genital reassignment surgery and both "humanized the idea of sex change for cisgender American public and allowed other 'transvestites' to hope for the same" (McNabb, 2018, p. 14). Though Jorgenson self-identified as both woman and man, and is quoted as saying "Each person is actually both in varying degrees...I am more of a woman than I am a man" (Jorgenson, 1952 as cited in Gherovici, 2010, p. 88). This is not to say that Jorgenson was the first in the United States, far from it in fact (see Snorton, 2017 to read stories of Mary Jones, Lucy Hicks Anderson, Ava Betty B Brown, Jim McHarris, and more).

> While Jorgenson quickly rose to fame, many Black trans people -- and especially Black trans women -- were disappeared in her shadow. White trans women like Jorgenson began to achieve acceptance by appealing to the dominant norms of white womanhood (domesticity, respectability, heterosexuality) and differentiating themselves from Black gender variant people. (Vaid-Menon, 2021, para 1)

Though it was not until the 1960s that academic and scientific scholars started to use the term "transexual" and began to accept surgical intervention. This was, in part, due to the work of trans* folx like Louise Lawrence who worked with biologist and sexologist, Alfred Kinsey throughout the 1950s to gather data, history and understanding of needs of trans* people (Stryker, 2004). Lawrence created networks of trans* correspondence and worked as a mentor to folx like Virginia Prince who created peer-support groups and authored publications (Stryker, 2004). In large part due to these works by gender variant

folx, the concept of gender was born. In work penned by John Money and colleagues, the term "gender" was used in talking about intersex children. They defined it as "outlook, demeanour and orientation" (Meyerowitz, 2002, p. 114). This was built upon by Robert Stoller and Ralph Greenson who differentiated 'identity' from 'role' and thus feelings and behaviours around gender (Meyerowitz, 2002, p. 115). While these revelations may lead a reader to believe that nonbinary, gender variant or gender nonconforming identities were accepted; it's imperative to recognize that as these identities received more visibility, they were more criminalized.

Those who held other marginalized identities were criminalized the most. Black, Brown, poor and/or femme folx that were gender nonconforming were most at risk for assault, policing, harassment and economic hardship. In fact, the PRIDE parade that is celebrated globally now is the result of an uprising and riot against police violence led by Black and Latinx bisexual trans* women at the Stonewall Inn in New York in 1969. This uprising was not the first of queer resistance in the United States; the first known being in Cooper's Donuts in Los Angeles in 1959 when arrests were being made of those whose gender identity did not match their marker. A similar uprising occurred in San Francisco in 1966 at Compton's Cafeteria. Though the resistance at Stonewall Inn is most recognized, and prompted Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson to found the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) (McNabb, 2018, p. 16). Their work was influential for a variety of other gender affirming and nonconforming organisations to arise, such as the Queer Liberation Front, Transexuals and Transvestites, and Transvestites/Transexual Action Organization of 1970, and AND/OR in 1971 (McNabb, 2018, p. 18). Although these groups advocated for the protection and in many ways, the

inclusion of gender nonconforming, gender variant, or nonbinary identities, the battle for equity, inclusion and justice is far from won.

Related to this, research investigating existence and roles of nonbinary, gender variant and gender nonconforming community members in various global societies historically articulates their precolonial existence and resistance. Evidence of this can be found in McNabb (2018) who provides an anthology of nonbinary identities globally. Similarly, Wilson (2011) adds insight to Indigenous nonbinary identities in the Americas, while Epple (1998) emphasizes the need for community specific explorations of these identities. In total, this research illustrates the rich history of nonbinary identities on various continents and in various societies. It's imperative to note however that as we explore the existence and roles of various identities that our own positionality and language shapes how we view these. One of the most challenging works we have when working to understand other identities is that we do not frame them through our own bias lens. To this end, even the way in which we discuss these identities can often be framed within a Eurocentric construct. There are a variety of culturally specific genders that are not existing or arising out of a binary construct so terms like "trans*" is not suitable for these world views. This is certainly not to say that these identities only exist(ed) outside of Europe or Western societies, we see in the section above that this is not the case. There are numerous European cultures that do in fact have traditionally variant gender roles like the femminiello of Italy that most often describes "feminine males" and are considered "useful and lucky" (McNabb, 2018, p. 33). The Burrnesha of the Balkan regions, and specifically Albania, take an oath of chastity and access privileges like land-owner status that is otherwise denied within patriarchal structures.

However, even with examples such as these existing traditionally in European countries, when European colonizers forcefully arrived in the Americas, there was a sinister goal of assimilation of Indigenous peoples into 'traditional European ways.' This came through rigid documentation (through the colonizer's own lens) and a fascination and fear of the unfamiliar. This was motivated in particular by Christian missionaries along with colonizing soldiers who wished to observe Indigenous ways of life in order to best subjugate and dominate them. When sexual behaviours, or gender roles and expressions were observed to be different from that of Spanish conquistadors, they were labelled sinful and taken as a sign of weakness, inferiority and decadence (McNabb, 2018, p. 35). This was used as reason to convert Indigenous peoples to the Spanish, Christian, heteronormative ways and to further subordinate them with labour exploitation.

The Spanish colonizers used the derogatory term of "b*rdache" which came from the Arabic term "*bardag*," and the Persian "*bardaj*" which translates to prisoner, and came to be "*bardaje*" in Spanish and was used to signify "the passive partner in homosexual anal intercourse" (McNabb, 2018, p. 35). This term demonized gender variant Indigenous folx for years. It is rooted in masculinity, domination, coercion and focuses specifically on one type of sexual activity. From the 1900s to 1950s, anthropologists with a Western/Eurocentric lens presumed that that Indigenous folx who were a part of this category were coerced, and a part of "institutionalized homosexuality" (McNabb, 2018, p. 35). It was not until the 1960s that whitestream researchers began to recognize that it was a separate *gender* category that was revered and respected socially, and often religiously in various communities.

In 1990, at a queer gathering of First Nation and Native American folx in Winnipeg, the term "Two-Spirit" was coined as an umbrella term for Indigenous gender and sexual identities that exist outside the European binaries (Wilson [of Queering Indigenous Education], 2019, p. 141). It must be emphasized that this is a term created by Indigenous peoples for Indigenous peoples. It is not a term for non-Indigenous nonbinary identities, and to use it as such would misappropriate and be damaging. As an umbrella term, it does not replace tribal-specific terms. Although there are various cases across tribes and Indigenous communities that show nonbinary identities respected and valued; it is important that one does not assume that they are all the same. In fact, Trista Wilson's studies show that there were at least 155 Native American tribes that accepted third and fourth genders (Wilson, 2011).

There are various Indigenous authors who work diligently to disrupt this misconception of a Pan-Indian identity and to privilege their own tribal understandings and ways of knowing. One such scholar is Carolyn Epple from the Navajo tribe, who has produced robust scholarship on "*nádleehí*" (a Navajo specific term for their nonbinary gender role). She has posited that the "synthesis of nádleehí and others into a single category has often ignored the variability across Native American cultures and left unexamined the relevance of gender and sexuality" (1998, p. 268). The Navajo also have another term for a nonbinary gender role called Dilbaa. Another such example is the *Lhamana* (a Zuni specific term for their 3rd gender role) which in Zuni origin stories unifies society (McNabb, 2018, p. 35). Other examples of tribal specific terms for nonbinary genders are the *mixu 'ga* of the Osage tribe, the *winkte* and *lila witkowin* of the

Lakota tribe and the *keknatsa'nxwix* and *tawkxwa 'nsix* of the Quinault (McNabb, 2018,p. 41).

As for others, there are examples from every continent of folks that fall outside the gender binary. Some that are placed into categories like feminine men or masculine women, some that are described as both genders, some that are described as neither gender, some that are described as a third (or fourth or fifth or more) gender, some that fall under what we in the U.S. know as trans* folk, some move back and forth between various gender roles over time. There are the *muxe* and *biza'ah* of Native Mexico (these terms specifically refer to Zapotec communities in Oaxaca), the *travesti* of Brazil, the *māhū* of Tahiti and Hawaii, the *fa'afafine* of Samoa, the *hijra,* and *sādhin* of India, the *waria* of Indonesia, the *bayot, bantut and bakla* of the Philippines, *kathoey* of Thailand, and many more (McNabb, 2018, p. 43-48). Across countries, not all are confined to nonbinary genders, many of those listed above also encompassed ideas around what is known in the US as intersex. There are nonbinary sexes like *guevedoche* in the Dominican Republic or the intersex deities celebrated throughout Polynesia (Nanda, 2000, p, 43-45). However, even with these categories there are no rules regarding sex or sexuality. And this is something important to underline: there may be patterns, but there are certainly no rules.

These gender roles, and relations are culturally specific and culturally bound. It's also highly challenging beginning to get firm understandings of gender variant existence due to the prejudice and damage that colonizers, missionaries and researchers have done to Indigenous communities which created distrust and likely led to "[hiding] evidence of gender diversity" even now (McNabb, 2018, p. 37).

It is important to note as well that even within these discussions of gender identities and sexualities outside the binary, it is a colonial mindset to expect people to 'come out'. Alex Wilson's research has been fundamental in the development of 'coming in.' This model acknowledges

> that Western conventional ways of understanding LGBTQIA+ experiences do not describe well the everyday experiences of Indigenous peoples, [Wilson's] research led to the development of the model of "Coming In" to describe individual and community empowered queer identities. (Laing [of Queering Indigenous Education], 2019, p. 131)

The final body of research I present claims the persistence of nonbinary identities today. Evidence of this can be found in McNabb's (2018) who claims nonbinary, gender nonconforming and gender variant identities have enjoyed heightened popularity and visibility. They suggest that this is due to three main reasons: the ability to disseminate content through the internet, greater numbers of nonbinary folx coming out, and coming out at younger ages and the number of celebrities who have spoken in support of nonbinary politics or come out themselves as nonbinary (p. 55). Through their research, they highlight notable nonbinary people, storylines, and characters in popular culture, as well as nonbinary people instrumental to nonbinary (hir)stories (McNabb, 2018, p. 55-93). Similarly, McNabb (2018) demonstrates the evolution of the English language in which to describe nonbinary identities. Finally, their work explores the increase in legalized nonbinary gender markers. These bodies of research, together, confirm the increase in the United States of the visibility of nonbinary identities.

In popular culture, there have been gender nonconforming, gender variant and nonbinary characters since the beginning of film. As language has evolved, and as visibility 'in real life' has occurred, we have seen more explicitly nonbinary story lines and artists across genres. Some examples are in well-known movies and shows like the Star Trek franchise, children's live-action puppet show on Netflix "Julie's Greenroom," cartoon "Adventure Time," and series "Orange is the New Black." Some are books like Octavia Butler's "Lilith's Brood" trilogy, zines like "Fear Brown Queers," songs like "True Trans Soul Rebel," musicians like Shawnee, or podcasts like "From Head Wraps to Hood Rats." This is a short list of an increasingly growing collection of work and contributions to popular media by nonbinary, gender varying and gender nonconforming people. Celebrities like Jaden Smith, ALOK, Elliot Page, Tilda Swinton, Ruby Rose, Sam Smith, and Billy Porter have all visibly played with gender expression or have explicitly stated in interviews their gender nonconforming, nonbinary or variant identities.

Part of the visibility of gender nonconforming or nonbinary folx has allowed for an expansion of language around these identities. In 1995, the term "genderqueer" was innovated by Riki Anne Wilchins, co-founder of Transexual Menace (Wilchins, 1995). Hir newsletter called for the situating of the historical resistance that nonbinary folx have taken on.

> The fight against gender oppression has been joined for centuries, perhaps millennia. What's new today is that it's moving into the arena of open political activism. And nope, this is not just one more civil rights struggle for one more narrowly-defined minority. It's about all f us who are genderqueer, diesel dykes and stone butches, leatherqueens and radical

fairies, nelly fags, crossdressers, intersexed, transsexuals, transvestites,

transgendered, transgressively gendered, and **those of us whose gender**

expressions are so complex they haven't even been named yet.

(emphasis my own: Wilchins, 1995)

As Wilchins suggests, language will continue to evolve because gender is limitless and

individual. It is widely accepted by medical professionals and scientists that youth

typically begin to recognize their own gender by the time they are about 4. This isn't the

case for all, but is common. If youth are living in inclusive and safe environments where

they have not been conditioned out of it, they tend to tell the surrounding adults how they

identify. Diane Ehrensaft has developed several terms to help caregivers understand their

"gender creative" children:

Gender hybrids are children who experience themselves as a combination

of girl and boy. Genderfluid children move along the gender spectrum or

outside of it. Prodigy children may play with gender before they realize

they are gay. And prototransgender youth first come out as gay before

later realizing they are transgender. (McNabb, 2018, p. 26)

However, as stated previously, gender is fluid. It does not stay stagnant and thus, neither

does the language folx use to describe it. As students are gaining more access to

visibility, inclusion and acceptance, more are exploring their own identities and

expressions of gender, as well as questioning the norms in place regardless of their

gender identity and expression. This is seen, in particular, with youth that are active in

social movements. They recognize the multiplicity of identity markers and the necessity

to centre and amplify the voices of those who are multiply marginalized. This is seen by

the focus on intersectionality, a term first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1991, in various social justice movements (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality posits numerous social categories/identity markers interlock together to create multifaceted levels of privilege and/or oppression (for example: Indigeneity, race/ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, age, (dis)ability, immigration/refugee status, language, education, location, spirituality or religion, size etc). One well-known example of this is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, in which two-thirds of the Black women who co-founded the organisation and movement self-identify as queer. Many of the BLM chapters identify this importance of intersectionality publicly. For example, the Portland, Oregon chapter states:

> We reject cis-heterosexism--we are queer, trans, and non-binary
>
> Black/Africans, and we struggle beside and for queer, trans and
>
> non-binary Black/Africans. We embrace and fight for the full and free
>
> expression of the entire spectrum of Black/African gender, sexuality, and
>
> identity. (Black Lives Matter PDX as quoted in McNabb, 2018, p. 27)

This outward display of solidarity and support has also resulted in changing language around gender in order to show the acceptance of gender nonconforming youth.

According to research done in 2016 by the J. Walter Thompson Innovation Group, "56% of GenZers know someone who uses gender-neutral pronouns" which is up from 43% of Millennials. This is in large part due to solidarity actions done by folx regardless of whether they identify as nonbinary or not. One example was in Baltimore, Maryland in 2004 where middle and high schoolers quickly adapted to a new gender-neutral pronoun, yo, to apply to all genders (Stotko & Troyer, 2007). This was a similar phenomenon to

the resurgence of the gender-neutral "they" as a pronoun throughout various other populations. While the singular "they" seems to be most popular in usage for gender nonbinary folx, there are various other pronouns used and new ones being created all the time. Similarly, the language one uses to describe their identity is also constantly evolving. Some of the more common examples falling under the nonbinary, gender nonconforming or gender variant umbrella are agender, agenderflux, androgyne, aporagender, bigender, birl, blur, butch, demiboy, demigender, demigirl, enby, femme, fluid, flux, genderfuck, genderqueer, gendervoid, in-between, maverique, neurogender, neutrois, nongendered, polygender, pangender, radical, rebel, third gender, transfeminine, trans*, transmasculine, xenogender, x-gender (Nonbinary Wiki). This list is by no means comprehensive, nor should it be taken to ignore culturally specific terminology. It is important to underscore again that culturally-specific terms should not be used by non-members of that culture.

As language evolves, so does legality. As I write this, and it's important to note that this will continue to update, numerous countries and states within the U.S. offer a third option for sex markers on identity documents like driver's licences or legally recognize a nonbinary gender. The countries that have passed this so far are Argentina, Austria, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, India, Netherlands, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, the United Kingdom, parts of the USA and Uruguay. Within the USA, the states that have passed this legislation are as follows: Oregon, California, New York, Washington DC, Washington, Maine, Arkansas, Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Illinois and Virginia. This is coupled with various legislation that protects against discrimination

based on marginalized identity markers, including gender, gender identity and gender expression.

In summary, research demonstrates that nonbinary identities have existed in almost every society and continue to exist today. This includes research that illustrates the existence and resistance of nonbinary folx in what we know as the United States research that articulates the perseverance of nonbinary identities throughout global societies and research that claims an increase in visibility of nonbinary identities today. Taken together, this body of research justifies a special need to focus on creating nonbinary inclusive learning communities.

Risks faced by nonbinary folx

Similar to the ongoing existence of nonbinary identities research demonstrates that when communities do not work to acknowledge and embrace nonbinary identities, there are severe mental health detriments to folx under the nonbinary umbrella. This includes research that indicates the disparities of mental health issues between sexual and gender minority students compared to their cisgender and heterosexual peers, research that articulates the challenges queer youth face within learning communities, research that tracks the fatal violence that occurs globally to nonbinary folx in our global society. This is important because as facilitators in learning communities, we must understand what is at stake when we choose not to actively include and engage with nonbinary identities. When learning communities do not actively work to support and embrace nonbinary, gender nonconforming or gender variant identities, we are choosing to risk the safety, wellness and lives of those members of our global community.

To begin, research illustrates that there is a disparity between mental health of heterosexual and cisgender youth compared to youth who, due to their sexuality or gender identity or expression, are queer. Evidence of this can be found in studies by Marshal, Dietz, Friedman, Stall and Smith (2011) and Kaann (2016) who claim the rates of depression, anxiety and suicidal ideations are higher for queer youth than their cis-heterosexual peers. It is important to note that the majority of statistics that follow are not broken down by other identity markers like race or ethnicity, religion, (dis)ability, or citizen status. In 2017, the Human Rights Campaign and the National Suicide Prevention Hotline compiled a variety of studies that state about a third of trans* youth have seriously considered attempting suicide while 20% has attempted. Other queer youth are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide compared to heterosexual youth (Kaann, 2016), and that number appears even higher for bisexual youth (Marshal, 2011). This suggests the forced binary and erasure of identities has a serious emotional and mental toll on the youth in these so-called categories. It's important to remember that these experiences are in no way homogeneous for queer youth and other identity markers are also impacting these numbers.

Much of this incongruence occurs due to treatment in learning communities. A study by Blackburn and McCready (2009) shows 86.2% of LGBT+ students experience verbal harassment due to sexual orientation in school, and 66.5% due to their gender expression. 44.19% of LGBT+ are physically harassed due to their sexual orientation and 66.5% due to their gender expression. 44.19% of LGBT students are physically harassed due to sexual orientation, 30.4% due to their gender. 22.1% physically assaulted due to sexual orientation, and 14.2% due to gender. Now before one assumes this is occurring in

backwards parts of the country or in deep rural areas, those that partook in the survey overwhelmingly identified their schools as in urban areas, which are often presumed to be more inclusive or progressive (Blackburn & McCready, 2009). Only 21.7% of students said school staff intervened <u>most</u> of the time or always when hearing homophobic remarks while 59.7% reported hearing homophobic language in school and 67.7% reported hearing gender based biased language in school (Blackburn & McCready, 2009). This is just those that recognized they heard gender biased language, and it is still that high. The result of this is catastrophic. Internally, the act of being repeatedly not seen or erased can create uncertainty, anxiety, depression and often failure within school. According to the research done by the Trevor Project (2019), when LGBTQ youth have acceptance from at least one adult in their life, their risk of attempting suicide decreases by 40%. When our youth grow up in learning communities that do not have a focus on inclusion of all identities, their safety is at risk when they enter 'adult society'.

The social implications of expressing one's gender outside of the binary expectations can result in marginalization, rejection and violence. Research done by Transgender Europe (TGEU) tracks Transgender Europe (TGEU) focuses on trans and gender-diverse people's experiences of crime and violence since its inception in 2009. They partnered with other organisations globally, and created the Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM) which is a research project that "has been systematically monitoring, collecting, and analysing reports of murders of trans and gender-diverse people worldwide" (Fedorko et al, 2020). According to their findings, "a total of 3314 trans and gender-diverse people were reported killed in 74 countries worldwide between January 2008 and September 2019" (Fedorkoet. al, 2020). The actual number is undoubtedly

much higher due to the lack of systematic recording of nonbinary, gender nonconforming or gender variant folx, and the rampant misgendering or erasure that trans* folx face is not included when we are talking about trans-**identified** or gender variant **identified** folx. Each November, on the International Trans Day of Remembrance, the Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide (TvT) team publishes Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM) research project update "to join the voices raising awareness of this day regarding hate crimes against trans and gender-diverse people, and to honour the lives of those who might otherwise be forgotten" (TvT, 2019). In 2019, their update revealed 331 **reported** killings of gender-diverse and trans* folk between the 1st of October 2018 to the 30th of September 2019. Countries that had the highest numbers of reported murders occurred in Brazil, Mexico and the United States (TvT, 2019). It's important to note in the United States, 90% of these people murdered are Black or Indigenous (TvT, 2019). This underscores again the necessity of not viewing gender or sexual identities and expressions as single issues. Identity markers are intersectional, as is the experience of those who hold them.

To begin, research demonstrates that without a focus on inclusion and acceptance of nonbinary identities, nonbinary folx are at a higher risk for various ailments. This includes research that illustrates nonbinary folx are at a higher risk for mental health illnesses, research that articulates an increased experience and awareness of harassment and microaggressions in learning communities, and research that exposes violence and crime targeted at nonbinary folx. Taken together, this body of research justifies the necessity to queer learning communities in an attempt to create inclusive and accepting

spaces. Related to this are various inclusive pedagogies that could help guide learning community approaches.

Queering Learning Communities

Similar to the mental health and physical risks that occur when we do not cultivate environments of acceptance for nonbinary identities, research demonstrates that youth in learning environments have more success when this is incorporated into their curricula. This includes research that illustrates the importance of representation, research that articulates the necessity for student centred curricula, and research that claims the importance of queering language in order to create affirming spaces. This is important because we must not assume that introducing pronouns is the be all and end all of this work. We must not view our nonbinary community members as single issue people and recognize the incredible cultural wealth they bring with themselves into the learning space. Finally, we must not view this work through the lens of damage only.

To begin, research illustrates the importance of representation within curriculum. Evidence of this can be found in Motschenbacher (2011 and 2016) who claims in more general terms that inclusivity is only possible when teachers are active in the goal. This can only be done by allowing students to bring their full selves into the learning community. Motschenbacher argues "teachers ...play an important role as guardians of inclusive language policies as shapers of communicative norms in the classroom community and as "agents of change" more generally" (2011, p. 180). He goes on to say that "full inclusion can only be reached when the included identities are positively represented in classroom materials and talk" (2016, p.167). Similarly, Yosso (2006)

demonstrates the importance of interrupting normativity by using counterstories to show resistance from those on society's margins.

There are opportunities to help guide and facilitate identity work through the use of literary or fictional characters. It is vital in the spirit of queering a classroom to disrupt hegemonic, or majoritarian stories and instead help facilitate the opportunities for counter-stories. Counter-stories recount "experiences of racism and resistance from the perspectives of those on society's margins" (Yosso, 2006, p. 2). Teachers can do this by taking a critical look at the materials they are using in their classroom and asking not only whose voices are present, but whose are missing. Building on this, teachers should be asking whether the literature they are bringing to their students is reflective of their own interests or whether it is reflective of their students.

Additionally, Paiz (2019) offers approaches to disrupting heteronormativity in World Language classroom environments that could be applied to other classrooms. He suggests that the teachers first step is to understand their own breadth and limitations in LGBTQ+ issues, understanding that teachers must be willing to learn alongside their students (Paiz, 2019, p. 6). He stresses the need for ongoing engagement to avoid an "'inoculation approach' of one and done" and instead to stress the importance of "understanding those around us and how we are all awash in discourses that elevate some and marginalize others" (Paiz, 2019,p. 6). Paiz stresses the importance of discussion and respectful engagement. In contrast, Sauntson (2019) adds that normativity is perpetuated not by what is said but the absences or what is not said around diversity. Silences or absences are critical functions to maintain and perpetuate heteronormativity within the

classroom (Francis & Msibi, 2006; Gray, 2011; Moita-Lopes, 2006; Sauntson, 2019, p. 333), as well as sustain the white heterocispatriarchal hegemony.

Sauntson uses the term "illocutionary silencing" wherein normativity is perpetuated not by what is said but the absences or what is not said around diversity (Sauntson, 2013 as cited in Sauntson, 2019, p. 333). This subject "emerges as having much transformative potential recognized by [students] as a key site for establishing and developing inclusive pedagogy in relation to sexual diversity and inclusion" (Sauntson, 2019, p. 323). Though Sauntson is speaking of sexual diversity, I argue this applies to any other identity marker as well. When students overwhelmingly express "critical attitudes towards what they perceived to be gender 'segregation' along the lines of binary sex", and view a relationship between sexual and gender diversity in the sense that "if gender was restricted then that also made sexuality restricted and heavily policed in the school context" (Sauntson, 2019, p. 337) then it is a teacher's obligation to use strategies that interrupt these binaries (albeit gender, sexuality, or any other identity marker).

There are various "macro-strategies like: teaching sexual literacy, deconstructing anti-gay discourses for teaching, recognising student cohorts and teaching staff are multi-sexual 'in a way that is intellectually enriching', evaluating teaching resources to consider whether they are upholding or challenging heteronormative thinking" (Nelson, 1999, as cited in Sauntson 2019, p. 324). These same approaches could be employed to celebrate (dis)abilities, racial or ethnic identity, religion, native language, etc. In sum, this research articulates that there are a plethora of ways in which representation of marginalized identities, and more specifically, nonbinary identities, that can be

incorporated into any learning community, but it is important to recognise whose voices, bodies, and stories are missing.

Related to this, research investigating approaches to creating student-centred curriculum articulates the need for student agency, and students' full selves to be brought in the classroom. Evidence of this can be found in Cruz (2012) who claims that to centre those that are most marginalized, we must invite and centre counterstories, but also invite students to create their own through the art of *testimonios*. Creating their own *testimonios* is a way to analyse lived experience, and practice "radical storytelling" in the classroom by sharing lived experiences and the narratives "of the 'dispossessed'--the criminal, the queer, a child, a [person] who has experienced sexual violence, a community that has organized and talked back to a history of substandard educational opportunities, an African American, the indigenous, a migrant or a narrator who is illiterate" (Cruz, 2012, p. 461). For this should be the ultimate goal of Queer Critical Pedagogies: to centre those marginalized, to disrupt and dismantle binaries in every form and to create inclusive spaces for students. Often, as we see through the banking model of education, students are required to lose parts of themselves in order to acclimate to the school and society as a whole. Rarely are students told that these parts of themselves are not only valid but filled with knowledge and worth. Allowing students to bring these aspects in and recognize them as worthy of exploration and learning is fundamental in their growth and development. Similarly, Robertson (2015) demonstrates that many members of genderqueer communities are able to explore their identities and create language to explore their experience through the practice of spoken word poetry. Robertson argues that "the lack of language available for bodies that define their existence outside of the

binary genders of male and female denies these bodies validation as well as the ability to discuss their identities with others" (Robertson, 2015, p. 2). Providing space for students to bring their identities into learning spaces is great, but so often nonbinary students do not have access to language to communicate that. Without access to define their own experiences, nonbinary people are denied validation and authentication. Robertson argues that the "queer subculture created within the spoken word community of Slam Poetry enables language around genderqueer identities to be created, defined, and cognized in a way that is not available within other literary forms, which permits the creation of subjectivity that is currently denied to genderqueer identities through the lack of language to define and share their lived experiences" (2015, p. 4). Arao and Clemens (2013) urge the importance of intentionality with the way in which we frame these conversations in these environments, as they recognize the discomfort it could cause for participants. Their research explores ways to create spaces for students where despite being "vulnerable and exposed," "willing and able to participate and honestly struggle with challenging issues" (2013, p. 141 & p. 138). They suggest various linguistic changes to community understandings to best help students brave learning spaces that risk, and may cause "pain of giving up a former condition in favour of a new way of seeing things" (Arao & Clemens, 2013, p. 141). This reflects the importance of trust building in the community in order to create spaces of true worth. In total, this research illustrates the importance of inviting students' whole selves, and to practice culturally responsive pedagogies that focus on student engagement. It also stresses the importance of intentionality with language in order to validate these identities and experiences.

A final body of research that claims the necessity of language, and queering language in this work. When we view language through a queer lens we see how white supremacist hetero-cis-patriarchal normativity is both upheld (particularly through the "linguistic construction of essentialist, binary gender categories" (Motschenbacher, 2014, p.250) and resisted and reclaimed. It is with this knowledge that we must arm ourselves with understanding the existing limitations of language, the potential of queer linguistics, and the possibility for queer affirming language classes to best prepare our learning communities to forge ahead. Wall Kimmerer (2013) invites us to learn the grammar of animacy through an Indigenous lens while Coady (2016) demonstrates what she calls the origin of sexism within Latin based languages. Papadopoulos (2019) adds the grammatical gender innovations of Genderqueer Spanish speaker while, Abbou (2011) claims that grammatical double gender marking in French is actively anti-sexist. Evidence of this can be found in Robertson (2015) who claims that access to language holds power in creating identities and can deny access to identities. When taken together, this research suggests that not only is it possible to create even grammatically "binary" languages more inclusively, but it is fundamental to inclusivity work.

The binary is (re)created through language to maintain and stabilize heteronormative systems in which the masculine and feminine are held as opposites, and to be attracted to each other, and where the hierarchy between the two lifts the masculine (Motschenbacher, 2014: 250). However, it goes beyond that. While the rest of the authors in this review discuss the important disruptions of binaries in Latin-based languages, Wall Kimmerer (2013) invites us to look at language through Indigenous ways of knowing. As Ignace (2015) states

Language shapes [our epistemology:] the way we think, perceive and

organize the world in culturally meaningful ways, and our First Nations

languages provide irreplaceable ways of organizing the social, natural,

[and metaphysical] world based on [our ontology; which is] the ancient,

cumulative human experience and associated assumptions of First

Peoples. (Ignace, 2015, p.12 in Rosborough & Rorick, 2017, as cited in

Rorick [of Wałyaʕasukʔi Naananiqsakqin: At the Home of Our Ancestors:

Ancestral Continuity in Indigenous Land-Based Language Immersion],

2019)

Wall Kimmerer invites us to ponder this with a story:

My first taste of the missing language was the word *Puhpowee* on my

tongue. I stumbled upon it in a book by the Anishinaabe ethnobotanist

Keewaydinoquay, in a treatise on the traditional uses of fungi by our

people. *Puhpowee*, she explained, translates as "the force which causes

mushrooms to push up from the earth overnight." As a biologist, I was

stunned that such a word existed. In all its technical vocabulary, Western

science has no such term, no words to hold this mystery. You'd think that

biologists, of all people, would have words for life. But in scientific

language our terminology is used to define the boundaries of our knowing.

What lies beyond our grasp remains unnamed.

In the three syllables of this new word I could see an entire process

of close observation in the damp morning woods, the formulation of a

theory for which English had no equivalent. The makers of this word

understood a world of being, full of unseen energies that animate

everything. (2013, p. 49)

It is with her own learning of this word *Puhpowee* in Potawatomi that Wall

Kimmerer (re)cognized the importance of learning her native tongue. An elder in her

community told her when discussing the importance of language revitalization, "It's not

just the words that will be lost...The language is the heart of our culture; it holds our

thoughts, our way of seeing the world. It's too beautiful for English to explain" (an

Anishinaabe elder as cited in Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p. 50). Wall Kimmerer does not just

urge [we] as readers to think critically about words but rather the grammar in which we

see the world. While "English is a noun-based language, somehow appropriate to a

culture so obsessed with things," Potawatomi is 70% verbs (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p. 53).

Potawatomi does not divide the world into feminine or masculine, but rather identifies the

animate and inanimate.

She goes on to give a crash course in animacy 101 in which [we] begin to

recognize the animacy of animals, plants, rocks, medicines, songs, stories, and so on; not

simply for the sake of understanding Potawatomi or Indigenous grammar, but to ensure

that we are offering respect and recognizing, "in every sentence,...our kinship with all of

the animate world" (2013, p. 56). This (re)minder and (re)cognition is something that

[we] can bring into each of our learning communities.

When I am in the woods with my students, teaching them the gifts of

plants and how to call them by name, I try to be mindful of my language,

to be bilingual between the lexicon of science and the grammar of

animacy. Although they still have to learn scientific roles and Latin names,

I hope I am also teaching them to know the world as a neighborhood of

nonhuman residents, to know that, as ecotheologian Thomas Berry has

written, "we must say of the universe that it is a communion of subjects,

not a collection of objects." …

[A student, Andy asked me,] "Wouldn't things be different if

nothing was an *it*?"...

Saying *it* makes a living Land into "natural resources." If a maple

is an *it*, we can take up the chain saw. If a maple is a *her*, we think twice.

A language teacher I know explained that grammar is just the way

we chart relationship in language. Maybe it also reflects our relationships

with each other. Maybe a grammar of animacy could lead us to whole new

ways of living in the world, other species a sovereign people, a world with

a democracy of species, not a tyranny of one--with moral responsibility to

water and wolves, and with a legal system that recognizes the standing of

other species. It's all in the pronouns. (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p. 57-58)

Understanding that language shapes how we relate with each other, it's not simply

a matter of prescribing a pronoun to someone. As Motschenbacher explores in both

English and German but in any binary gender-based language, "every time speakers of

writers use binarily gendered forms, they reinstate the discursive formation of the

heteronormative system" (2014, p. 250). We witness this binary being maintained

through vocabulary and grammar, particularly in the most common foreign language

classes of European descent like French, Spanish and German. These languages, like

English, have their roots in Latin. When the others consumed Latin, the masculine

absorbed its neuter gender (Coady, 2018, p. 283). One of the most dangerous problems in these languages is the conflation of generic and neuter as synonymous.

Assuming that the binary in language has existed since the beginning is false. In looking at the origins within Latin, there was a neuter gender which literally means "not either" (Kennedy 1906, p. 14). With that, it is not a stretch to assume that "if *neuter* means *neither* masculine nor feminine, that it *excludes* rather than includes both of these noun classes, defies logic and is 'littéralement un non-sens' [literally nonsense]" (Khaznadar, 2006 as cited in Coady, 2018, p. 286). It was no accident that the neuter was absorbed into the masculine, nor is it unintentional that insults tend to evoke the feminine. Coady refers "sexism in language...to structural linguistic phenomena like the unmarked masculine, and gender agreement rules" (2018, p.272). These grammatical genders are not only a linguistic reflection of, but a reinforcement and a (re)creation of the binaries (2018, p. 276). The only thing lower than the feminine, linguistically, in English is to neuter or dehumanize someone (McConnell-Ginet, 2014, p.23). Ultimately, this is the deepest binary in English: the human versus the nonhuman.

Racism, cissexism, heterosexism, and sexism are reflections of binaries within the 'human' category but are tools to dehumanize the target. Once we as a people dehumanize a group, we can look the other way when oppression and violence are inflicted upon them. Language is a way to reinforce the hegemony, but also to challenge it. Coady emphasizes "there is always somebody behind language change; the question is how visible they are" (Coady, 2018, p. 286). This is the linguistic economy: "the more powerful a group, the more frequently we talk about them" (Coady, 2018, p. 279). As we have already touched on above, youth recognize this, and make space even when it is not

given to them. Youth combat the erasure of nonbinary identities and use words to reflect

their worlds even when it seems 'untraditional'. Language adapts. In English there are

new gender pronouns constantly. A few are outlined here (LGBT Resource Center, 2020):

HE/SHE	HIM/HER	HIS/HER	HIS/HERS	HIMSELF/HERSELF
zie	zim	zir	zis	zieself
sie	sie	hir	hirs	hirself
ey	em	eir	eirs	eirself
ve	ver	vis	vers	verself
tey	ter	tem	ters	terself
e	em	eir	eirs	emself

Queer linguistics in French and Spanish have also identified solutions to sexist

binaries. One such example is allowing words to be simultaneously both masculine and

feminine and neither masculine nor feminine by using one word with punctuation marks

to separate it like "*étudiants*$_{MASC}$+*étudiantes*$_{FEM}$= *étudiant-e-s* [student-s]" known as

abbreviated splitting in comparison to full splitting "*étudiants*$_{MASC}$ *et* étudiantes $_{FEM}$"

(Coady, 2018). However, this splitting still suggests an incompatibility of the feminine

and masculine (Motschenbacher 2014, p. 225). Both of these approaches are becoming

more common in French and French Language classes, however, a more radical approach

is blending of the forms to create neutral words: "*professionèles* [professionals]"

(Labrosse, 2002, p. 100)*, and "il*$_{MASC}$ [he] + *elle* $_{FEM}$ [she] = *ille* [s/he / singular they]

(Abbou, 2011, p. 63). This is observed in Spanish as well in numerous ways (splitting,

emphasizing grammatical gender with @ symbol, removing grammatical gender with the

use of 'x' or creating new words). Some examples are seen below in this table

(Bengochea, 2008; deOnis, 2017; Lara Icaza, 2014; Maldonado, 2017; Grupo Anarquista

Pierexia, 2011 as cited in Papadopolus, 2019):

EMPHASIZE GRAMMATICAL GENDER	segundo, da *second*	estimado/a amigo/a *esteemed friend*	querid@s alumn@s *dear scholar*	escritor, -ra *writer*	médico/a *doctor*
REMOVE GRAMMATICAL GENDER	lxs trabajadorxs *workers*	voluntari*s *volunteers*	chicanx *Chicano*	amigx *friend*	latinx *Latin*
ADD A NEW GRAMMATICAL GENDER	elle *they*	humanis *humans*	cansade *tired*	li personi *the person*	une persone *a person*	muches amigues *many friends*

We must teach students these options in any language accessible, and allow them to use them however they can in their writings. Not marking students down for "incorrect" grammar use is fundamental in queering our learning communities. Allowing students to use any words and grammar they have at their disposal (regardless of language) to describe their world is crucial. Robertson (2015) argues that "the creation of language to define the lived experiences of gender non-normative people must be one that allows for the existence of multiple genders, a mix of genders, and even those who don't place themselves in the gender spectrum at all" (p. 19). Language is needed for agency in the classroom, but also life in general. Understanding that language is both a place of oppression and a place of resistance, a place of erasure and a place of survival, a place of control and a place of reclamation. Allowing our students to explore their identities through language, especially when it is not considered "standard" gives a gift to the whole community. In the words of Leslie Feinberg, "as you struggle to identify yourself in words, you offer every one of us here the gift of new language of fresh concepts" (1998, p. 72). The connection between [Indigenous] language revitalization and [queer] language creation is intertwined and deserves attention, encouragement and nurturing.

In summary, research demonstrates that active engagement with nonbinary identities is not only possible in a learning environment but necessary in creating affirming spaces. This includes research that illustrates the importance of representation for various aspects of identity, research that articulates the importance of student created and student centered curricula and research that claims the necessity of intentional language expansion. Taken together, this body of research justifies the need for an increased focus in learning communities on embracing intersectional nonbinary identities to queer learning spaces.

Summary

This literature review claims the importance of incorporating and embracing nonbinary identities in curriculum, evidence that supports this claim includes the historical presence of these identities, the detriments that occur when they are not embraced, and the myriad of ways that identities are being embraced. This claim and body of evidence addresses the necessity of queering schools by arming teachers with contextual knowledge and strategies to use language to engage. With my project, I propose to seek the ways in which we can further queer learning environments through an intersectional approach particularly by centring Indigenous epistemologies.

CHAPTER III
THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Brief Description of the Project

For this project, I decided to create a three-part handbook for fellow teachers to queer and indigenize their learning communities at my place of work. It is applicable and available for use to any teachers that resonate with the information. The first is a selection of practices for how to interact with students and advice on things like grading, discipline, language and activities, the second is a curriculum for a semester long course called "Becoming" and the third is a resource collection of ready-made curricula for various subjects.

Development of the Project

This project was inspired by my work at a Catholic high school that advertises itself as an all-girls school. After a series of racist, homophobic, and ableist remarks from a small selection of students in the incoming Junior year, the administration decided to create a course for incoming Freshmen to welcome them to the school and be upfront regarding shared values for their first semester. I was able to facilitate one section of the admin-created course during the fall semester of 2020. The course was divided into 6 units: 1) Beginning Your Journey, 2) Community Health and Wellness 3) Transformative Leadership 4) Skills to Help Your Journey 5) Mind, Body and Soul Connections 6) End of semester Digital Portfolio. Feedback from students was that they enjoyed the discussion-based courses and the ability to hear from various guest speakers but wished there were more opportunities to hear about racial justice, gender and sexuality and other marginalized identities. Students also wished there were more opportunities for field trips or interactive activities rather than the lecture-based classes. Often, I have found myself

as a person on the faculty where other faculty members are asking me how to integrate different marginalized voices in their curricula or how to engage with different "controversial" topics. I also noticed that while our school can have a challenge with holding some students accountable, we enforce punitive consequences on others.

I decided that I wanted to create a course that engaged with the idea of joining a community while also reckoning with accountability and reciprocity. Facing the ongoing oppressions and marginalization of Catholic institutions and Indigenous peoples and Land was at the forefront of my mind. As a white educator in a predominantly white institution, I worked to create a curriculum that would indigenize without co-opting, provide suggestions to fellow white teachers and compile and credit resources from educators in the field for how-to guides.

In order to create the first part of the handbook with best practices for engagement with students, I relied heavily on the practices I had seen throughout my time in university (particularly my graduate studies). In particular, I pulled out some of the most impactful activities during my time in the International and Multicultural Education Master's program at USF. I was privileged to study under Dr. Monisha Bajaj, Dr. Rosa Jimenez, Dr. Mariana Mora, Profe. Yalini Dream, Dr. Amy Argenal and Dr. Jessie Blundell and soon-to-be Dr. Dani Ahuicapahtzin Cornejo. In each of the courses I took with these professors, they demonstrated tactics that centred BIPoC voices, disrupted banking models of education and invited learner voices and autonomy.

Soon-to-be Dr. Dani Ahuicapahtzin Cornejo, or as we called him: Profe. Dani, was the professor for one of my courses, Ethnic Studies with a focus on Indigenous Education. He demonstrated the importance of ceremony and ritual. In each of his

classes, we were greeted with music from an Indigenous artist or group. He led us in a grounding meditation to connect us with the Earth and ourselves before we reviewed what our course would look like for the day. Each course had both professor-led and student-led presentations, discussions and reflections, and student-led autoethnographies before a closing ritual to leave the space. Profe. Dani's assignments were a mixture between listening, readings, writing and speaking. He invited feedback from the other members of the community and took that feedback seriously.

Dr. Aaminah Norris taught Human Rights and Media. She was committed to using various forms of media to bring into the classroom. She consistently centred Black and Muslim voices and reflected the complexity of issues in each. She showed how antiBlackness is pervasive in every facet of our lives and how we are doing a disservice to simplify it to only one issue. Dr. Norris' use of podcasts, articles and video helped me (re)evaluate what was academic. The freedom she gave within projects allowed me to create, even when I felt nervous about lack of structure. Her approaches forced me to engage with the internalized critic and banking model and welcomed critique of the system at large.

Dr. Amy Argenal and Dr. Jessie Blundell co-taught the Methods of Educational Research course. Both professors reminded me the importance of critiquing research and the institution, allowing for student choice and various forms of engagement, and the necessity of clear organization and accessibility. From the beginning of the course Drs. Argenal and Blundell invited students to join "SWAGs" (Student Writing Accountability Groups) that were created based on affinity identity and/or way of preferred engagement. For example, some students chose to join groups that would meet and do their work

together weekly, some preferred synchronous weekly check-ins, some preferred a text check-in and some preferred to do their work individually and check in very rarely. It allowed student choice and recognized that engagement can look different ways for different people. This honoured those differences and allowed autonomy. While reviewing various research methodologies, Drs. Argenal and Blundell provided critiques and opportunities to further reflect and critique. It emphasized that even if this is 'the way things are done', it doesn't need to be so. It invited a (re)visioning of the future of academia and life at large. Their course schedule was highly organized and visually appealing. They provided short-lecture videos, slides that worked for a variety of modalities and started providing subtitles and transcripts upon request. They mixed asynchronous and synchronous, full class, small group and individual work. They worked to meet each student individually as often as possible. Their expectations were clear while holding space for patience.

Professor Yalini Dream facilitated the Social Justice Pedagogy and Arts course. This was like no course I had ever taken. Professor Dream asked us to call them Yalini, and shook to the core of what could be considered academic. Yalini showed us that art, expression, representation and movement were not only scholarly but necessary as a form of resistance and survival. Yalini invited us to think critically about space and what was 'part of school.' She queered my understanding of storytelling and emphasized resistance all through a trauma-informed lens. Yalini's sessions continued to invite us back to check in with our breath, our body, and our mind. She stressed self and collective care. She (re)minded us of the importance of language and body but that we were people first, and not just students in the institution.

Dr. Mariana Mora was the professor of Social Movements and Human Rights with a Focus on Decolonial Feminisms and Collective Action. Dr. Mora queered and indigenized each course and material by critically engaging with who was being given space and why. She managed to help us make connections and celebrate differences while in the name of solidarity and collectivity. Dr. Mora's classes were heavily discussion based, and it helped hold us as learners accountable because you wanted to engage. She mixed the resources to include readings, podcasts, films, personal stories and field trips. While she facilitated conversations, she took collective notes for us and posted everything, so we could come back and engage with it at a later time. Dr. Mora's classes were ongoing, it didn't matter whether it was 'covered' in one class, it would certainly come up again in the future. Dr. Mora queered and indigenized the idea of time: it became more cyclical. She helped me to disrupt ideas around perfectionism, binary ways of thinking, mistakes and sense of urgency. She valued learner voices and experiences and engaged with each through a lens of growth and solidarity building. We were not empty vessels but rather treasure troves of knowledge that we would each benefit from.

I have had the privilege of engaging with Dr. Rosa Jimenez, or as many in my cohort called her: Profe Rosa. I took group courses Foundations of International and Multicultural Education and Critical Pedagogies, as well as an individual directed study: Language, Sexuality and Gender. Profe Rosa introduced me to a number of the assignments and approaches that I highlight in my handbook and use today: the "Where I'm From" poem, student led resource and culture shares, as well engaging with classroom physical spaces and student led inquiry based assignments. Profe Rosa's insistence on (re)defining who is a scholar and upsetting power dynamics in the

classroom was deeply impactful in my learning and facilitating my own learning spaces. She helped create community through setting norms and expectations but also by sharing her own vulnerability. In each course, Profe. Rosa encouraged and allowed me (and many others with marginalized or erased identities) to explore and centre our experiences. She met us each where we were at and cultivated discussions that allowed for pushing and experiencing discomfort all while feeling heard and safe. She honoured queering any discourse and consistently made us do better. Profe Rosa's exploration and sharing of testimonios and counternarratives has brought countless people confidence and pride. Her dedication to working to provide social-emotional learning and holistic learning spaces has been endlessly helpful throughout this project.

Lastly, and certainly not least, Dr. Monisha Bajaj served as my mentor in this project as well as the professor for the first course I took at USF: Global Perspectives on Decolonization and Education. It was this course that first introduced me to indigenizing learning spaces and forced me to critically look at my role as a colonial-settler/uninvited guest on these Lands. While it is deeply saddening that it took until graduate school for me to experience frank discussions about settler-colonialism and approaches to decolonization and resurgence, Dr. Bajaj (re)minded us through her actions and facilitation that we are forever students. Through Dr. Bajaj's course, I was exposed to cultural shares, guest speakers, gallery walks, discussion-based learning, and a cumulative final project that went from theory to practice: I saw what a difference these learning approaches could be. Particularly through our final project of a decolonial intervention which provided so much student choice and autonomy: I recognized the importance of freedom with guidance. Dr. Bajaj also held a workshop through Teachers

for Social Justice, and I "fanbied" (fan+enby, a play on nonbinary with fangirl/fanboy) out and watched how she used timelines and storytelling to engage with the erasure of South Asian voices in resistance. Dr. Bajaj introduced me to Rucha Chitnis, a filmmaker that has centred Indigenous resistance and perseverance through her projects. I was able to invite Ms. Chitnis who presented at our school with her film, "In the Land of My Ancestors." The students still speak of it to this day. Dr. Bajaj introduced me to numerous resources and decolonial approaches that are accessible to a variety of ages and learners. More than anything, Dr. Bajaj taught me the importance of centring resistance and existence throughout any learning community.

It is with each of these professors, that I work to bring these core tenets into a younger learning space. The theorists I discuss throughout chapter 1 and 2 have certainly challenged, guided and shaped my thoughts and pedagogies, but without seeing how these theories of indigenizing, queering, culturally responsive/sustaining, and critically engaging play out into praxis: it would have been impossible to move forward. I owe my teachers, and my classmates who have continued to challenge and support me throughout each step of this process the creation of my project.

Throughout my time as a graduate student and creating this project, I attended a number of workshops and seminars as well as joined various groups of educators working toward these goals. Notably, the educators of Amplify RJ (Restorative & Racial Justice) with David Ryan Castro-Harris and others, Decolonize your Classroom with Helen Thomas and DeMointé Wesley and webinars held by the Sogorea Te' Land Trust. The workshops I attended with Decolonize Your Classroom, with Helen Thomas, helped me engage further with how to indigenize learning spaces, name settler-colonialism in

schooling and work to centre and uphold Indigenous epistemologies and voices in

learning spaces regardless of being Indigenous. These workshops helped me critically

evaluate my positionality and how I could work to indigenize my learning spaces as a

white educator. The workshops I attended with Amplify RJ helped me to learn and

implement restorative justice approaches in my learning communities and honour the

Indigenous roots of this work. They also helped me disrupt the carceral logic in my

learning spaces and my inner-cop in order to best serve all of my students but especially

BIPoC learners. Their work in abolitionist teachings was profoundly impactful in each

section of this handbook. The webinars I attended sponsored by Sogorea Te' Land Trust

helped me to look critically through part two of the handbook and analyse how best to

centre Indigenous voices, including Land and water.

Many of the approaches I compiled and suggest in part one of the handbook are

directly influenced by and credited to educators, groups and accounts on social media like

Pinar and Sophia [@QueerNature], Trisha Moquino and Julianna Arquero

[@IndigenousEducators], DON founders Jasmine Nguyen and Katelin Zhou

[@DiversifyOurNarrative], Eghosa Obaizamomwan Hamilton and T. Gertrude Jenkins

[@MakingUsMatter], Liz Kleinrock [@TeachandTransform], Françoise Thenoux

[@TheWokeSpanishTeacher], Ryann Garcia and Barbara Sostaita

[@TheNotSoIvoryTower] and others have had immeasurable impact on my work. The

posts by each of these scholars/teachers/educators/community members shed light on the

spectrum of challenges students (especially BIPoC, (dis)abled, and queer) experienced in

normative class settings as well as a plethora of solutions and approaches to rectify them.

I joined groups like Gender Inclusive Schools Educator Idea Exchange, White Educators for Racial Justice, Trans Intersex and Non-Binary Teacher Support, Critical Educators Social Justice SIG and Teaching Social Resource Exchange. It is through these educators and groups, as well as Profe. Rosa's "Big List of Resources" that I was able to compile many of the resources listed in part three of the handbook.

I would be remiss if I did not credit the influence of Cohort Q at California Institute of Integral Studies of who my spouse, Kiyoko, was a member. I was able to learn from their cohort as well as the guest speakers they engaged with like Charlotte María Sáenz. It was through this Cohort that I witnessed the transformative nature of community in education when schooling has failed students, and the importance of student choice in school in order to reach the goals of education. It was also through Kiyoko's studies and classes that I learned about *Braiding Sweetgrass*, as well as the "special place" and bioregional quiz assignments that I reference.

The biggest change in my development of part 2 of this handbook (the curriculum) was the guidance from Kiyoko in restoring my relationship to the Land in which our home was on. During the creation of this project, Kiyoko began to focus on ensuring that while we repaired and restored the Land in the back and front of our home, we did so with native and hypernative plants. They introduced me to the group California Native Plant Society which was in the middle of heated discussions about the importance of not viewing Land and a love for native plants as separate to rematriation, and centring Indigenous voices. I combed through the discussions and posts soaking in as much information that the Indigenous members of the group offered and shared. In particular, Kanyon Sayers-Roods was diligent in sharing and enlightening the group. Suddenly it all

clicked for me. It was not enough to acknowledge the Land and ancestral and contemporary stewards of this Land, but I must also help my students be in relation with the Land. Representation, values, and community are all taught through Land and water. Once this connection was made, everything fell into place. I was able to see that the entire curriculum of "Becoming" could be done through relationship-building with the Land. Centring and learning from Land would more deeply impact every other goal of this project.

From there the project was a matter of trial and error. I wrote and rewrote the curriculum and schedule and activities numerous times. Each time going through and working to understand what I was missing, whose voice was I leaving out, what would a back-up plan be and how was I indigenizing and queering in every step along the way. While I had initially worked to keep the 5 Units that were original to the administration created "Becoming" course, I found myself moving away while keeping key elements.

The Project

The project in its entirety can be found in the Appendix.

Part 1 of the handbook is an exploration of best practices. It is broken down into approaches for language usage, discipline and accountability, ritual and routine, physical set up of classroom, accessibility, representation and general assignments to use.

Part 2 of the handbook is a curriculum for "Becoming Community." It is broken down into five (with a potential sixth) units. Each of the links, including the opening slides to highlight various community members are open for the public. Unit 1 of the curriculum will be an introduction to the journey and ensure that the history of the school and foundress: St. Julie of Billiard, the hallmarks of Notre Dame, Catholic social

teachings and Laudato Si were all still present and emphasized. I then worked to identify and centre the reality of the nature of relationship between Catholic missionaries and the Indigenous peoples of California, specifically the Ohlone peoples of the Lands the school is on. From there, I worked to invite various voices and stories that do not often find their ways into hegemonic schooling through the use of "Wherever There's a Fight: How Runaway Slaves, Suffragists, Immigrants, Strikers and Poets Shaped Civil Liberties in California." After this, I introduce the Bioregional quiz which is a series of 44 questions about Neighbours, Water, Fire, Land, Sky and Earth.

Unit 2 is an introduction to self: care and identity. In this unit, the students are now able to discuss the various forms of identity for themselves but also understand how not all identity markers can be seen or need to be seen to be valid. It works to help with identifying vocabulary, begin to recognize privileges, affirm various identities and invite students to bring their whole selves into the space. I kept the suicide prevention training given by the school guidance counsellors but also added pieces around toxic positivity, social media representation, and boundary work.

The third unit is about community care and wellness. In this unit, I decide to spend some time digging into what a community is rather than taking for granted that each learner has the same idea. From there I use TedTalks and articles where we look at relationships of plants, trees and the "queerness" of them to understand how that translates between people. I organized a field trip to our local regional park or beach where we are going to spend time really reflecting on these lessons learnt. Then, we spend some time unpacking anti-bullying work as well as promises to our communities going forward.

The fourth keeps the title of transformative leadership. I work through various modalities like film, articles, short clips and guest speakers to help students draw their own conclusions about what it means to be a leader and be transformative while disrupting some of the stereotypes our school has upheld of who holds those titles. This unit uses imagery of trees to self-identify, as well as highlighting how power and privilege can shape who gets to hold leadership roles. This unit finishes with highlighting Pinar of QueerNature, Kanyon Sayers-Roods from Kanyon Konsulting as well as California Native Plant Society, and Corrine Gould of Sogorea Te' Land Trust. My goal is to pay one or all to be guest speakers and/or to organise a field trip to Sogorea Te' Land Trust.

The fifth unit is restoring relationships to self, community, and Land. It is a cumulative learning experience where the learners will take all that we have discussed and engaged with over the units to come back to the Land in which the campus is on. They will organise roles among themselves (for example: researchers, shoppers, fundraisers, planners, planters, community educators, graphic designers, etc.) to restore the campus using Native plants and to fundraise to begin to restore relationships to the Ohlone peoples. For gardening, (and using tools like the bioregional quiz, California Native Plant Society, and CalScape) the students will design and plant native plants through a set area of campus. The goal is to then build coalitions with other students (particularly through various clubs, and the Biology and Environmental Science classes) and present to the community why this work is important and necessary. It is through this final project that students will be able to develop skills to continue on their journey as

well as emphasize a mind, body, soul connection around collaboration, reciprocity, research, educating others and upholding the hallmarks of the school.

I have a sixth unit in case the project does not take the rest of the semester. The sixth unit is focused around skills to continue on. It uses the power of storytelling and vision to create through passion exploration, project development, ethics around service and community advocacy, as well as researching groups already doing the work, collecting resources to further understand and begin/continue building connections and networking for their future endeavours.

The assignments for this course are largely optional. I have provided 1208 points available for the course but only 270 are needed to earn an A-. The deadlines are rolling, and if a student misses one, it's fine: they can simply choose another assignment or opportunity. If, however, they are committed to the assignment but need an extension, they simply need to communicate it with me in advance but do not need to trade a sad reason for it. The assignments are a mixture of big points to small and ample opportunity to decide what engagement looks like. I received these approaches from a post by Annette Joseph-Gabriel [@AnnetteJosephG] discussing Pandemic Pedagogy that was reposted on @NotSoIvoryTower (2021).

The assignments are as follows:

1. "Wherever There's A Fight" chapter and presentation: 40 point each, due by end of Unit 1 (480 points available)

2. Bioregional Quiz questions and answers: Each question worth 2 points, due by end of Unit 3 (88 points available)

3. "Braiding Sweetgrass" chapter and 1-page reflection (written or drawn) with lessons taken away from chapter and 2 quotations: 15 points each, due by end of Unit 5 (up to 480 points available)

4. Drawing Special Place assignment, 5 points each, due by end of Unit 5 (up to 90 points)

5. General participation can be in the large group, SWAGs, written reflections on discussion boards or privately, 2 points per class (Up to 70 points).

My hope is that by making the other assignments in class ungraded, it will allow students to take risks with their learning and be able to be more present in engaging with the materials rather than experiencing fear around the grade. I hope it also allows for encouragement to show up while not penalizing anyone who is not there.

Part 3 of the handbook is a collection of resources and curriculum for teachers to use in their classrooms, as well as educators and groups to follow to continue their own education. Some of these include slide decks and prompts I have made for various heritage months and celebrations to give a start for people to highlight.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following chapter will reflect on the conclusion of the handbook as well as discuss some of the critical discussions that have come out of sharing it. It will situate the handbook into the context of the theories brought forth throughout chapters one and two, as well as imagine what this could look like going forward. Particularly, this chapter will serve to discuss whether the handbook is queer and indigenized enough, some of the challenges that could arise from using the handbook and how one could reshape, rework and reimagine its use in various other settings.

Conclusions

At the core of this handbook is the commitment to understanding Freire and Kincheloe's stance that "schools not only reflect social stratification but extend it" (as cited in Kincheloe, 2004, p.8). Through the curriculum of "Becoming Community," my goal is to recognize the histories and contexts that came to uphold this social stratification, particularly through colonization and the heterocisnormative patriarchy that came with the missionaries. While this is a necessary conversation to be having at any school, the need was even more pronounced given that I wrote this curriculum for a Catholic school that prides itself on being dedicated to the Hallmarks of ND which are deeply rooted in social justice. Freire, and many others, call for teachers to insist on the practice of freedom: the opportunity to help young people "deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (Freire, 2018, p. 34). Often during the creation of this handbook, I was met with questions from

well-intentioned community members who told me that they felt paralysed in not knowing how to deal with the injustices the world, and namely those their students were facing.

They wanted to be able to hold a space for exploration and healing but didn't know how to simultaneously prepare their students to survive in the world as it currently existed while also nurturing their ability to (re)envision and (re)create their futures and their present. To this, I think that it underscored the importance of co-creating units and curriculum together. While in the curriculum I provide, there is a substantial amount of time in creating a project to repair and restore relationships with the Ohlone peoples, the unceded ancestral Ohlone Lands the school is on and the community these learners are a part of, I left room in case that unit needed to go longer, so it could go until the end of the semester. However, I hope that the unit can finish as I write it because the next unit is a way to use the skills that they have learned and bring it forward. While discussing with a department head at the school, the recognition that, at all times but particularly during this Covid-19 pandemic, there is a need to (re)imagine our teaching of skills rather than simply focusing on content. It brings up the challenge of our classes being compartmentalized into subjects. I think it provides a challenge because many teachers are terrified that they will fail their students by not providing the necessary content that they will need in the future (namely for undergraduate classes and potential careers after graduation) rather than skills that speak to the world the students are living in now, and the values that we as a community want to instil. Being a student or a young person is not preparation for life. Being a young person is life. Life is happening for them now and our learning spaces need to reflect that.

This handbook also stresses the importance of allowing learners to engage with language in a multitude of ways. Language needs to adapt, create and affirm the realities our learners are going through. I wanted to channel bell hooks when she proposed that in order to combat normativity (read: white supremacist hetero-cis-patriarchal coloniality) we need to allow for the "rupture of standard English" in order to forge "space for alternative cultural production and alternative epistemologies -- different ways of thinking and knowing that [are] crucial to creating a counter-hegemonic world-view" (hooks, 2014, p. 171). This speaks to the necessity of unpacking what "standard" language use will mean in our learning communities. Are we promoting communication or assimilation? This encompasses allowing other languages and dialects but also the creation of words and languages. Motschenbacher's (2010, 2011, 2014, 2016) work in queer linguistics, Papadopolous (2019) and Coady (2018)'s work in queering language and understanding sexism in language was crucial for me and I hope the handbook speaks back to that. However, one area that I think could have more exploration going forward is deepening the connection between Indigenous languages revitalization and creating new queer language. While the grammar of animacy [as I learnt it through Wall Kimmerer (2013)] is explored through the curriculum, I feel there is much more space for that work.

One of the most challenging things I came up against while developing this handbook is administrative push back. This was apparent when I created the anti-racism journaling prompts for self-guided teaching specifically made for Black History Month but could be used at any point in the year. Administration at the school decided that naming white supremacy was too risky and divisive. Naming white supremacy cultural characteristics was going to be a problem because it could be read as damning the school.

Namely, the holding of the written word as the most important could not be critiqued given that the school operates in such a way where the written word is in fact upheld as the most important. They copied and shared the journaling prompts but edited them without my permission to remove any naming of white supremacy and to remove my ownership of the document. They also forbade me from holding workshops and seminars on antiracism because they hope to hold a class at some point in the future. It speaks back to the importance of holding smaller group and larger group discussions and the need for adults to be committed to lifelong learning and co-creation with the students. This also raises the need for additions to the handbook to include tips on how to deal with resistant administrators, and how to organize with faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members. It also reminded me of the importance of accountability at all levels of a learning organization, as well as the need for transparency regarding visions and values for the school. It is very challenging to hold these spaces in individual classrooms when the school is in opposition. I think that some of my future work will be handbooks to address this but also resources for the administrative level.

I worked with a number of affinity groups on campus through the creation of this handbook on their own projects of peer-education. While this was a tactic that was wildly helpful in putting down words for how to co-create and identifying various areas for tips, I found it disheartening to see how little our students expected. At a group meeting with nonbinary students, I asked them to create a wish list of big and small things that they would want to see at our school. The requests were so simple: stop using gendered language, maybe provide some pamphlets in the counselling or student life centre that could direct them to queer mental health services or queer clubs and resources, and at

some point mention nonbinary existence in any class. When discussing using queer representation in classes and the examples given in this handbook, one student commented that they thought it would be too radical for our school, and that in 4 years they had only heard anything about LGBTQ people once--during a two-day lesson about trans* existence during the western expansion in their U.S. History class. The idea of including non-cis and non-hetero people regularly was something they did not believe would occur. This was troubling for reasons especially around belonging and mental health but also because of my own experience at the school. I attended the high school as a student and have worked there for about 3 years. This outlook was such a disconnect to my own experience at the school as a student (where we had non-hetero people as guest speakers semi-frequently), as a teacher (though my classes are niche and only have a few students) and as a colleague where my co-workers told me how eager they were to include marginalized voices. This underscored the importance of co-creating units and curriculum with students and other community members but also the need for teachers to participate in ongoing professional developments reviewed with members of the community.

Another element that this handbook addresses is the queering of time, research and academia. Through the fifth unit of Becoming Community wherein the students co-create a project to repair and restore relationships with the Land, Ohlone peoples and school community they work to develop skills around community building, research, Land management, educational outreach, fundraising, gardening, networking and marketing/advertising (among other skills). One of the approaches I hope to take with the students is to help them connect with other students cross-disciplinarily (e.g., through the

Social Justice course in Spiritual Life, the Environmental Science and Biology courses in

Science, the Graphic Design course in Visual Performing Arts and the American History

course in Social Sciences to name a few); however, I did not create an answer to "How

will you be responsible to this knowledge and this community with the next seven

generations in mind?" (Whetung & Wakefield [of Colonial Conventions], 2019, p. 151). I

am eager to see what answers come out of this question and how the students will

respond back.

One of the suggestions that I hold to be particularly vital throughout this process

of queering and indigenizing learning communities is to build more than enough time for

reflection. When we are challenging the hegemonic ideas of 'who is a who' or who can

hold knowledge and how we can access it, we need enough time to unpack, unlearn and

relearn. I think that setting expectations of community norms upfront and referring back

to them repeatedly (and adjusting whenever necessary) is key to this. Communicating

values and being persistent in upholding them is of the utmost importance throughout this

work. Recognizing that learning happens even when it's not just about specific textbook

content is valuable here. Bringing back the insistence that life is happening to young

people, it is not something they are preparing themselves for. They are not preparing to

join society, they are in society now. We need to work together to centre the values that

we as a community want and uphold.

As seen in much of the background and need of this paper, simply: when we don't

centre the marginalized and amplify the silenced, we all suffer. Anxiety, depression,

suicidal ideations and violence against/of those most impacted increases but even those

who don't hold the same identities suffer (Scandura et. al, 2019). When we don't create

space to help all learn from all, our society is incomplete. It's vital that while we do this we remember to also think locally. Often when working to promote representation, we do generalizations or choose folx from all over. There is a balance between ensuring international mindedness and global compassion (and decentring whitestream narratives that disregard the global South) while also being specific about the peoples of this Land. This handbook strives to do this by centring a different person of the Land each day and by focusing on bioregional questions specifically geared towards this Land and the ancestral stewards of it (in this case the Ohlone peoples).

Recommendations

This handbook should not be used as a catch-all nor should it be held stagnant. While this handbook can be used as a guide, it is vital to remember that it was written at a specific time for a specific population. It will not apply to every community but can be used as a general framework for this work.

My recommendation for the community this was written for is to first come together with all stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, administrators, board members, sisters, alumnae and family/community members) to determine the vision and values for the school. Will we be a school that recognizes the nature of school as inherently political or will we continue to assume that by nature schools are neutral? This needs to be addressed so that people can choose whether to continue to participate in the community and visions can be created going forward.

I also recommend that all members of this community undergo training to recognize the impacts of settler-colonialism in school and the nature of the settler relationship with Indigenous peoples and Lands, specifically the Ohlone peoples (namely

the Ramaytush, but all under the umbrella of Ohlone). Following this, all interested

parties should meet to review and recreate the curriculum and decompartmentalize it. I

would recommend more involvement from student government and representatives from

various affinity groups on campus in meetings that impact them (for example, curriculum

council meetings).

I have suggested to my school's interim Head of School that we need a grouping

of students, faculty and staff, admin, parents, alumnae and community members to

review curriculum and work together to ensure that inclusivity is not a tag on or

tokenized but rather weaved through every facet of our programming. I would invite

other educators (specifically white educators, and educators who hold any of the

dominant identity markers like cis and/or hetero, able-bodied, neurotypical, native

English speakers, Christian, etc.) to think critically about this. When and how can you

bring in other eyes to your curriculum? When and how can you relinquish control to

allow feedback and engagement?

I recognize that I think this handbook doesn't do enough to address how to

interrupt dominant religions, particularly at a Catholic school. While in the heritage

month slide decks, I ensure that I am highlighting folx from different religions, I think I

could have done more in this regard. I want to emphasize that while celebrating holidays

is great, this is not enough and can be tokenizing. There are suggestions for how to do

this in the guidebook but going forward I would like to spend more time focusing

specifically on addressing anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and allocating more time for

centring and celebrating religions and spiritualities outside of Catholicism and

Christianity. Courses taught by members of these faiths should be mandatory for students

at our school. To that note, 'ethnic studies' courses should also be mandated despite the status as a private school.

As stated, I would recommend another handbook is created that goes beyond teacher level and into an administrative level. Some of the suggestions I would have for the administrative team at my present school would be around the schedule. Each Wednesday going forward, we should allow for the continuance of "Tiger Wednesdays" allowing community members to meet together, (re)create, meet with various affinity groups and have opportunities for supplemental learning opportunities (albeit guest speakers, workshops, seminars, service opportunities, etc.). This should not replace the need for counternarratives to be centred in each curriculum, but should be supplemental and to allow for additional engagement. We also need to budget for BIPoC anti-racism, decolonial and queering consultants to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our community annually. There needs to be annual programming to supplement the core curriculum and should be responsive to current events. If this school, as a predominantly white institution, decides to go forward with a Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) department and decides to hire a white person into that roll, it should be required that that person and department is accountable to a BIPoC consultant.

This work should never be done, similarly this handbook should never be considered done. It should be regularly reviewed, revised and recreated to match the needs of the community in which it serves. To conclude, I leave a writing by Kathleen Dean Moore (2004) from *The Pine Island Paradox*

I stretch my back and start two lists. What does it mean to love a person? What does it mean to love a place? Before long, I discover I've made two copies of the

same list. To love – a person and a place – means at least this: Number One: To want to be near it, physically. Number Two: To want to know everything about it – its story, its moods, what it looks like by moonlight. Number Three: To rejoice in the fact of it. Number Four: To fear its loss, and grieve for its injuries. Number Five: To protect it – fiercely, mindlessly, futilely, and maybe tragically, but to be helpless to do otherwise. Six: To be transformed in its presence – lifted, lighter on your feet, transparent, open to everything beautiful and new. Seven: To want to be joined with it, taken in by it, lost in it. Number Eight: To want the best for it. Number Nine: Desperately. I know there's something important missing from my list, but I'm struggling to put it into words. Loving isn't just a state of being, it's a way of acting in the world. Love isn't a sort of bliss, it's a kind of work. To love a person is to act lovingly toward him, to make his needs my own. To love a place is to care for it, to keep it healthy, to attend to its needs. Obligation grows from love. It is the natural shape of caring. Number ten, I write in my notebook: To love a person or a place is to take responsibility for its well-being.

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APPENDIX

Handbook on next page

Beyond Pronouns:

A Handbook for: Queering & Indigenizing your Learning Community

Contents

Glossary Of Terms

- **Carceral Logic (n.)**: "refers to the variety of ways our bodies, minds, and actions have been shaped by the idea and practices of imprisonment—even for people who do not see themselves connected explicitly to prison" (Rochester University FAQ, 2021)
- **Holistic Learning (p.v.)**: "engaging the four knowledge domains that interweave all aspects of learning: emotional (heart), spiritual (spirit), cognitive (mind) and physical (body)." (Mason et. al, 2018, glossary of terms)
- **Indigenizing (v.)**: "the process of naturalizing Indigenous knowledge systems and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. In the context of post-secondary education, this involves bringing Indigenous knowledge and approaches together with Western knowledge systems. It is a deliberate coming together of these two ways of being."(Mason et. al, 2018, glossary of terms)
- **Rematriation (n.)**: Returning Indigenous Land to Indigenous people.
- **Tokenism (n.)**: "the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce." (Oxford Dictionary)
- **Queering (v.)**: subverting the hegemony by centring the marginalized, amplifying the silenced and questioning normative lessons. I argue that in order for queering to be fully realized, it must also be indigenizing

Part 1:

Guiding Questions

- ## Pedagogy/Outlook on Education & Schooling:

How would I describe the difference between education and schooling? What is my pedagogical approach? Do I recognize the historical and contemporary ways that schooling has upheld and extended social stratification? How do I work to learn while I teach, and allow the learners to teach?

- ## Identity, Power & Privilege:

What is my positionality? What are the various privileges that come with my identity markers? Do I acknowledge and work to use my privileges to dismantle systems of oppression? How do I do so in education/schooling? Is my class a site for upholding the status quo or disrupting it? How do various identities I hold match those of the learners in my community? How do they differ? Do I feel equipped discussing identity, power and privilege with my learning community? Am I able to identify microaggressions and oppressive practices as they come up? Do I feel confident addressing them? How can I improve?

- ## The Land and broken treaties:

Who are the ancestral stewards of the Land in which we hold our learning communities? What treaties were broken on this Land and to whom? What are members of this tribe/these tribes doing in regard to rematriation now? How much do I know about the Land? How many bioregional questions can I answer? What is my relationship to this Land? How can we use our learning communities to repair our relationship to the Indigenous peoples of this Land and to the Land? How can we

centre the voices of past and current Indigenous peoples in our curriculum? How can we centre the Land and water as teachers in this curriculum?

- *Community:*

To what communities do I belong? To what communities do the learners belong? How do I imagine a learning community? How would learners define community? Can we come together to define ours? How are we checking in throughout to practice collective care? What are our norms or expectations?

- *Values & Skills:*

What values does our community hold? What values do the learners hold? What values do I hold? What values is my curriculum teaching? What skills do I want to teach (subject based and beyond)? Where is there room for student choice in the curriculum? Where is there room for students to lead and to teach? Where can I offer flexibility? How is this curriculum relevant to their past, to their now and to their futures? Do they have agency, autonomy or consent in/to this curriculum? How am I holistically teaching?

- *Accountability:*

What does accountability look like to me? Is it punitive? Is it about restoring relationships? Who gets held accountable? Is it equitable? Is it the same in other classes at the school? How would the learners define accountability? Do they have investment in the rules, expectations, and norms? Do the consequences for actions match the values of the community? Is accountability about punitive consequences or repairing or restoring relationships? Am I upholding colonial power dynamics and carceral logic? Am I helping our community members heal, and move forward or punishing them for mistakes?

- *Grading:*

How does my grading match the values? Why? For deadlines: is the goal mastery of the skill or time management and urgency? Something else? For grammar and spelling: is the goal communication and accessibility or a specific language skill? Is my grading promoting growth mindsets or fixed? How does the way I grade promote the skills? Does it uphold the status quo and extend stratification or reimagine possibilities and futures? How does my grading promote punitive measures? How is it

liberatory? Can it change? Should it? Are the learners involved and invested in grading decisions?

- *Language:*

How does my language reflect the learners' realities and identities? How does my language uphold or challenge the binary? How does it exclude? How does it include? How does it allow for differences and a (re)imagining of futures? Do I hold space for different languages, dialects, slang, and communication styles? Do I use language that enforces hierarchies? Am I making generalizations or being specific?

Approaches

Suggestions to Queer & Indigenize your classroom

Remember: You are not the holder of all answers. Amplify the voices of the silenced & erased or ignored. Centre the marginalized. Be comfortable with discomfort. Safety does not equal comfort.
Always be learning.

Beginning of Course:

- Ask Questions to get to know your community
  - Name/Chosen Name
  - Pronouns (and when to use)
  - Support, Engagement and Communication
  - Language
  - Skills/Topics they wish to learn
  - Best practices in other classes?
- Student Work Accountability Groups/Support Groups & Affinity Groups
  - Student Work Accountability Groups (SWAGs) are a way to help students continue community outside of the typical class to support each other academically but also as an added layer of support. I suggest letting students choose their preferred manner of communication (1x a week: face to face, via zoom, via text,

other). Once a week, a chosen member of the SWAG will communicate with the teacher/facilitator on how the small group members are doing toward their academic goals and whether or not they need support as a group.)

- Affinity Groups are an opportunity for students to connect with others who share commonalities (whether it be identity markers or shared interests)

- Setting Community Norms and Agreements
  - These should be co-created with the students. Starting by asking questions can be good to set intentions:
    - What are you bringing into this space? What do you need from others?
  - Some examples of agreements can be:
    - Take care of yourself and your needs.
    - Be accountable for your own learning
    - Assume positive intention, but prioritize the impact. ("Ouch" and "Oops)
    - Be mindful of whose voices are being centred and heard. Step up/step back.
    - Share knowledge & be open to learning.
    - Feelings are welcome; keeping in mind the collective experience.
    - Respect each other; respect differences (personality, silences, ways of learning)
    - Safety does not always equal comfort. Get comfortable with discomfort. Discomfort means growth!
    - When in doubt, ask for clarification or follow up (but refer to agreement #2)
- Setting Routine & Expectations

Periodically:

- Start, Stop Continue
- 1 on 1 meetings/Check-ins
- Small Group Check-ins
- Group Check-ins regarding objectives, norms and routine
- Provide time and space for co-creating the curriculum or units. This is critical to getting buy in but needs to have good relations, space and time to be effective. A general process could be:
  - Offer a starting point. Show examples of what creating curriculum can look like, and share your expectations or goals for the class.

- ○ Let students get into groups and start thinking about the elements that go into designing courses (the content, exploration of content, transferable skills and activities/projects). They should attempt to make a balanced framework for their curriculum.
  - ■ Look to the end of this handbook for a link to how to do this with tiles!
- ○ Give students time after this to research the content and construct the unit. They should think about the audience, literacy and specifics of content.
- ○ Share and peer feedback. Each group can pitch their unit (and show what the goals for outcomes are). The rest of the learning community can ask questions, provide constructive feedback and wonderings/issues. Pitch group can respond and then there should be takeaways and how to improve!
- ○ Ongoing research and revisions

End of Course:
- Review
- Reflect
- Revision
- Recreate

Daily:
- **Beginning**
  - ○ Grounding & Centring Session/Ritual
  - ○ Social Emotional Check-in/Activity
  - ○ Community Building Activity
  - ○ Preview Schedule
- **During**
  - ○ Bio-breaks/Movement Breaks
  - ○ Brain Breaks
  - ○ Opportunities for Reflections
- **Ending**
  - ○ Recap
  - ○ Closing Sessions/Ritual

Accessibility:

- Flexibility
- Subtitles & Closed Captioning
- Visible Routine/Schedule
- Consistent Organization
- Different Modalities (Podcasts, Audio Recordings, Films, Activities, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Tactile Creation)
- Alternate Assignments
- Student Choice Assignments to demonstrate mastery or understanding
- Visual Cues for transitions
- Direct instruction
- Slide decks: size, font & colours
- Record classes (minimally instructions) for reviewing
- Allow learners to preview material
- Student paced activities
- Provide access to applications (Speech to text, text reader, communication devices, gamification apps)

Physically:

- Access to facilities?
- Sitting in circles encourages discussion and allows people to read each others lips
- What is the temperature like in the space? The light(s)?
- Can you be outside?
- Can there be a community garden or a space in the classroom for decompressing or resetting?

Language:

- Be intentional about words you are using. Each has power and impact. Impact is more important than the intent.
  - If you make a mistake, acknowledge and thank for lesson and move on.
- Explicitly allow for learners to speak in the "first draft". Perfection is not the goal, but communication and growth.
  - In your community norms, how will you all handle it if someone causes harm? "Ouch" and "Oops" are great tools.
- Every word can be gender-inclusive. Before using a gendered term, think about if you need to. Practice using them!

- ○ Rather than boys and girls: Scholars, Learners, Community Members, Tigers (or mascot), Biologist/Mathematician/Writers (or subject specific), y'all, my people, friends, folks/folx, etc.
- Families look different, don't assume. Not everyone has a "mom & dad" or either/or. Try "your adult(s)"
- Think about impacts of colonization when you are describing things.
  - ○ Rather than "developing" countries, "formerly colonized" or "healing".
  - ○ Was it really the "first" school (or other institution)? Or was it the first *colonial* school built? Were they really the "last"? Or just the last you know of?
  - ○ Remember, Indigenous peoples exist and can speak for themselves. Google the Indigenous tribe's education outreach system if you want resources or better yet, build a connection and pay for a guest speaker.
- Are you being specific? Are you talking about Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPoC) in general? Are you talking about Black people? Are you talking about Indigenous people in general? Are you speaking about a specific tribe? Are you speaking of APISA peoples in general? If you are being general, be sure why.
- Teach about code switching.
- Offer opportunities to write/speak/listen/read using words not conventionally considered 'academic' or in nondominant languages.

Accountability:

- Learn and practice restorative justice. Recognize that it originates from Indigenous paradigms and is inclusive, relational and community based.
  - ○ Participate in workshops by Amplify RJ or Decolonize Your Classroom
  - ○ Co-create community norms, agreements, values and expectations from the start of the semester, revisit/remind regularly and revise whenever necessary.
  - ○ Use restorative talking circles:
    - ■ Opening session, intentional mindfulness
    - ■ Check-in with members of circle
    - ■ Discuss what happened and the impact

- How could it be made right? How could relationships be restored?
  - Honour student leadership in being "circle keepers"
    - Can we sponsor our students to be trained as circle keepers?
  - Progressive accountability: restorative circles in class, restorative council from there (bringing in other members of school community)

Representation:

- Take a critical look at your curriculum: whose voices are present? Whose are left out? Are marginalized voices added on as a tokenization or are they intertwined throughout? Share this with learners. Help them critically view the material as well.
- Remember, you should not be a "voice for the voiceless". Pass the mic. Find ways to bring those voices in, and financially support them for that labour.
- If you are looking for specifics, a start can be googling. For example, "Black transwomen in mathematics", brings us to sites for "how to queer math" and resources to create inclusive curriculum, as well as Q&A interviews with living Black trans mathematicians.
- Highlighting a mathematician (historically or living) with marginalized identities can be a great way to start each day and be thinking.
- Ask your students to bring in their own cultural understandings/approaches to the subject. Can they lead the lesson and teach the rest?
- Do culture shares. Learn about your own culture, be ready to talk about it and share something. Know why you are who you are because of where you came from and the identities you hold. Invite your learners to do the same.
- Think about your physical set up, do your visual materials reflect culture/language/identities of the learners who are in the space? Ask them to co-create the visual space as well.
- Think about your pedagogy. What teaching strategies do you use? Is it making learning more or less accessible for some? Google is your friend here too. "Teaching inclusive history" brings up millions of sites for decolonizing education, and rethinking inclusion.

- Ask your students what they wished they learnt about in school. Make it happen.

Assignments:

- Culture Shares
- Resource Shares
- Special Place Reflections
- "Where I'm From" Poems
- UnEssays
- Student Choice/Alternative Assignments
- Rolling Deadlines

Part 2: Sample Curriculum

Becoming Community

Instructor: G Imazumi-Hegarty (Profe. Imazumi/Mx. I-H)
Time: Block 2, 10-11:15am on 'A days'
Location: Room 120

Office hours: Collaboration on B days or by appointment. Please use this link to set an appointment or email me directly.

Email address:

Course Description & Overview:

This course introduces first year students to the community. We centre the Land in which our school is on to understand our community, self, relationships and values. This course utilizes decolonial frameworks and strives for culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies. 'Becoming' seeks to create holistic learning opportunities and values learners full selves. We will co-create and work together to understand and be in good relation to each other, the Land and Indigenous peoples, specifically Ohlone peoples, the ancestral stewards of this place. This course seeks to unravel and complicate the history of our school and society and explore opportunities for connection and solidarity between Indigenous values and the hallmarks of Notre Dame. Another central theme of the course is to explore shared solidarities between relationship with Land and relationship with people.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1) Identify values of the school and what it means to be in this community.

2) Critically reflect on the history of the school, the Bay Area and California.

3) Practice research skills, networking and collaboration through a cumulative project to repair relationships on the campus Land.

Course Dynamics & Expectations:

The class requires a high level of active class participation and involvement. Each class focuses on a specific topic related to 'Becoming' (identity, self and collective care, leadership, and skill building). The course relies heavily on reflection and community building. There is diverse class content, including: class readings, film and videos, poetry, lectures and class discussion. There are rolling deadlines for assignments, and students can choose which they want to participate in. Students will need to earn 270 points to earn an A- in the class, and there are 1208 points available over the course of the semester.

Academic (Dis)honesty

From the NDB student handbook: NDB is committed to the care and education of the whole person. NDB has an obligation to embody and foster the values of honesty and integrity. All students are expected to know and adhere to the Honor Code, which emphasizes students' responsibility for building safe and respectful learning environments, as well as explicitly prohibits plagiarism, and other violations of academic ethics. Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism is defined as intentionally or unintentionally representing the words or ideas of another person as your own; failure to properly cite references, manufacturing references. NDB faculty may use internet-based services to identify those portions of the person's written assignments that might not meet the full standards of academic integrity (i.e., www.turnitin.com).

Writing & Speaking Support: If you need help with the writing assignments, NDB offers an Academic Skills Coach, as well as a peer tutoring program. Contact your teacher for more details.

Disabilities Act: Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, students with (dis)abilities who will need reasonable accommodations for this course should contact their EFS coordinator.

Required Materials
1. Wall Kimmerer, R. (2013) *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Milkweed Editions (Audiobook recommended)
2. 1 Journal (Lined or blank pages)
3. All additional resources will be available on the course Schoology site.
4. **Optional but suggested:** Elinson, E & Yogi, S. (2009). *Wherever There's a Fight: How Runaway Slaves, Suffragists, Immigrants, Strikers, and Poets Shaped Civil Liberties in California*. HeyDay.

Course Requirements:
Above All: Care for self & community. *Attend. Engage. Read. Reflect. Question. Contribute.*

Student Work Accountability Groups (SWAGs)

Each student will be a part of a Student Work Accountability Group (SWAG) based on their choice of engagement (1x a week: face to face, via zoom, via text, other). Each SWAG will communicate outside of class time with their preferred method of communication. This is an opportunity to connect and further a sense of community, but also to communicate regarding each students' progress toward their 'point goal'. Once a week, a chosen member of the SWAG will communicate with Profe. I-H on how the small group members are doing toward their goal and whether or not they need support as a group.

Grading Policy

There are **1208 points available** in this class with various deadlines. You can choose which assignments you want to complete. If you miss a deadline, you can continue on and choose another assignment with a later deadline. If you need an extension, just communicate with me in advance. You do not need to provide a sad story for the extension. You **need 270 points to earn an A-** in the class. Each week you should communicate with your SWAG (Student Work Accountability Group) about your progress to the goal.

Cumulative Grade Point Averages are computed at the end of each semester.

The grading scale to be used in calculating letter grades from percentages is as follows:

Letter Grade	Points	Percentage	Letter Grade	Points	Percentage
A+	293.48-301.68 and above	97.5-100	C	218.69-233.77	72.5 – 77.49
A	279-301	92.5-97.49	C-	209.64-218.69	69.5 – 72.49
A-	270-279	89.5-92.49	D+	203.60-209.63	67.5 – 69.49
B+	264-270	87.5 – 89.49	D	188.52-203.60	62.5 – 67.49
B	249-264	82.5 – 87.49	D-	179.47-188.51	59.5 – 62.49
B-	239.8-249	79.5 – 82.49	F	179.46 and below	59.49 and below
C+	233.77-239.80	77.5 – 79.49			

Assignment Descriptions

Due by End of Unit 1

Presentation *Wherever There's a Fight*– Worth up to 40 points for each chapter (Up to 480 points available). The presentation **WILL NOT** simply be a summary of the reading(s) presented on a PPT. Instead presentations will challenge students to engage the class in dialogue and/or debate. Activities can incorporate multimedia, writing, visual art, drama, debate, music, etc. Most chapters allow for groups of 2. Please sign up for your presentations using the following link.

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48A8AF2CA7FDC16-wherever

Due by End of Unit 2

Culture Share- Not worth points but considered part of participation. During Unit 2, we will be starting each day with culture shares. It is a 2-5 minute opportunity to bring in a part of your culture. This can be done in any number of ways: bringing in an object and speaking about it, creating a slidedeck, sharing a song or dance or food. *Just remember: we are a peanut-free campus*.

Due by End of Unit 3

Questions *Bioregional Quiz*– Worth up to 2 points for each correct and thorough answer to each question (Up to 88 points available). Find questions at the following link.

https://indigenize.wordpress.com/2013/03/21/bioregional-quiz/

Due by End of Course

Reading Responses *Braiding Sweetgrass*– Worth up to 15 points for each chapter reflection (Up to 480 points available). The reading responses are to help students critically engage with readings and lessons learnt. Students will be asked to 1. Identify and analyze the main lessons/themes of each chapter. 2. Select 2 quotations and discuss their relevance to a course theme of community and relationship. Reading responses can include drawings and should be about 250-500 words (1 page).

Special Place Drawings – Worth up to 5 points for each drawing (Up to 90 points available). Students are encouraged to spend 30 minutes at least 1x a week in their own 'special place' outdoors without distractions (no phones, friends, music or talking). Draw what you see and continue learning from the community of land, water, plants and animals around you.

General Participation – Worth up to 2 points per class (Up to 70 points available). Students

are encouraged to participate and engage in whatever ways possible. All participation will be interwoven into the bigger class discussions. Participation and engagement can look like: in the large group, in smaller groups (Student Work Accountability Groups and Affinity Groups), in post-class reflections on the discussion board or private reflections/questions to Profe. I-H.

Mindwatch Journal - Not worth points but reflections and discussions will be brought into general discussions/participation grade. Throughout the semester, students keep "Mind Watch" diaries of their immediate responses to people who were different from them. I ask you not to deny or censor your initial reaction, but to record it immediately. For each twice-weekly entry, students identify the origin of the thoughts (culture, family, media) and describe how the reaction affected your behavior toward the "other." At the end of the semester, explore patterns in your reactions.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS
Our Daily Opening the Circle Slidedeck

Unit 1: Beginning the Community Journey		
Date and Topic	Activities	Assignments
Pre-Course	Please fill in the Google form before class.	**Getting to Know Each Other**
8/16/21 Opening the Circle	Review Syllabus Co-create Community Norms Preview assignments Create Timeline of proposed 'point completion'	**Journaling assigned**: Special Place Journaling **Braiding Sweetgrass**: assigned **Project** Sign Up (Optional) **SWAGs** Sign Up (Mandatory) **Affinity Group** Suggestions (Optional)
8/18/21 NDB Community	Guest Speaker: Introduction to the story of St. Julie & Francois, Sisters of ND, Hallmarks, Catholic Social Teachings	**Affinity Groups** Sign Up

8/20/21 Community Building	**All Listen**: https://www.capradio.org/news/insight/2017/04/25/insight-042517a/ **SWAG** Meetups **Work**: CA History Project	
8/24/21 Community Building	**Affinity** MeetUps **Work**: CA History Project	**CA Project** due next class.
8/26/21 CA Community	**Presentations of Work**	**CA Project Due**
8/30/21 Bay Area Community	**All Watch**: *In the Land of My Ancestors* Explore (1 each and share out): ● The Ramaytush Ohlone ● The Ramaytush Ohlone of the San Francisco Peninsula ● Ohlone-Portolá Heritage Trail Project ● Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy ● Choose people from Ohlone Elders & Youth Speak Discussions	**Bioregional Quiz** assigned **Culture Share Sign Ups**
Unit 2: Intro to Identity & Self Care		
9/1/21 Identity & Culture	**Culture Share Example** **SWAG** Culture Worksheet **All** Discussions around Culture	**Journaling assigned**: Mindwatch Journal
9/3/21 Intro to Privilege	**Culture Shares** **All** Unpacking Knapsacks Unpacking Knapsacks: White Privilege Unpacking Knapsacks: Hetero/Cis Privilege	

	Affinity Discussions	
9/8/21 Identity & Culture	**Culture Shares** **All** <u>"Where I'm From" poems</u>	
9/10/21 Self-Care: Toxic Positivity and Social Media	**Culture Shares** **All:** Watch videos & discuss <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EOj2Z7hw5w</u> <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Czg_9C7gw0o</u> <u>https://youtu.be/yjzGxLq1Dqs</u> **Affinity Group/SWAG** Check-ins	
9/13/21 Self Care: Suicide Prevention	**Culture Shares** Guest Speakers	
9/15/21 Self Care: Boundaries	**Culture Shares** **All:** Watch & Discuss <u>Friendships & Boundaries</u> <u>Boundaries: Why you Need Them</u> **Solo:** Reflect	**Point Check-ins:** - Special Place - Braiding Sweetgrass - Bioregional Quiz
**Unit 3: Community Care and Wellness**	
9/17/21 Intro to Community	**SWAG:** Define **All**: Come together and define <u>community</u>, Envision how to build, how to restore/repair *Do we need to revisit norms?* **All**: Read: Lent, J. (2021) *What does an ecological civilization look like?* Yes! Magazine. <u>https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/ecological-civilization/2021/02/16/what-does-ecological-civilization-look-like/</u>	**Field Trip Permission Slips Provided**
9/21/21 Community/	**Watch**: <u>Nothing more Queer than Nature</u>	Brigitte Baptiste	

Natures Values & Relationships	**Read:** [Trees In Early Irish Law & Lore](#): Respect for Other-Than-Human Life in Europe's History	
9/23/21 Community/ Natures Values & Relationships	**Read:** [Plants are Friends/Lessons Learned from Plants](#) or [7 Wisdoms Trees Can Teach Us](#)	**Field Trip Permission Slips Due**
9/27/21 Connecting with Community	**Field Trip:** Ocean or Redwoods	
9/29/21 Protect Community	AntiBullying [Lesson Plan](#)	
10/1/21 Promises	Promises to community/Cooperative Comics [lesson plan](#)	**Point Check-ins**: - Special Place - Braiding Sweetgrass - Bioregional Quiz (finals due)
Unit 4: Transformative Leadership		
10/5/21 Intro to Leadership	**Solo**: What does it mean to be a leader? Values? Draw* yourself as a tree. On the roots, lists things that are your strengths, and on the leaves, list things that you are in the process of changing, and on the trunk place your core values. Use this as a springboard for a self-reflective piece* which includes reflections on doing the exercise, gratitude for, and celebration of your strengths and a realistic timeline showing how you will change certain things.	**Watch:** ● Drew Dudley: [Everyday leadership](#) ● Susan Cain: [The power of introverts](#) ● Eddy Robinson [An Indigenous Journey to Leadership](#) ● Joél-Léhi Organista [Chinampas: an Indigenous model for leadership development](#) **Permission Slip for Field Trip Given**
10/7/21 Plants as Leaders	**All**: Discuss Videos **SWAG:** Read one of the	

	following: - [The 7 Characteristics of a Good Leader | Edutopia](#) - [Can Plants Teach Us about Leadership?](#) - [Leadership is Like Gardening](#) - [Leadership Lessons from the World of Plants](#). **Share with other SWAGs**	
10/14/21 Power & Privilege	**Watch:** Whale Rider	
10/18/21 Power & Privilege	**Watch:** Whale Rider Discuss: How does power & privilege impact who gets to be considered a leader?	**Permission Slip Due**
10/20/21 Leadership & Representation	**Watch**: [Here We Stand](#) & [Decolonizing Surfing](#) **Explore:** - **[Kanyon Konsulting](#)** - **[QueerNature](#)** - **[Sogorea Te' Land Trust](#)** - **[Planting Justice](#)**	
10/22/21 Leadership & Stewards of Land	Field Trip to Sogorea Te' Land Trust	**Point Check-ins:** - Special Place - Braiding Sweetgrass
Unit 5: Restoring Relationships to Self, Community, Land		
10/26/21 Bringing it back to NDB	**All**: Developing Project, Organizing Roles: 1. Restoring Native plants to campus 2. Fundraising to restore relationship to Ohlone peoples	**Create Timeline for Work**

	Example Jobs: ● Planners ● Researchers ● Fundraisers ● Shoppers ● Planters ● Community Educators ● Graphic Designers	
10/28/21 Project	**Small Group Roles/Work**	
11/1/21	**Small Group Roles/Work**	
11/3/21	**Small Group Roles/Work**	
11/5/21	**Small Group Roles/Work**	
11/9/21	**Small Group Roles/Work**	
11/11/21	**Small Group Roles/Work**	
11/15/21	**Small Group Roles/Work**	
11/17/21	**Small Group Roles/Work**	
11/19/21	**Small Group Roles/Work**	
11/23/21	**Community Showcase**	**Point Check-ins:** - Special Place (finals) - Braiding Sweetgrass (finals)
Unit 6: Skills to Carry on the Journey		
11/30/21 (Re)Imagine	**Guest Speaker:** Power of Storytelling **Watch**: Stop Searching for Your Passion **SWAG:** Passion Ideas **Solo**: Vision Board	

12/2/21 Ethics	**Discuss**: Savior Complex **Watch**: [Voluntourism](),	
12/8/21 Build & Connect	**Research**: Groups/Orgs/Resources **Connect**: Networking	
12/10/21 Closing the Circle	**All**: Review & Reimagine	

Part 3: Resources

How to Co-Create Curriculum with Students

- [A Play by Play Strategy for Co-Creating Curriculum with Students]()

Heritage/Identity Months:

- Tips: While acknowledging struggles/oppressions, don't make that the full story. There is so much more than trauma and pain. Let people of those identities speak for themselves. Work with students to see what they want to learn about and highlight! Here are some examples of some of the slide decks and activities I have put together.
  - Black History Month in February
    - [Slidedeck]() with Black youth
    - [Antiracism Journaling Prompts]()
    - Movie Screenings: *Hidden Figures*, *13th*, *Black Art: In the Absence of Light*, *Judas & The Black Messiah*
  - Lunar New Year in February
    - [Slidedeck]() (with videos submitted from students who celebrate)
  - Women's History Month in March
    - [Women to Highlight & Resources]() (for teachers)
    - [Understanding Womxn]() (a discussion within Intersectional Feminist Club)
    - Movie Screenings: *Becoming*, *Death & Life of Marsha P. Johnson*, *Whale Rider*, *On the Basis of Sex*
  - Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May
    - [Slidedeck]()
    - [Combating AntiAsian Racism Resources]()

- - ■ Movie screenings: *KTown'92, Parasite or To All The Boys I've Loved Before, A Place in the Middle, White Tiger*
  - ○ Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month from September 15-October 15
    - ■ Slidedeck
    - ■ Movie screenings: También La Lluvia, Dolores, Viva, Frida
  - ○ Native American Heritage Month in November
    - ■ Slidedeck

Indigenize:

- ● Taken from the San Mateo County of Education: Resources for Teaching About Indigenous Peoples California's History-Social Science Framework calls for students to examine the history and culture of Native Californian peoples, including the Ramaytush Ohlone people. Below are culturally responsive resources to help educators teach about Indigenous peoples.
  - ○ Classroom Ready Resources for Teachers (Teaching California): Find lessons that explore California Indian history and help students understand diverse perspectives, evaluate historical evidence, and unpack ethical considerations of the past.
  - ○ Map of Original Native Tribes and Teacher's Guide (Native Land): Search Indigenous territories and engage your classroom in the complexity and diversity of Indigenous peoples.
  - ○ Bay Area Native History Resources (UC Berkeley History-Social Science Project): Access culturally responsive resources about settler colonialism and the ongoing history and presence of Ohlone people in the Bay Area.
  - ○ Frameworks for Teaching History - Social Justice Standards, Teaching Hard History, Digital Literacy (Teaching Tolerance): Find frameworks for teaching social justice standards, American slavery, digital literacy, and civil rights.
  - ○ Rethinking Columbus Teaching Resources (Zinn Education Project): Search through lessons, books, and films on how to teach the truth about Christopher Columbus and Indigenous peoples' history.
  - ○ California Indian Education Resources (California Indian Education for All): Access resources and professional development opportunities to learn about the diverse histories, cultures, and contributions of California Native peoples.
  - ○ Indigenous Peoples' Day Teaching Toolkit (San Diego County Office of Education): Find resources to celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day, including a board resolution, lesson plans, and toolkits.
  - ○ Native American History Month (Library of Congress): Search through articles, webpages, videos, and other media that provide information on Indigenous peoples.

- ○ [Teaching about Native American Life Resources](#) (California Teachers Association): Learn about Native American history and contemporary life and access ideas for class discussions, writing, research, and community involvement.
- ○ [American Indian History and Heritage](#) (National Endowment for the Humanities): Find lesson plans, teacher guides, and media resources for teaching indigenous perspectives and exploring indigenous peoples' culture.

General Approaches & Resources

- [Structures & Strategies](#)
- [Best Practices for English as an Additional Language Learners](#)
- [Social Justice Resources](#)
- [Educating Justice Citizens](#)
- [Reflection Press](#)
- [Profe. Rosa's Big List of Resources](#)

Visual/Performing Arts

- [The Storytelling Project Curriculum](#): Learning About Race and Racism through Storytelling and the Arts
- [Theatre of the Oppressed](#)
- [Black Art: In the Absence of Light](#)

Science

- [6 Ways I made my Science class LGBTQ Inclusive](#)
- [Gender Inclusive Biology Lesson Materials](#)
- [A People's Curriculum for the Earth](#)

Mathematics

- [Rethinking Mathematics: Teaching Social Justice By Numbers](#)

English

- [A Mighty Girl](#)
- [Diversifying Literature](#)
- [Where I'm From Poems](#)

Social Sciences

- [Decolonizing Pedagogies](#)
- [Black Lives Matter Curriculum](#)
- [Trans Oral History Project](#)
- [Standing Rock Syllabus](#)
- [Thanksgiving](#)
- [Hip Hop Civics](#)

Religion/Faith

- [Countering Islamophobia in Schools](#)
- [Islamophobia is Racism](#)
- [Islamophobia Syllabus](#)

Accountability

- [Prevent Expulsion](#)

Queer/LGBTQ

- [Somos Familia](#)
- [Guide to Allyship](#)
- [LGBTQ Lesson Plans](#)
- [So Everything You Know about Gender is a Lie, and Colonialism is to Blame](#)
- [InterACT (Intersex Info)](#)