

## ***“The Term ‘All Genders’ Would be More Appropriate”: Reflections on Teaching Trauma Literature to a Gender-fluid Youth***

AMBER MOORE  
University of British Columbia

### *Abstract*

Using intersectional feminism and narrative inquiry, this paper reflects on a qualitative case study where a trauma text was taught in high school English for the purposes of analyzing students’ responses. One gender-fluid participant provided particularly compelling insights and so this project revisits their data. They demonstrate that their lived experience as a gender-fluid youth in school informed their authoring of themselves as a ‘diversity worker’ and/or ‘equity person’ (Ahmed, 2017), which overall, resulted in allyship and accomplice work that benefited the school. Because self-defined identities are important (Zamani-Gallaher, 2017) and there is a lack of studies that attend to trans spectrum students’ positive experiences in school (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017), this paper aims to address this gap.

### *Keywords*

adolescent literacy, accomplice, ally, case study, critical literacy, diversity worker, gender fluidity, narrative inquiry, trauma literature

### *Introduction: Lingering Thoughts on Landry*

"Male is partly female, because female/Carries male. To whit, Gender's not a jail" (Clarke as cited in Andrew-Gee, 2016, p. 2).

A teacher is not supposed to admit this, but I did have favourites and Landry (pseudonym) was one of them. A bright, stormy-eyed and waiflike person often dressed in black - right down to their lipstick - sat quietly in my academic English classroom through their grade nine and ten years. The volumes they spoke in their writing more than made up for their quiet classroom demeanour; however, I remember them as a talented creative writer especially, and their expository work was equally thoughtful and convincing. They had a few close friends, whom they always sat with at a table near the door, often chatting about the show *Supernatural* or online avatars. Landry always chose their words carefully, usually preferring body language to speaking; I'd usually receive nods or mischievous smirks when I asked what trouble they managed to rustle up over the weekend, and I'd sometimes get a roll of the eyes and a violent head shake if I inquired whether a new Netflix show was worth watching. Simply, Landry is one of those students that teachers go to work for.

In grade nine, Landry stayed after class one day to ask me to use their preferred name rather than their given one, as well as gender neutral pronouns; they identified as gender-fluid. They showed me their forearm, where every day, they'd imprint thoughts regarding their gender fluidity in their skin with sharpie. As I understood them, their explanation of it is much akin to this: ““Gender-fluid” means that identity changes by days or weeks over time, and that questioning and changing one’s identity from time to time is

also legitimate” (Risman, 2017, p. 72). I remember telling them, “You got it” and thanked them for trusting me. I got some flushed cheeks and a quick smile in return, along with a rare “Thanks, Ms. M - have a nice day” before they scurried off to their next class. Their black tutu skirt bounced as they left, their legs reminding me of Beetlejuice with tights of thick black and white stripes, anchored by black combat boots that were surprisingly quiet scuffling across the cement floor of my classroom.

I return to Landry for this paper because simply, they never left me though I left teaching two years ago to pursue doctoral work, following the completion of my MA. In my thesis and the subsequent research article that followed (Moore & Begoray, 2017), I wrote about Landry along with my other 24 participants. However, I had a lingering feeling that Landry had a great deal more to offer because not only did they provide rich data, but more so, they repeatedly demonstrated that they think critically about gender and related issues, such as violence against women, and are committed to social justice. Thus, I was brought back to this piece where I explore what their responses might reveal about one gender-fluid student’s literacy experience with trauma literature, and particularly, a story about gender violence. The purpose of this article, then, is to document how their meaning making included beliefs and perspectives informed by their experiences with being out as a gender-fluid student in school, coupled with a strong sense of social justice ethics. My goal is to provide a dynamic portrait of how Landry’s responses not only allowed them to author themselves as a social justice worker, but further, to model such subject positioning for their peers.

To achieve this goal, I tighten the frame of this project slightly from the last time I worked with this data set. Using the theoretical lens of intersectional feminism (Crenshaw, 1989) specifically, and the particular conceptual frame of Ahmed’s (2017) ‘the diversity worker’ and/or ‘equity person,’ I explore how Landry authored themselves as such by taking up the roles of ally and accomplice - expert of and engaging in - cultural critiques on significant issues including gender identity, gendered violence, and trauma. To do this, I return again to narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, Leggo, 2004; 2012) primarily because I strive to “attend to the story of [an]other” (Leggo, 2012, p. xii). Thus, my aim is to contribute to how some gender-fluid students might experience literacy in high school English, particularly critical literacy learning - “focused on the uses of literacy for social justice in marginalized and disenfranchised communities” (Luke, 2012, p. 5) - centered on trauma literature investigations. I am interested in providing insights from how they responded to trauma literature, and demonstrate that their lived experience as a gender-fluid youth in school informed their authoring of themselves as a ‘diversity worker’ and/or ‘equity person’ (Ahmed, 2017) in the classroom, which overall, resulted in allyship and accomplice work that benefited the learning culture. It is important to be clear that my intention is not to offer Landry as an example of how gender fluidity typically ‘works’; indeed, there is nothing ‘typical’ about Landry, or any student, and so, I do not want to produce a narrative about how gender-fluid students receive and respond to any story, trauma or otherwise. Rather, what I hope to offer is a rich exploration of one gender-fluid student’s experience with learning about a trauma text, and how this critical literacy event afforded them an opportunity to engage themselves and their peers in activist-oriented behaviour that meaningfully contributed to our class and school culture(s). This project thus represents an individual case of meaning-making where Landry drew from their experiences as a gender-fluid person as part of what informed their learning; exploring this

is useful because it highlights an epistemology based on being able to occupy different subject positions which is very helpful when considering social justice work, especially with respect to gender violence. Further, as much scholarship on youth with such gender identities and education focuses on negative experiences in school (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017), this paper also strives to showcase a positive, productive example of one gender-fluid literacy student who thrived in their literature class.

*On 'Defining' and Understanding Gender-fluid Identit(ies)*

Young people like Landry are becoming more vocal about “expanding notions of gender beyond traditional categories of boy/man and girl/woman” (Frohard-Dourlent et al., 2017, p. 1). Throughout this paper, the term “gender-fluid” will be used to describe Landry’s gender identity because this is how they self-identified, and because it is something that “people claim for themselves” (Fox, 2015, p. 163). Across literature on LGBTQ+ youth, this term is used interchangeably with: “gender-variant... gender creative, gender non-conforming” and even “transgender” (p. 163), as well as “genderqueer” (Ressler & Chase, 2009, p. 17), “non-binary,” “bigender” and “pangender” (Richards et al., 2016, p. 96). This terminology continually evolves, sometimes creates controversy, and often causes confusion (de Jong, 2015). Even educators new to discussing LGBTQ+ issues “often find the language and labels daunting” (Ressler & Chase, 2009, p. 16), and it is significant to acknowledge how “Non-binary identity is not currently... well accepted in many Western cultures” (Matsuno & Budge, 2017, p. 116)<sup>1</sup>. However, as mentioned, my understanding of Landry’s use of the term is that some “are simply more fluid by nature. They do not feel comfortable fitting into boxes of behaviour. They may move from one box to the next, and back again, or say that neither box feels right” (Brill & Pepper, 2008, p. 24), much like how Landry keeps daily ‘gender notes’ on their skin. As such, I align myself with how I observed Landry assigning meaning to the term, and recognize the importance of honouring this; after all, “Gender identity is a basic defining feature of a person’s identity which deeply influences every part of people’s life” (Fontanella, Maretti, & Sarra, 2013, p. 2554). Thus, with this work, I echo Matsuno and Budge’s (2017) important call to action:

if every person who read this article discussed concepts of non-binary and genderqueer identity with someone in their life (who was not already well-versed in concepts of gender), that would be a major step in deconstructing a society that continues to misunderstand and invalidate the experiences of those who do not fall within the gender binary. (p. 199)

This call to action might be one way in which to answer Goodrich and Luke’s (2014) question: “Our schools, and our [LGBTQQIA] students, are in crisis. How will you answer the call and assist in facilitating the personal growth and development of each and every student?” (p. 364). Attending to experiences such as Landry’s provide a much-needed contribution to discussions regarding best practices for supporting gender diverse students in K-12, particularly because Landry’s literacy learning was largely generative for themselves

---

<sup>1</sup> To be clear, this is not to suggest that non-binary and gender-fluid people should be conflated into one group. Rather, Matsuno and Budge (2017) are being drawn from here to emphasize the point that anyone who pushes back against gender binaries face challenges in Western culture.

and their community. Overall, Landry's stories are worthwhile and necessary; indeed, they show us that "We need to question our understanding of who we are in the world. We need opportunities to consider other versions of identity" (Leggo, 2012, p. xx).

### *Theoretical Framework: Intersectional Feminism*

I approach this work using an intersectional feminist lens, an idea largely developed by legal scholar Crenshaw (1989); she deeply considers how individuals with multiple social identities are systematically impacted. Since Crenshaw coined the term 'intersectionality,' it has been "taken up and invoked widely and flexibly... the word, if not always the concept, has traveled so far" (Case, 2017, p. x), though much of this surge arises from Black feminists. Key tenets include honouring diverse identities, analyzing systems of power, and enacting social justice. For example, intersectionality provides a way in which to "interrogate identity disparities" (Banks, Pliner, & Hopkins, 2013, p. 102). Moreover, it is a tool for resisting oppression; it is "both a theoretical framework as well as a process of analysis through which one can understand how multiple identities congeal to mediate one's ability to navigate sociocultural systems of power" (Nicolazzo, 2016, p. 1177). Crenshaw argues: "it is a relationship between identities... *and* [my emphasis] structures... they are not separate" (Crenshaw as cited by the Equal Rights Trust, 2016, p. 5). Thus, it is a frame and "mechanism" (Case, 2017, p. ix) that has profoundly influenced feminist philosophy, politics, and practices. Due to these qualities, this framework is appropriate here because not only was the original study conducted using feminist framing, but more specifically, its focus on diverse social identities will help to better attend to the voice of an individual with a dynamic, complex gender identity. Intersectional feminism is also necessary for conceptualizing the significance of a gender-fluid student's critical literacy learning experiences because "any serious discussion of feminism in education has to espouse a theory of intersectionality" (Henry, 2011, p. 262), and further, "feminism will be intersectional, "or it will be bullshit," to borrow from the eloquence of Flavia Dzodan" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 5).

Within the field of education, intersectionality transforms pedagogy because it offers "a frame to complicate identity" (Case, 2013, p. 6). For instance, Case and Lewis's (2017) example of intersectional pedagogy in a psychology course is useful for the purposes of this paper where Landry's demonstration of allyship and accomplice work will be discussed. In their research, students began to adopt an ally identity, and were "eager to use the term [ally]" (p. 138), demonstrating intersectional awareness with respect to Black LGBTQ+ liberation. Fostering such awareness with students is important for critical literacy and for encouraging social action, such as in the form of ally/accomplice work. This is an example of how "intersectionality can serve communities through what [Crenshaw] refers to as 'coalition building'" (Yenika-Agbaw, 2017, p. 108). To encourage such building, "critical educators must also give students, especially privileged groups, tools to effect change- [intersectional strategies]" (McQueeney, 2016, p. 1466) to avoid only "emphasizing individuals' experiences with these social identities, rather than the systems of power and oppression that shape these experiences" (Núñez, 2014, p. 85).

Intersectional feminism is thus an important stream of feminism that provides a way of understanding the significance of Landry's social location(s) and how such complexity in their identity can influence them to be both a unique voice in literacy learning, and to also engage in social justice behaviour. Ultimately, because "an

intersectional approach is expected to be fluid” (Goswami et al., 2016, p. 2), fluidity is a value of this theoretical framework, making it appropriate to use as a lens for (re)examining Landry’s critical literacy contributions.

*Conceptual Framework: Sara Ahmed’s ‘Diversity Worker’/ ‘Equity Person’*

Because “there can be unintended consequences to the blanket application of intersectionality” (Luft, 2009, p. 100), Ahmed’s (2017) concept(s) of the ‘diversity worker’ and/or ‘equity officer’ - drawing on her “own involvement in trying to transform universities” (p. 90) - will be used here as a means to interpret Landry’s ideas and impressions which contributed to their own efforts to, like Ahmed, transform our school. She is a committed intersectional feminist scholar who argues that this approach is “the point from which we must proceed if we are to offer an account of how power works” (p. 5), and describes intersectionality as “messy and embodied” (p. 119). Particularly her latest book, *Living a feminist life* (2017), she describes the intersectional feminist killjoy role(s) of ‘diversity worker’ and/or ‘the equity person’ as a part of her discussion on transformative diversity work as feminist theory - “an effort to be in a world that does not accommodate our being” (p. 91). She calls diversity work (1) “work we do when we are attempting to transform an institution” and (2) “the work we do when we do not quite inhabit the norms of the institution” (p. 91). However, it “also covers a wide range of different practices” - it is “complex” (Ahmed & Swan, 2006, p. 99). Due to this complexity, ‘diversity workers’ and ‘equity people’ do “messy, even dirty work” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 94) and “work that is less supported” (p. 96). And so, although it is encouraging to witness Landry’s efforts to transform their school culture, the conceptual lens of Ahmed’s ‘diversity worker’ and/or ‘equity person’ is being invoked to also deliberately call attention to how Landry’s very presence reveals heteronormativity in the institution of school. This paper does celebrate Landry’s contributions that emerged during a trauma novel study; however, Ahmed’s conceptual lens aids in framing this work as inherently “sweaty” - Landry was, of course, never officially ‘appointed’ as a diversity worker. According to my analysis, they took on this labour when they sensed they needed to, perhaps because they were - to my knowledge - the only gender-fluid student in class. In each moment I analyze, it was likely demanding and difficult because it is not easy to “intervene in the reproduction of power,” to “think differently,” and to “think on our feet” (p. 93).

A diversity worker and/or equity officer typically undertakes roles including: “strategic work” (p. 97), “sending things out” (p. 102), and engaging in “pushy work” (p. 107). First, “strategic work” is work that comes from a place of “trying” - “an attempt to do something... to carry something out” (p. 97) - despite difficulties. To do so, Ahmed argues that diversity/equity officers have to exhibit a self-awareness and reflexivity in any resistance they engage with; they might have to even “try on” (p. 98) different styles or methods. As well, such strategic work often means carefully selecting appropriate language whilst dialoguing with others in the institution, which can be tiresome, leading to “equity fatigue” (p. 98). Nonetheless, “image management” (p. 99) is important, and as such, as institutional killjoys, those in these roles often “polish” (p. 102) institutions to make them better. The next important undertaking of diversity/equity officers is “sending things out.” One example is producing writing documents and/or policies - creating a “paper trail” (p. 104). Lastly, diversity and/or equity officers do “pushy work,” meaning, they have to hold the institutions accountable for what they say they will do; in this way, pushy work often

involves “mind[ing] the gap” “between words and deeds, trying to make organizations catch up with the words they send out” (p. 107).

Overall, all of these strategies of the diversity and equity officer are characterized by Ahmed as “wilful work” (p. 113), and such wilfulness, such persistence and striving to “know” how to keep “pushing to open up spaces to those who have not been accommodated” (p. 114) is exactly the kind of feminist killjoy work Landry demonstrated throughout the course of the study in their ally and accomplice behaviours.

## *Methodology*

### *The Study*

Landry’s data analyzed here is from a qualitative case study (Yin, 2013) I undertook for five weeks in a Western Canadian public high school in 2015 (Moore & Begoray, 2017). Landry was a middle-class white fifteen year old, self-identified gender-fluid and pansexual student - one of 25 who participated. The purpose was to explore the ways in which grade ten students responded to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives. The research questions that guided this study were: (1) in what ways can the use of trauma narratives develop critical literacies and an empathetic classroom culture? And (2) What critical literacy strategies are most effective when using trauma literature to explore issues such as rape and sexual assault, sexual harassment, exclusion, power, peer pressure, and bullying? The unit was centered on reading *Speak* (Anderson, 1999), a young adult trauma novel about a grade nine girl who is raped by a classmate. Alongside *Speak*, several complementary texts including current event materials, poetry, photographs, and videos were also studied.

The students’ responses were collected through a number of print and digital writing activities (creative and personal writing, blogging, Instagram, poetry, a variety of ‘tickets out the door’ quick-writes, threaded discussion groups), class, individual, and small group discussions during lessons, as well as in a focus group session where students were asked about their learning experiences during the unit, after the conclusion of the course (Landry did not participate in the focus group). I originally framed the study using social constructivist (Smagorinsky, 2013), feminist, gender, and queer studies (Butler, 1990; Lorde, 1984; Rich, 2003), and trauma theories (Caruth, 1991, 1995); however, for the purposes of this revisitation, I have accordingly reframed and narrowed my lenses more particularly with intersectional feminism (Crenshaw, 1989), specifically Ahmed’s (2017) conceptions of the diversity and/or equity worker, as mentioned.

This is also a good place for me to acknowledge that I am an able-bodied, cisgender white woman who grew up in a middle class context; although this case study foregrounds the voice of a gender-fluid youth, the analysis and perspective are mine. I believe that this paper, as part of my ongoing research on teaching and learning about trauma literature, offers some dimension to understanding gender-fluid experiences intersectionally, from my perspective as a cultural “outsider” (Collins, 1986). However, it is also important to acknowledge that I am still ‘inside’ gender because I move through the world and, specifically, my classroom, as a female teacher. My gendered experience in education very much informs my investment in this project because I have experienced harassment and sexism as both as teacher and a student and so, I have some experiences with feeling scared, small, and silenced in school. Of course, these experiences differ greatly from those of gender-fluid youth like Landry; however, I want to acknowledge that my gendered learning

experiences influence my investment in seeking ways in which I might foster more inclusive, welcoming learning spaces for my students. It is necessary to hone in on specific experiences of gender diverse youth in order to seek to understand how educators might best service them, as well as honour their voices and stories.

### *Narrative Inquiry*

Narrative inquiry, “the study of experience” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 189), is a research methodology “rooted firmly in a wide range of philosophical, psychological poetic, and pedagogic perspectives and imperatives” and it is often used in education (Leggo, 2004, p. 97). It is appropriate for this project because while it is aimed at understanding social context, it is centered primarily on individuals within a context rather than the context itself (Kitchen, 2006). This is complementary to education because teachers often endeavour to teach individuals rather than just classrooms; as Aoki (1994) describes: “the important thing is to understand that if in my class I have 20 students, then there are 20 interspaces between me and my students. These interspaces are spaces of possibilities” (as cited in Leggo, 2004, p. 109). Narrative methodology works for this investigation because it is “connected to understanding how stories present possibilities for understanding... the complex, mysterious, even ineffable experiences that comprise human living” (Leggo, 2012, p. xix).

Stories also have a capacity for action, are potential sites for transformation, and can function as vehicles for learning. Further, during this study, I was “awash with stories” (Leggo, 2012, p. xiii), especially Landry’s. Narrative methodology is especially significant here because it “challenges and problematizes the nature of knowledge as objective and questions unitary ways of knowing” (Kim, 2008, pp. 251-252). My process of engaging in narrative inquiry began with Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) suggestions for narrative methods, particularly with respect to reconstructing field texts to research texts via “*narratively coding*” (p. 131). I hand-coded photocopies of all data by looking for “places where actions and events occurred, storylines that interweave and interconnect, gaps or silences that become apparent, tensions that emerge, and continuities and discontinuities that appear” (p. 131). To capture these items, I chiefly followed the strategies outlined by Creswell (2014) on analyzing and coding data, as well as “Tesch’s Eight Steps to Coding” (1990), which Creswell recommends and outlines, and then engaged in thematic analysis to not only capture the prominent ideas in the data set, but to also examine differences and relationships between noted themes. However, this process was certainly not comprised of a tidy series of steps; rather, it was complex and messy. The data was revisited repeatedly as I returned to them “again and again” because “Negotiation occurs from beginning to end” (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000, p. 132) Through this dynamic narrative analytic process, I found that narrative methodology can indeed open up new ways of knowing, such as through connecting stories and unique, marginalized lived experiences. Because the literacy experiences of a gender-fluid student are explored here - an identity that importantly questions “unitary ways of knowing” (Kim, 2008, pp. 251-252) - narrative inquiry certainly thematically connects with the subject matter at hand.

### *Findings: Allyship & Accomplice Work as an Equity and/or Diversity Officer*

Landry’s responses were dynamic and rooted in their deep commitment to social justice issues - an attentiveness I had come to recognize as both their English teacher and

as the teacher researcher. Although their responses covered considerable theoretical, conceptual, and critical ground, a revisit of the Landry's data demonstrated their successful authoring of themselves as a diversity and/or equity person, even also, as a kind of 'feminist killjoy,' deeply committed to ally and accomplice work. In doing so, Landry provided compelling commentary on and critiques of gender identities, gender violence and trauma.

### *Allyship*

One of the most encouraging findings was that students - especially Landry - began to engage in what I coded as 'ally communication' as they recognized the importance of solidarity in light of *Speak*, a novel about a rape survivor who is largely unsupported throughout the story. As we described, this might be a reflection of how, "Throughout the learning, we revisited the importance of witnessing, being allies, not defaulting to the role of a bystander" (Author & Coauthor, 2017, p. 178). Additionally, the need for connection in high school is tantamount, so observing students reaching out to create communities and foster allyship (see, for example, Case, 2013; Brown, 2015; DeTurk, 2011; Hunt & Holmes, 2015) was impressive.

Landry consistently exhibited allyship. Although there is "no [ally] blueprint" (Gaffney, 2016, p. 44) because it is a "complex and ongoing process" (p. 45), DeTurk (2011) defines allies as "people who have relative social power or privilege and who stand against injustice" (p. 570). For example, we learned about Emma Sulkowicz, an Asian American Columbia University student and artist who was assaulted in her dorm room. While her rapist remained at school, she began the "Carry that Weight" project," a kind of "endurance art piece" (Mitra, 2015, p. 386), carrying her mattress around campus in protest and as art "of pure, almost formalist, endurance, an instruction manual for getting a handle on a collapsed event's affective weight" (Chu, 2017, p. 310). I was hoping Sulkowicz would inspire students to use the bystander approach as ally work that would engage them in "empathy and perspective taking" which is "embedded in this approach" (Cares et al, 2015, p. 580). Students had to decide if this was a productive form of protest, and to leave their thoughts in the article's comments feature.

In Landry's detailed response, they first applaud Emma, characterizing her efforts as "a good way to protest peacefully, and still get media attention." Here, they assert themselves as an ally *and* hone their critical literacy skills by analyzing the protest work; it is worth noting that Landry was the only participant who picked up on how this was a peaceful protest. The added note about "still getting media attention" also showcases them taking up Ahmed's (2017) concept of the "diversity worker" - someone "conscious of the resistance of their work," which could mean, "that some strategies might aim not to cause *too* [my emphasis] much disruption" (p. 80). Landry elaborates on the importance of Emma's strategy: "Usually people don't listen to peaceful protests. If they're violent, people listen, but then discredit the protesters for being violent." This understanding of how diverse protests are 'received' demonstrates allyship emerging from "an awareness of the different aspects of power employed to perpetuate inequality, the way in which history contributes to ongoing inequality, and various efforts to deny or minimize inequality" (Brown, 2015, p. 714) - a critical component of effective allyship and diversity work. Next, Landry details their physical reaction, describing how it is "sickening that [Emma] was forced to see her assaulter repeatedly," exhibiting disgust over the detail that the attacker

threatened legal action against Columbia University because “he doesn’t want his name dirtied.” They conclude: “I think he should go jobless for the rest of his life. I don’t care if his life is ruined, how many lives did he ruin? Honestly, he deserves it.” Landry’s angry, publicly posted reaction demonstrates that not only have they critically analyzed this current event in multiple ways, but further, that they were willing to put their potentially controversial, visceral reaction online. This might be considered a moment that critical literacy pedagogue and intersectional feminist scholar bell hooks’ (1994) calls “coming to voice” (p. 148). As well, during our class discussion, Landry “sen[t] something out” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 102) by contributing a rare oral comment, somewhat angrily offering that “statistically” it is “very rare to have false rape accusation” when a peer brought the subject up during class discussion. Arguably, Landry is certainly positioning themselves as an ally and “diversity worker” - one for whom “words become tools, things you can do things with” (p. 98) because they leave something of a digital “paper trail, a trace of where they have been” (p. 104). And indeed, Landry’s “sickening” feeling in their written response and their angry tone with their class dialogue contribution showcases how “diversity work is emotional work” (p. 130).

In another example, Landry exhibited allyship during an Instagram project, where students posted thank-you messages for their allies. This assignment emerged from a character in *Speak*, who pens a card to the rape survivor protagonist that ends their friendship; their friendship is too risky - it risks her social capital. We took the opportunity as a class to express gratitude to those who are always there for us. Landry texted a friend, “thank you for always being there for me, even when it’s inconvenient or bothersome,” ending with: “You are the closest person to me and I’m grateful for you.” Here, Landry uses ally communication and recognizes the significance of allyship. Landry’s work speaks to Hunt and Holmes’ (2015) conception of “both/and” allyship, which they believe can be fostered in friendships and intimate relationships. They argue: “Friendships can provide opportunities for enacting allyship” and that such spaces “require developing trust and communication across differences, challenging one another, and creating solidarity with one another” (p. 161). Although diversity and equity workers might sometimes “end up challenging what gives security, warmth, place, and position” to become “institutional killjoys” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 113), Landry also illustrates that in this role, it is possible to facilitate such items through friendship and allyship.

Relatedly, students also wrote letters to “survivors,” like the protagonist of *Speak*. Again, Landry’s letter clearly demonstrates their ally communication. They begin with validation, in a compassionate tone, which captured the essence of this literacy work: “You are very strong willed, despite the abuse you had to endure for those eight long years.” Such validation is akin to DeTurk’s (2011) example of an ally communication strategy called “comforting targets” to be used at an interpersonal level; it includes “direct (authoritative and dialogic) responses to expressions of stereotypes and prejudices” (p. 581). Further, Landry’s characterization of the timeline of their friend’s trauma - “those eight long years” - emphasizes Landry’s keen empathy - a key quality of allies (Munin & Speight, 2010). In fact, in another blog post, Landry chastises a character’s lack of empathy; they write: “Heather neglects using empathy to help Melinda feel better, and instead, abandons her.” This showcases that Landry is well aware of the power of empathetic interactions. Returning to Landry’s validating survivor letter, they very much initiate, or perhaps aim to sustain, an empathetic dialogue, “a rhetorical strategy invoked

by allies” (p. 579), and also, an illustration of Landry’s literacy learning with regards to effectively harnessing tone in their written response. Landry does so by citing specific details of the trauma that their friend experienced, clearly referring to previous disclosure(s) that they witnessed:

It’s okay to shake and cry when they flash through your memories. It’s okay to fear going back to the group home, but I promise you will never be going back. You will never have your hair cut in your sleep, your skin clawed, your arms slashed, by those children again.

This recollection reinforces that Landry is an effective witness to traumatic testimony, “an act of love” because it “involves the deliberate attendance to people, seeing and taking notice of that which they believe is meaningful” (Love, 2016, p. 239). Recalling details of the trauma demonstrates Landry’s attentiveness to witnessing difficult stories and to “protect [the story’s] place in the world” (p. 239). Further, the use of repetition here - the repeated phrase “it’s okay” - is a significant stylistic device; “repetition is meaning. Repetition is always meaningful” (Rogers, 1987, p. 584). This repetition, a kind of echoing, perhaps suggests that (1) Landry is employing their learning about the effectiveness of repetition in persuasive prose and in poetry, as well as (2) it might represent how Landry is “attuned to [a] beating heart,” and represents a kind of “stead[iness]” (Ronnberg & Martin, 2010, p. 674) for them. Further, Ahmed (2017) speaks to the damage heteronormativity does by means of repetition, likening it to “a chair that acquires its shape by the repetition of some bodies inhabiting it” (p. 123), and so, it is possible that Landry is using the stylistic device of repetition in their writing to insist upon a counter-narrative, in this case, to stigma surrounding mental health struggles and trauma. Finally, Landry’s ally communication in this letter is overall an example of how “diversity workers are communication workers” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 95).

Landry also exhibited allyship in classroom dialogue. During the study, and for much of the time I taught them, Landry sat with their friend, Ellie (pseudonym). In one moment, Ellie was terribly upset after receiving angry text messages from a friend who had recently moved. He was accusing Ellie of “expecting too much from him” and “pressuring him” to maintain their friendship while he trying to fit in at his new school. Then, he accused Ellie of “not really understanding [him]” because he is a trans man and so, because Ellie is a cisgender woman, she will never truly “get” him. I sat with Ellie and Landry, listening as Ellie tearfully relayed the story; all the while, Landry rubbed Ellie’s back and nodded supportively. As we read the texts, Landry closely inspected them, and continued listening attentively – arguably engaging in what Keating (2009) deems as important intersectional work - “listening with raw openness” (p. 92). They also made brief, supportive comments but were careful to focus on hearing Ellie, to avoid speaking “for... loved ones without their consent while also creating spaces in which [they] can be called on as allies when desired” (Hunt & Holmes, 2015, p. 168). As well, “Even experienced allies aren’t always sure what to say or do” but one “path to support and empowerment” is: “Do listen and ask how you can help” (Gaffney, 2016, p. 46). When Ellie and Landry took up my offer to take a walk privately, I suspected that Landry shared some insight about what Ellie’s friend might be going through as a result of their transgender identity experience. Likely, despite how experiences with gender identities carry different valence

for each individual, Landry had some important connected personal insights to share. When they returned, they were smiling and Ellie assured me that she felt “much better,” likely due to Landry’s efforts to “listen deeply” (Gaffney, 2016, p. 48) and probably, their informed insights. This encounter is perhaps also indicative of Landry’s literacy learning in the *Speak* unit; Melinda, as discussed, feels completely abandoned. Because she knows no one will listen to her, she silences herself. Landry’s deep listening here suggests that she is transferring her learning from the novel to a real-world situation by carefully attending to someone in pain.

As Landry wrote in their final assignment for the unit: “Teenagers are usually afraid... they stay silent because they are scared, want to believe they’re strong enough not to need help, or because no one will help them.” Therefore, allyship is one manifestation of equity and diversity work that is productively ‘wilful,’ and inspires ‘killjoy’ identities (Ahmed, 2017) that might help combat the fear that Landry refers to here. However, Landry also engaged in accomplice work, which some scholars deem to be more significant.

### *Accomplice Work*

In addition to ally work, Landry also demonstrated that they are an accomplice – behaviour which contributes to their authoring of themselves as an equity and/or diversity officer - and perhaps more so, a feminist killjoy (Ahmed, 2017) demonstrating that “The diversity worker could be described as an institutional killjoy” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 99). An accomplice might also be considered a ‘critical ally’ - someone who “sees [their] responsibility as being always, necessarily, a commitment to destabilizing the prevailing relations of power that structure [their] praxis” (McGloin, 2016, p. 841). As the Indigenous Action Media (2015) assert, accomplices are important because “there are so many so-called allies” and allyship does not go far enough: “Ally has also become an identity, disembodied from any real mutual understanding of support” (p. 85). They posit that an accomplice is willing to go places that allies are not; “Accomplices aren’t afraid to engage in uncomfortable, unsettling, and/or challenging debates or discussions” (p. 89) and “accomplices are realized through mutual consent and build trust” (p. 90). Powell and Kelly (2017) are also aligned with this understanding of accomplice work, arguing, “the core idea that separates... allies from... accomplices is *risk*” (p. 43). As such, Sheridan’s (2017) suggestion, that “the concept of accomplice provides a way of “becoming unstuck” and creates the potential to move from inability and inaction to dynamic existence” (p. 18), is compelling. Ultimately, Landry certainly demonstrated not only allyship but their “*unstuckness*,” their accomplice work as well in a few key moments during the study.

To begin with, Landry certainly took up Indigenous Action Media’s call for engaging in “uncomfortable... discussions” (p. 89). For instance, at the risk of becoming this classroom killjoy - the one at risk of making people say, “oh here [they] go” (p. 99) - Landry regularly took it upon themselves to contribute more than was required on the class blog. In one instance, they very mindfully called attention to a peer’s binary thinking. Here, Landry authors their diversity/equity worker role through accomplice practice because they attempt to “generat[e] the right image for the organization [in this case, the classroom], by correcting the wrong one” (p. 105). Camille (pseudonym) wrote a thoughtful post about a video clip we watched of a female sports reporter being interrupted by two men screaming obscenities and promoting sexual assault. Camille stated: “It’s offensive and degrading to both genders and we see it all the time in our world and apparently it has become ‘okay.’”

In her lengthy response, Camille demonstrates intertextual literacy skills by extending her stance to her own observations and experiences. Landry posted a “strategic work” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 97) response, perhaps risking “equity fatigue” (p. 98) by using the opportunity to teach the class about being mindful of terms when discussing gender:

Your comment looks really good. I agree with this 100%. One thing though, the term “both genders” is a little constructed as there are more than two genders (I assume you mean male and female only). There are actually very, very many, and the term “all genders” would be more appropriate.

As Powell and Kelly (2017) argue, “One of the risks we are taking as accomplices in the classroom is the risk of vulnerability” (p. 53). Landry risked vulnerability in order to take advantage of a teachable moment to “call out” gender binaries while also being very encouraging of Camille’s ideas. Though Landry’s comment was potentially a little bit “uncomfortable” (Indigenous Action Media, 2015, p. 89), something of a “*risk*” (Powell & Kelly, 2017, p. 43), Landry also understands that exhibiting respect and “building trust” (Indigenous Action Media, 2015, p. 90) while doing accomplice work effects change. Landry does not attack, but rather, validates Camille’s excellent comment while also offering a bit of extra insight in their “pushy work” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 107). When it comes to discussing gender in class, Landry exhibits how, in doing diversity work, “When we do not recede into the background, when we stand out or stand apart, we can bring the background into the front” (p. 132).

Another example of Landry’s accomplice work was during a group activity about the bystander approach as allyship (Cares et al., 2015). We looked at a party scenario called “It’s time...to help a friend” where a young female goes off with an unknown male, alone. Her friends see her leave with him and consider an intervention. The students worked together to brainstorm and recorded their ideas on sticky notes to be posted in the class for discussion. Verbal discussion is important because, as DeTurk (2011) found, “the [most] prevalent, rhetorical strategy invoked by allies was *dialogue*” (p. 579). Many students spoke from experience because they had been in such scenarios. For example, Landry’s group – of which I observed they were a clear discussion leader - demonstrated that they thought that “direct action is best” (Indigenous Action Media, 2015, p. 90) by discussing how the friends “could lead the girl away from the guy while her friends distract the guy” or “could accompany the girl and the guy outside with her friends to make sure nothing happens.” They demonstrated that they were “... *compelled to become accountable and responsible to each other*” (p. 90).

Next, to return to Landry’s survivor letter, they conclude with a plea for the recipient to accept their ongoing support and to particularly reach out during flashbacks:

You will remember these [abuses] at times and they will frighten you, but please remember that you do not have to be alone until you can manage to push them to the back of your mind once again. You are not alone! If you need someone to be there, to silently hold you in their arms until the pain stops, there will be someone there for you. You are going to be okay, I promise.

Here, Landry’s insistence on “silently” holding them is especially compelling; perhaps this

is in response to a previous request by the recipient. Regardless, “silence, or non-speech, is a text in itself” (Henry, 1998, p. 236) and so, Landry demonstrates that not only do they understand the importance of ally communication, but further, to act as an accomplice and simply *be there* - to stand by their friend’s side in the face of trauma. Arguably, Landry is offering to “maintain[.]... strategic silence and develop[.] strategies of resistance” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 36). In fact, the issue of silence is one that arose in Landry’s excellent creative writing during the unit, particularly, in their poetry writing. In a piece called “Run run,” they write: “Chaining my ankles to the ground, never making any sound as/ my wings are silent and my soul has been cursed/ Oh when will this awful lie be reversed?” This poem overall details a traumatic experience, and is perhaps reflective of the ordeal that Landry’s friend endured. Landry explains that the “speaker [is] describing themselves in some kind of pain, and how their life is changing in a grotesque way. They begin to enquire about who they are... [that] the real them is locked away on the inside.” The image of “silent wings” is particularly incisive because wings carry many symbolic possibilities including “boundless freedom,” a means to “transcend the ordinary world by leaving the earth and the weight of the body” because they “lift us” (Ronnberg & Martin, 2010, p. 240). Further, wings represent the ability to see from multiple perspectives - from above and below at the same time, thus functioning to connect the two realms, and as Ronnberg and Martin (2010) argue, “intuition and inspiration seem to arrive unexpectedly on wings out of thin air” and so, they are “a sign of any creative act” (p. 240). All of these possibilities certainly connect to Landry’s accomplice work because their return to the notion of a powerful “silence” that shows up in their letter and poetry writing. This is not a “desperate attempt to make something out of nothing,” but rather, I align myself with Mazzei (2003) who urges that: “we as researchers need to be carefully attentive to what is not spoken, not discussed, not answered, for in those absences is where the very fat and rich information is yet to be known and understood” (p. 358). As such, this poetry perhaps signals Landry’s commitment to creativity, connection, freedom, ‘lifting’ others, and transcending confines of the physical body.

As a final note, Landry’s accomplice work also took place outside our classroom and unit of study on at least two occasions. First, seemingly channelling Ahmed’s (2017) argument that “We have to make adjustments to an existing arrangement in order to open institutions up to those who have been historically excluded from them” (p. 109), Landry and a friend decided that our school needed to be better educated on the diversity of gender and sexual identities. They demonstrate how “When we are in question, we question” (p. 133). In response, they arguably engaged in the diversity work of “institutional polishing” (Ahmed, p. 102) that made a significant impact; they started an advocacy and awareness campaign, met with administration, and then created posters with definitions of different identities such as “gender-fluid” and “pansexual” - two identities of Landry’s that they felt most students and teachers didn’t understand. Like Ahmed’s (2017) diversity worker, Landry was “attempting to transform an institution” and did so because they “didn’t quite inhabit the norms of the institution”; thus, Landry challenged the heteronormativity of our school by augmenting the (literal) “brick walls” that they “come up against” (p. 91) in our school by papering them with educative posters. I was asked to confer with Landry and the other student to proofread the posters and offer support for their campaign - or, “visceral encounter” (p. 136) - although my support was not needed because both of them are excellent writers. These posters were displayed all over the school during the time of this

study, and demonstrate Landry authoring themselves as a “diversity or equity officer[.]... who keep[s] pushing; otherwise things do not happen” (p. 109) and a resistor of “the hardenings of history” (p. 91). Additionally, Landry also shared on the class blog that they do not tolerate hateful speech or behaviour from their parents. We had just read a chapter in *Speak* where a student walks out of class in protest because his teacher is racist. I had posted an invitation for students to share what social justice issue they would ‘walk out for.’ Landry disclosed:

I have actually walked out on my parents several times for a number of things. Mainly, I... argu[e] with them about how they’re transphobic, homophobic, sexist, or ableist. It leaves quite the effective impression.

Here, Landry demonstrates that even in their own home, they are willing to take risks to stand up for vulnerable folks across a number of communities. This disclosure, which describes a far more severe response than seen in class, is perhaps evidence of how Landry as a diversity worker “‘tr[ies] on” different styles or methods of argumentation” by naming particular forms of oppression and demonstrating how “words become tools; things you can do things with” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 98), in this case, creating what they call an “effective impression.” Landry is thus doing painful but important accomplice work as a diversity and/or equity officer in their family institution because “youth voice can provide a significant impetus for parents to re-think their attitudes and thereby become allies” (Tasker, Peter, & Horn, 2014, p. 307). Further, this moment might also be understood as Landry, as a “[diversity] practitioner, claim[ing] a home” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 100).

Ultimately, Landry paired their allyship with accomplice work, proving to be a force for transformation. Landry was fearless during many difficult moments in the study; from risking their perception in the class as a something of a ‘killjoy’ to speak up when problematic discussions on gender were unfolding, to demonstrating a willingness to intervene in a potentially dangerous incident of gender violence, exhibiting strength and offering to support a traumatized friend, and even initiating education and advocacy campaigns, promoting ideas that their own parents didn’t agree with.

### *Concluding Thoughts*

I am grateful to have taught Landry. A major learning piece for myself was understanding just how much students have to teach us Landry’s fulfilling of the role(s) of Ahmed’s (2017) diversity and/or equity officer by way of their ally and accomplice work – how they exercised a kind of intersectional feminism wherein we “pick each other up” (p. 1) - was inspiring to witness and, hopefully, nurture. Educators and students alike have a lot to learn from students such as Landry - the ‘killjoys’ who enliven learning and spark important change in class dynamics and beyond.

On my last day of teaching, Landry was one of the students who made a very-much appreciated special effort to offer multiple goodbye visits to my classroom. At the end of that afternoon, for the first time, I gave up the fight and let the tears flow following the final bell before summer vacation and my move, offering well wishes and hugs to all the students who stopped by for a final quick chat. I remember Landry’s quick wave and smile before barrelling down the hall at an as always, astonishing pace. They graduated from high school last spring and from what I understand now, are pursuing a career as a freelance

writer and artist - two passions that I am certain they will thrive with. Like Taylor (2009), I feel I have “benefitted from personal [teacher-student] connection, drawing from my own social networks” (p. 199), to enhance my understanding in this study. I am so grateful to have learned from Landry, and my hope is that this paper has in a small way, revealed one gender fluid’s meaningful responses to a trauma story, and demonstrated how some gender-fluid students might bring a particularly impactful insight to learning when exploring issues such as gendered violence and identity.

### References

- Ahmed, S. (2017). *Living a feminist life*. Georgia: Duke University Press.
- Ahmed, S. & Swan, E. (2006). Doing diversity. *Policy Futures in Education*, 4(2), 96-100.
- Anderson, L. H. (1999). *Speak*. New York, NY: Douglas & McIntyre.
- Andrew-Gee, E. (2016, December 24). In the office of the poet. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A20.
- Banks, C. A., Pliner, S. M., & Hopkins, M. B. (2013). Intersectionality and paradigms of privilege. In K. A. Case (Ed.). *Deconstructing privilege: Teaching and learning as allies in the classroom* (pp. 102-114). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bartholomaeus, C. & Riggs, D. (2017). Whole-of-school approaches to supporting transgender students, staff, and parents. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, doi: 10.1080/15532739.2017.1355648
- Brill, S. & Pepper, R. (2008). *The Transgender child: A handbook for families and professionals*. San Fransisco, CA: Cleis Press Inc.
- Brown, K. T. (2015). Perceiving allies from the perspective of non-dominant group members: Comparisons to friends and activists. *Current Psychology*, 34(4), 713-722.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Caruth, C. (1991). Introduction. *The American Imago*, 48(1), 1–12.
- Caruth, C. (Ed.). (1995). *Trauma: Explorations in memory*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Case, K. A. (Ed.). (2013). *Deconstructing Privilege: Teaching and Learning as Allies in the Classroom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Case, K. A. (Ed.). (2017). *Intersectional pedagogy: Complicating identity and social justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Case, K. A. & Lewis, M. K. (2017). Teaching intersectional psychology in racially diverse settings. In K. A. Case (Ed.). *Intersectional Pedagogy: Complicating identity and social justice* (pp. 129-149). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Chu, A. L. (2017). Study in blue: Trauma, affect, event. *Women & Performance: A journal of feminist theory*, 27(3), 301-315.
- Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
- Collins, P. H. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of black feminist thought. *Social Problems*, 33(6), 14-32.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139-167.
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*

- approaches* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- de Jong, D. (2014). "I think it would be a very sensitive topic..." School, social work, gender variance, and the silencing of differences. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 24(7), 869-879.
- de Jong, D. (2015). "He wears pink leggings almost everyday, and a pink sweatshirt..." How school social workers understand and respond to gender variance. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 32(3), 247-255.
- DeTurk, S. (2011). Allies in action: The communicative experiences of people who challenge social injustice on behalf of others. *Communication Quarterly*, 59(5), 569-590.
- Indigenous Action Media. (2015). Accomplices not allies. In C. Milstein (Ed.) *Taking sides: Revolutionary solidarity and the poverty of liberalism*. (pp. 85-96). Oakland, CA: AK Press.
- Equal Rights Trust. (2016). Interview: Kimberlé Crenshaw and Patricia Schulz. *The Equal Rights Review*, 16, 207-219.
- Fontanella, L., Maretti, M., Sarra, A. (2014). Gender fluidity across the world: A multilevel item response theory approach. *Quality & Quantity*, 48(5), 2554-2568.
- Fox, R. K. (2015). Is he a girl? Meeting the needs of children who are gender fluid. In *Discussions on sensitive issues* (pp. 161-176). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. doi:10.1108/S0270-402120150000019009
- Frohard-Dourlent, H., Dobson, S., Clark, B. A., Doull, M., Saewyc, E. M. (2017). "I would have preferred more options": Accounting for non-binary youth in health research. *Nursing Inquiry*, 24(1), 1-9.
- Gaffney, C. (2016). Anatomy of an ally. *Education Digest*, 82(3), 43-48.
- Goodrich, K. M., & Luke, M. (2014). Queering education in response to the needs of LGBTQQA students in P-12 schools. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 61(3), 361-365.
- Goswami, N., O'Donovan, M. M., & Yount, L. (2016). Introduction to why race and gender still matter: An intersectional analysis. In N. Goswami, M. M. O'Donovan, & L. Yount (Eds.) *Why race and gender still matter: An intersectional approach* (pp. 1-12). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Henry, A. (1998). "Speaking up and speaking out": Examining "voice" in a reading/writing program with adolescent African Canadian girls. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 30(20), 233-252.
- Henry, A. (2011). Feminist theories in education. In S. Tozer, B. P. Gallegos, A. M. Henry, M. Bushnell Greiner, P. Groves Price. (Eds.), *Handbook of research in the social foundation of education*. New York: Routledge.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hunt, S. & Holmes, C. (2015). Everyday decolonization: Living a decolonized queer politics. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 19(2), 154-172.
- Keating, A. (2009). From intersections to interconnections: Lessons for transformation from *This bridge called my back: Radical writings from women of colour*. In M. T. Berger & K. Guildroz (Eds.), *The intersectional approach: Transforming the academy through race, class, and gender* (pp. 81-99). Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Laura, C. T. (2016). *Intimate inquiry: A love-based approach to qualitative research*.

- Critical Questions in Education*, 7(3), 215-231.
- Leggo, C. (2004). Narrative inquiry: Honouring the complexity of the stories we live. *Brock Education*, 14(1), 97-111.
- Leggo, C. (2012). *Sailing in a concrete boat: A teacher's journey*. The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Freedom, CA: Crossing.
- Luft, R. E. (2009). Intersectionality and the risk of flattening difference: Gender and race logics, and the strategic use of antiracist singularity. In M. T. Berger & K. Guildroz (Eds.), *The intersectional approach: Transforming the academy through race, class, and gender* (pp. 100-117). Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Luke, A. (2012). Critical literacy: Foundational notes. *Theory Into Practice*, 51(1), 4-11.
- Matsuno, E. & Budge, S. L. (2017). Non-binary/genderqueer identities: A critical review of the literature. *Current Sexual Health Reports*, 9(3), 116-120.
- Mazzei, L. A. (2003). Inhabited silences: In pursuit of a muffled subtext. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(3), 355-368.
- McGloin, C. (2016). Critical allies and feminist praxis: Rethinking dis-ease. *Gender and Education*, 28(7), 839-850.
- McQueeney, K. (2016). Teaching domestic violence in the new millennium: Intersectionality as a framework for social change. *Violence Against Women*, 22(12), 1463-1475.
- Minsheu, R. (2015). Lost in place: An adolescent case of gender fluidity and secondary trauma. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 19(2), 201-208.
- Mitra, S. (2015). 'It takes six people to make a mattress feel light...': Materializing pain in *Carry that weight* and sexual assault activism. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 25(3), 386-400.
- Moore, A. & Begoray, D. (2017). The last block of ice: Trauma literature in the high school classroom. *Journal of Adult and Adolescent Literacy*, 61(2), 173-18.
- Munin, A. & Speight, S. L. (2010). Factors influencing the ally development of college students. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 43(2), 249-264.
- Nicolazzo, Z. (2016). 'It's a hard line to walk': Black non-binary trans\* collegians' perspectives on passing, realness, and trans\*-normativity. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 29(9), 1173-1188.
- Núñez, A. (2014). Employing multilevel intersectionality in educational research: Latino identities, contexts, and college access. *Educational Researcher*, 43(2), 85-92.
- Powell, J. & Kelly, A. (2017). Accomplices in the academy in the age of Black Lives Matter. *Everyday Practices of Social Justice*, 6(3), 42-65.
- Richards, C., Bouman, W. P., Seal, L., Barker, M. J., Nieder, T. O., & T'Sjoen, G. (2016). Non-binary or genderqueer genders. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 28(1), 1369-1627.
- Rich, A.C. (2003). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian experience (1980). *Journal of Women's History*, 15(3), 11-48.
- Risman, B. (2017). Raising the visibility of gender-nonconformists. *Contexts*, 16(2), 72-74.
- Ressler, P. & Chase, B. (2009). EJ in focus: Sexual identity and gender variance: Meeting the educational challenges. *The English Journal*, 98(4), 15-22.

- Rogers, R. (1987). Freud and the semiotics of repetition. *Poetics Today*, 8(3/4), 579- 590.
- Ronnberg, A. & Martin, K. (2010). *The book of symbols: Reflections on archetypal images*. Cologne, Germany: TASHEN.
- Sheridan, R. S. (2017). *Pedagogy of accomplice: Navigating complicity in pedagogies aimed toward social justice* (doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2390&context=dissertations>
- Smagorinsky, P. (2013). What does Vygotsky provide for the 21st- century language arts teacher? *Language Arts*, 90(3), 192–204.
- Solórzano, D. G. & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44.
- Sykes, H. (2004). Genderqueer: Transphobia and homophobia in schools. *Orbit*, 34(1), 21-23.
- Tasker, T. B., Peter, C. R., & Horn, S. S. (2014). Parents’ attitudes about safe school policies and practices: Repositioning parents as youth allies through a rights-based framework. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 11(4), 299-309.
- Taylor, Y. (2009). Interesting intersections? Researching class, gender, and sexuality. In M. T. Berger & K. Guidroz (Eds.). *The intersectional approach: Transforming the academy through race, class, & gender* (pp. 193-209). Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Yenika-Agbaw, V. (2017). Re-imagining an alternative life after the Darfur war: Writing as emancipatory practice. In H. Johnson, J. Mathis, & K. G. Short (Eds.). *Critical content analysis of children’s and young adult literature* (pp. 106-121). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Yin, R. (2013). Validity and generalizations in future case study evaluations. *Evaluation*, 19(3), 321–332.
- Zamani-Gallaher, E. M. (2017). Conflating gender and identity: The need for gender-fluid programming in community colleges. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 179, 89-99.

#### *Author Biography*

**Amber Moore** is a SSHRC-funded PhD candidate and Killam Laureate at the University of British Columbia studying language and literacy education with the Faculty of Education. Her research interests include adolescent literacy, feminist pedagogies, teacher education, and trauma literature, particularly YA sexual assault narratives. She also enjoys writing poetry and creative nonfiction. Email: [amberjanellemoore@gmail.com](mailto:amberjanellemoore@gmail.com)