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<th>Pre-service teachers</th>
<th>Knotts</th>
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<td>Elementary pre-service teachers and homophobia: Curricular changes making a difference</td>
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Abstract
This study describes research done with elementary pre-service teachers and the Education Outreach Project of the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles (GMCLA). The study summarizes research on the impact this Outreach Project had on these teacher candidates’ intersecting views of gender and sexuality. The presentation will share findings from this case study and the Project’s implementation in a large, comprehensive university teacher education program. It investigates how pre-service teachers bring to school their constructed meanings of gender and sexuality, and how the implementation of the Project changed pre-service teachers’ views of misogyny and homophobia. This study continues a dialogue about how to address issues of gender and sexuality in the classroom and how elementary school teachers might better be able to approach these topics in standards-driven appropriate ways.

Elementary pre-service teachers and homophobia:
Curricular changes making a difference

This study describes research done with elementary pre-service teachers and the Education Outreach Project of the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles (GMCLA). The research summarizes the impact this Education Project had on these teacher candidates’ intersecting views of gender and sexuality.

Teachers have a fear of, and lack of experience, implementing ideas of sexuality in the classroom (Bickmore, 1999; Knotts, 2009; Macgillivray, 2004). Even if states have laws protecting school-age children from harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity, those same laws rarely if ever require teachers to implement curriculum addressing those issues (Knotts, 2009). If administrators or teachers attempt to implement a curriculum addressing social change, it is often seen as radical or unnecessary (Deal & Patterson, 1999; Fullan, 1991, 1993, 2001; Skelton, 2007). Parental and social influences from the larger social/cultural world also contribute to the ways teachers understand their role in delivering content to students (Goodlad, 1984; Yanow, 1996). It is in this convoluted environment in which teachers operate that the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles presented their Education Outreach Project to pre-service teachers at a large, comprehensive university in Southern California.
Pre-service teachers

GMCLA’s Education Outreach Project, the A-Live Music Project (AMP), brings live music, personal testimony, and standards-driven curriculum to high school youth with the intended purpose of teaching content in innovative ways and encouraging students to think critically about personal, national, and international issues. This research study involved partnering with GMCLA in presenting curriculum on the biography of Billy Strayhorn, an African-American, gay composer from the early American Jazz Age, and his outstanding contributions both to music and the fight for Civil Rights equality. This initial AMP curriculum has now developed into further content comprised of contemporary civil rights issues, as well as biographies of other gay composers, and their histories involving immigration, religious persecution, race, and class. This study summarizes an adapted presentation of the Billy Strayhorn curriculum to elementary pre-service teachers, open-ended qualitative questions from pre- and post-assessment surveys, as well as lesson plans that the pre-service candidates created for K-5 students.

The discussion here is from a case study of the A-Live Music Project’s (AMP) implementation in a large, comprehensive public university teacher education program. It investigates how pre-service teachers bring to school their constructed meanings of gender and sexuality, and how the implementation of the Project changed students’ views of misogyny and homophobia, in theory, but not in practice. This study continues a dialogue about how to better address issues of gender and sexuality in the classroom and how elementary school teachers might better be able to approach these topics in standards-driven appropriate ways. The study encourages further research on standards-driven curriculum around these social/cultural issues.
Pre-service teachers

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History of the Project

The mission of the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles (GMCLA) is to use music and singing as a vehicle for changing hearts, minds, and attitudes (gmcla.org). GMCLA creates productions and performs music that reaches people with a message of unity that celebrates diversity, rather than condemning it. GMCLA was formed in 1979 as a volunteer effort of 99 gay men from all over the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area, and has grown in size, gained professional artistic and administrative staff, toured nationally and internationally, released fourteen CDs, and appeared with numerous stage, film, and television celebrities, and also appeared on several television broadcasts (i.e., Will & Grace, Six Feet Under, MadTV).

GMCLA has also had many ‘firsts’ in its 30-year history. GMCLA was the first gay men’s chorus to perform for a sitting President of the United States: Bill Clinton, in 1999. The Chorus was the first gay men’s chorus to tour central Europe in 1991, the first openly gay chorus to be broadcast over Russian television in 1999, and the first openly gay chorus to tour South America.

GMCLA’s A-Live Music Project (AMP) is an attempt to address the fact that almost one-third of all California youth in grades seven to 11 have been the victims of bullying or harassment based on their actual or perceived race or ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation (GLSEN, 2007). Eight percent of California students report being targeted for harassment because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, according to the 2004 Safe Place to Learn report issued by the California Safe Schools Coalition and the 4-H Center for Youth Development at UC Davis. In addition, even if not the targets of harassment themselves, more than 91 percent of all youth in schools report hearing students make negative comments based on sexual orientation (GLSEN, 2007). AMP has been created in response to the fact that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, or those perceived to be, are
Pre-service teachers disproportionately targeted as victims of hate crimes outside of schools (Herek, 2009). According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 14 percent of the hate crimes committed in 2005 were motivated by the victim’s sexual orientation (FBI, 2009).

California has a number of laws addressing perceived gender identity and sexual orientation in the schools [AB 537, AB 394, SB 777]. As early as 2000, California enacted a law, AB537: The Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act, that addresses harassment in the schools based on gender identity and sexual orientation (California Penal Code, 2005). In 2007, two additional laws were passed: the Safe Place to Learn Act, AB 394, and the Student Civil Rights Act, SB 777 (Equality California, 2008). The Safe Place to Learn Act attempts to enforce what AB537 did not by protecting youth, including those who identify as LGBT in California public schools, by ensuring that the state’s nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policies are rigorously enforced. This Act requires the state to actively monitor school district compliance of the already existing anti-bias law (i.e., The Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000).

The Student Civil Rights Act establishes consistent civil rights protections in all public education programs and protects students from harassment and bullying. It also maintains that curriculum that is discriminatory or biased against LGBT people and other protected groups be prohibited. These recently passed laws, however, are being fought by a coalition of anti-LGBT activists in an attempt to undo student safeguards guaranteed by SB 777 (Campaign For Children and Families, 2007).

In response to statistics like these on LGBT harassment and the current state of legislation in the state of California, GMCLA developed an Education Outreach Project, titled the A-Live Music Project (AMP). AMP brings a personal and human connection to LGBT issues for high school students by including personal testimony from singing
Pre-service teachers Knotts members that is aligned to the curriculum of the given presentation. Typically GMCLA sends 25 to 40 singing members to a high school site to present some version of curriculum addressing some combination of AMP's stated goals: equality, diversity, music as message, LGBT history, and social action. AMP brings to life the larger sociocultural context of civil rights issues by presenting the music and biographies of outstanding gay American composers, or thematically addressing any of a number of the Project's stated goals. The Project brings live music and standards-driven curriculum to youth with the express purpose of teaching content in innovative ways. The A-Live Music Project encourages students to think critically and construct their own social meanings, relating these to personal, national, and international issues. GMCLA has performed AMP in five southern California school districts, for audiences ranging from 25 to over five-hundred students and teachers.

In addition to thematic issues of civil rights, the A-Live Music Project oftentimes focuses on the lives and music of various composers (i.e., Leonard Bernstein, Marc Blitzstein, Stephen Sondheim, Billy Strayhorn) highlighting themes such as: racism, homophobia, escape from persecution and violence, poverty, and music as salvation. If focused on a composer, the presentations typically consist of live choral performance of several musical selections and short talk-spots to tell the biographical stories of the renowned American composers behind the music. Men from the chorus are also assigned the task of sharing experiences from their own personal life stories in order to make real and concrete the many issues raised in the biographies of the composers. These brief testimonials are meant to bring the potentially detached and disconnected stories of the composers into a vivid and personal context related to the particular Chorus member sharing the story.
Pre-service teachers

This study summarizes an adapted and innovative presentation to elementary pre-service teachers. Moving the presentation to the university site, and targeting pre-service teachers, opened the possibility of GMCLA potentially bringing this presentation beyond the high school setting. This study summarizes the experience of 49 elementary pre-service teachers at a large, comprehensive, public university in southern California. The study used open-ended qualitative questions from pre- and post-assessment surveys, as well as lesson plans created for K-5 students.

**Literature Review**

*Teachers and Sexuality*

Teachers are conflicted when attempting to determine how best to present and frame gay and lesbian issues in the classroom, or whether to present them at all (Kempner, 2003; Lipkin 1999, 2004; Sears, 1999). There is little agreement as to how best to approach the issue of sexuality in the schools. Foulks (1999), however, presents the three most common perspectives of teachers as being the biological approach, the religious approach, and the societal/lifestyle approach.

The first notion is framing gay and lesbian issues in a biological approach. Teachers who support this approach and want to confront gay and lesbian issues at school feel that accurate information and clarification of misunderstandings in an objective framework is necessary for instruction. Teachers who support this approach, and feel that schools should not confront these issues, argue that these topics are best addressed at home and should be the responsibility of the family (Foulks).

Foulks (1999) also discusses proponents of the second paradigm, the religious approach. Teachers who support this approach feel that gay and lesbian issues at school should be
Pre-service teachers presented in a framework of broadening awareness to different beliefs and lifestyles with an emphasis on respect and acceptance. Religious approach proponents who do not want to instruct on these issues feel that often homosexuality can run counter to prevailing religious beliefs, is morally wrong, and is an inappropriate subject for the schools.

The third framework is the societal/lifestyle approach. Proponents of this ideology believe that since these issues are being addressed in the larger society through the media, the law, and general culture, then they cannot afford to be ignored in the schools. Proponents believe that these issues should be presented in a framework of respect, with tactics for disagreement of belief systems, and creating an atmosphere of safety for discussion. Proponents for this approach who do not want these issues addressed in school feel that children, especially elementary children, should maintain their innocence and not be exposed to sexual issues, and that the responsibility for discussion falls to the family (Foulks).

It would follow that whether a teacher is gay or straight would certainly influence which of these approaches might be adopted. The sexual orientation of a teacher also certainly would seem to impact how a teacher might want to implement these approaches, either to discuss or not discuss these issues in school. Unfortunately, studies of gay teachers are difficult to conduct, as there is still such social stigma to being an openly gay or lesbian teacher in school (Harbeck, 1992; Jennings, 2005; Kissen, 1996). Therefore it is difficult to know how the sexuality of a teacher influences which of these approaches might best impact the school environment. There have been studies, however, on teachers and how their sexuality generally influences the educational environment both negatively (Jennings, 1994) and positively (Jennings, 1994, 2005; Sears, 1992).
Pre-service teachers

There is also the difficulty of a teacher’s gender. Haywood (1996) points out that there can be perceived sexuality and age related hierarchies that reorient themselves depending on the gender of both student and teacher. For instance, young boys often sexualize a female teacher through the use of overt or covert language. In addition, there is sometimes an interrelational dynamic of sexual disciplining between students and teachers when, for instance, male teachers, through flirting, can control female students in the class. In addition, the issue of curricular materials addressing sexuality, for instance, often depict minority sexualities negatively or not at all (Herr, 1997; Whatley, 1992; Whitlock & DiLapi, 1983).

**Pre-Service Teachers**

There is scant evidence about what pre-service teachers believe about sexual orientation prior to becoming teachers. Jennings and Sherwin (2008) found that only 55.6% of teacher preparation program even address issues of sexual orientation, and even then the issue is embedded in foundations courses and only somewhat couched in multicultural education. Elsbree and Wong (2007) did find teacher preparation programs that address sexual orientation by using the play “The Laramie Project” as a pedagogical tool to purposefully disrupt heteronormative and homophobic constructs. Using the dramatic arts allowed for these pre-service teachers to change their thinking on the need to address issues of sexual orientation and homophobia in the schools. Petrovic and Rosiek (2003) investigated Christian pre-service teachers and how they negotiate and explore their heteronormative suppositions and how that might affect their teaching. What is known about pre-service teachers is that very little is being done to consciously address sexual orientation as a systemic demographic variable for new teachers to consider as they begin their teaching careers.
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Methods

This study summarizes the experience of 49 elementary pre-service teachers at a large, comprehensive, public university in southern California. The study used open-ended qualitative questions from pre- and post-assessment surveys, as well as lesson plans created by those pre-service teachers for K-5 students.

The study used two sections of a Social Studies and Performing Arts Methodology course in a post baccalaureate teacher preparation program for Elementary Education (candidates are studying to get their preliminary teaching credential to teach in the elementary schools). This course seemed in perfect alignment to the AMP curriculum, as the course has a stated purpose to help pre-service teachers better understand how to integrate the performing arts into the Social Studies curriculum. Between the two course sections, there were 49 pre-service teachers enrolled: 43 female, 6 male, with ages ranging from 21 to 50, with the majority of candidates (39) under the age of 26. The candidates were diverse ethnically, with 57% White, 31% Latino/a, 6% Asian, and 6% bi-racial.

A pre-assessment survey was administered to both sections. The pre-assessment survey asked questions of these pre-service teachers that discussed the value of social justice oriented curriculum generally, to including issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation into the curriculum, in addition to any specific knowledge they had of Billy Strayhorn, jazz music, and the Harlem Renaissance. This AMP curriculum was presented to both sections of the course. 12 singing members of GMCLA, the Artistic Director, and Assistant Director came to two different class sessions of each course; the class sessions were two weeks apart. GMCLA presented an adapted version of the Billy Strayhorn curriculum, which focuses on issues of race, class, and sexual orientation as the driving demographic features in Strayhorn’s life. Each presentation was
Pre-service teachers

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one and a half hours long, which included biographical history of Billy Strayhorn, live singing of Strayhorn’s music, and personal testimony from the singing members that aligned with general themes of Strayhorn’s life (growing up poor, being a minority in the larger sociocultural world, and homophobia in various facets of life: the military, marriage, and the workplace.)

Immediately after the second presentation candidates were then given a post-assessment survey with the same questions from the pre-survey regarding the value of the content (social justice oriented curriculum generally, as well as including issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation into the curriculum specifically; in addition to any specific knowledge they gained about Billy Strayhorn, jazz music, and the Harlem Renaissance). As an adapted midterm, candidates were then asked to create lesson plans that would address any of the primary issues from Strayhorn’s life (race, class, sexuality; as well as gender and the use of the arts as a vehicle for social change), aligned to Social Studies content standards, in developmentally appropriate ways for the K-5 classroom. As the opportunity to have GMCLA present this curriculum came after the semester had begun, and a standard midterm was already listed in the syllabus, candidates had the choice of either taking the already prepared standard midterm (multiple choice, short answer, etc) or completing the adapted lesson plans. A rubric for the lesson plan was distributed along with already chosen, pre-selected Social Studies content standards (Attachment A) to which the candidates were to align their lesson plans.

The major limitation to the study is that the author was in various roles: professor of record for the two courses, singing member of GMCLA, and author of the study. Candidates could have been biased in their responses knowing that the study was being conducted by their professor, who happened to also be a member of GMCLA (and presenter of the AMP curriculum). As a participant observer and researcher, action research and qualitative analysis
Pre-service teachers Knotts

certainly allows for these dual roles (Mason, 1996; Polkinghome, 1988; Schwandt, 2001), and I
believe I successfully navigated this duality and presented no untoward pressure on the
candidates to agree (or disagree) with the presentation’s focus and content. As will be discussed
further, the results of the surveys and lesson plans certainly demonstrate that the candidates
appeared to honestly engage with the presentation and their response to it.

Discussion and Analysis

Pre-assessment

The initial survey, completed a week prior to GMCLA’s arrival, yielded interesting results from the candidates. There was a general tension between candidates who perceived some value in educating for social justice (and race, class, and homophobia/sexuality specifically) and those who believed that content not specifically addressed by standards and ‘the curriculum’ be left to the purview of the home. There was a general sense (36 candidates) that addressing these issues for the K-5 classroom would be difficult, at best, and perhaps even unnecessary, until students really “understand how the world works. Kids just don’t get it.” These more negative comments also included: “Is this in the curriculum?”, “Aren’t the parents going to cover this stuff?” and the more ubiquitous, “This sounds hard.”

There were positive, more enthusiastic comments (6) like, “As new teachers we should be open to many new ideas.” These more positive candidates (all female and all students of color) shared comments that new teachers should challenge themselves to step “outside the box and off the page” and bring “real lives in to [sic] the classroom.” There were also more neutral comments (7) like, “I don’t really know what to say about some of these things.” Generally, candidates were at odds with how to appropriately present the challenging social issues of race, class, and sexuality to K-5 students.
Pre-service teachers

**Post-assessment**

The AMP presentation seemed to have profound effects on the pre-service teachers in terms of a raised consciousness and a call to social action and their willingness to approach these issues in their future classrooms. Generally, comments were coded into three major categories: Use of the Arts, Racism and Classism, and Misogyny and Homophobia. A summative look at these three major categories indicated that the pre-service teacher candidates experienced a consciousness raising and were willing, if not eager, to introduce these challenging social issues into their future classrooms.

**Use of the Arts.** There were a series of comments that simply addressed using and experiencing the arts as a pedagogical tool (26). Evaluative comments like, “You guys are really great….the vocals are really good!” and “I found the music to be awesome and I loved the performance!” are representative of the more pedestrian experience of simply listening to the music from the presentation. Other comments addressed the actual content of the music with comments like, “I learned a lot about the history of the music and Billy Strayhorn.” Other candidates experienced the presentation as a motivator for their future practice. “I can see I’d need to bring in some music and stuff to get them [the Ss] engaged.” And finally, some responses indicated an initial realization that the arts can be used in the classroom for an elevated purpose. “Easy to see how the Arts are used for social action.” These comments indicate that pre-service teachers had an immediate reaction to the use of music as a teaching tool in the delivery of the presentation.

**Racism and Classism.** Roughly the same number of candidates (24) made concrete comments about the presentation addressing the issues of race and class. In these comments there was a general sense that this kind of presentation was just “another tool in the arsenal” at
Pre-service teachers breaking down stereotypes regarding race. One male candidate said, “I feel like we do a good job addressing race in the schools.” This was echoed by several others who felt that there were “posters, Culture Days, and books that help” teachers bring up the issue of race with their students. One candidate said, “I knew that music! It’s great now that I know an African American wrote it! Another great role model for kids.” The issue of class, socioeconomic status, and growing up poor resonated with candidates as well. “It just goes to show that we don’t have enough role models from poor backgrounds who grow up to do great things.” These and comments like them indicate that pre-service teachers see the value of addressing race and class in the classroom.

Misogyny and Homophobia. It is the area of sexual orientation and homophobia that seemed to resonate most with the pre-service teachers. 45 of the 49 candidates made some kind of comment regarding sexuality, homophobia, and the tacit presence of how those constructs contributed to a misogynistic culture. There were straightforward, descriptive comments like, “I’d never been in a room with that many gay guys before” and “Really great to see gay guys who can sing and also look so masculine at the same time.”1 This idea of masculinity and the male construct was also echoed in comments like, “I learned that not all gay men are flamboyant” and “You guys just seem so normal.” These comments require further deconstruction beyond the scope of this study; perceptions of masculinity and femininity, and how teachers perceive those constructs in the classroom must be evaluated further, but it is clear that pre-service teachers are coming to be trained for the profession with constructed notions of gender and sexuality.

The pre-service teachers also reflected about the personal nature of the presentation and

1 It is comments like this that made me realize that I must add individual interviews or focus group interviews to the next study because there is an obvious need to deconstruct the meaning behind terms like 'masculine' used in this context.
how much they grew personally from listening to the personal testimony of the singing members. Many candidates made comments like, “I just never really thought about how hard it was for gay people” and “Your personal stories will haunt me. Honestly, I learned to be a little more accepting and less judgmental.” There was one nonevaluative comment from a male teacher candidate who said, “I guess it takes a lot of courage to be openly gay and not ashamed.” The comment neither affirms the openly gay singers, nor does it malign them; rather there is the presence of a number of possibilities that, again, would require further study in relation to the value of a presentation like this. For instance, is this the comment of a teacher perhaps biased against homosexuality, but acknowledging the courage of the presenters in their unapologetic presence as part of an organization with ‘gay’ in its title? Is it the comment of a closeted (or even as yet unacknowledged) gay youth who sees a presentation like this and realizes the courage he might need to live openly and honestly as a gay man? Is it the comment of a straight ally merely affirming that in the larger sociocultural world, it still does require ‘courage’ to live openly and out as a gay man? Again, this answer is beyond the scope of this study, but does require further investigation and research.

What is answered, however, is the immediate reaction the pre-service teachers had in relation to feeling the need to address sexual orientation and homophobia in the classroom. An overwhelming majority (34 candidates) made comments that said teachers needed to be more proactive in their treatment and delivery of these issues. One said, “I learned more about discrimination and how severe it is. It seems like an easy leap to tie these issues to bigger issues of tolerance and diversity.” Another said, “This presentation gave me a new perspective about this issue about gay people which I think is a cool feeling. I can see this is necessary to tell kids about.” And the more concrete, “Teachers can help eliminate all the negative
There was also a distinct minority (2) of teacher candidates who felt the presentation was inappropriate and unnecessary. One said she was, “Put off and offended” and “This presentation is wrong.” Another candidate seemed to struggle with her personal beliefs and the value of the presentation by saying, “I have never hated gays and I don’t even want anything bad to happen to gays. I know that isn’t right, but I simply don’t want to believe in the same ways that you believe.” There were also a few candidates (3) who were coded as neutral and who commented on the presentation with value-free remarks like finding the presentation “Interesting” and another who said she did not feel “any different [sic] than before I knew about your program.” And echoing some of the initial comments in the pre-survey, one teacher candidate said, “I don’t see how it’s connected to my job” referencing the fact that there are no content standards that specifically address sexual orientation in the K-5 curriculum.

**Raised consciousness.** 44 pre-service teachers, however, used positive words throughout their post-assessment surveys. Words like: proud, good, amazing, impressed, cool, happy, welcome, moved, admire, open-minded, entertaining, and enlightened were used throughout their responses. These positive comments fell, generally, into three major categories: Use of the Arts, Racism and Classism, and Misogyny and Homophobia. These three areas contribute to a general raised consciousness of the pre-service teachers. “I feel like I could intelligently educate others about acceptance of gays.” The teacher candidates felt compelled to treat their teaching like social action. “I feel as teachers we must act to end all these kinds of stereotypes” and “This can be used to crush all stereotypes and eliminate all of the negative things we think about gay people” were representative of the candidates who indicated a proactive, anticipatory commitment to addressing these issues in their teaching. A comment that seemed to capture this...
Pre-service teachers sense of a raised consciousness is, “This presentation was exciting and challenging. I see how I have the opportunity to push the envelope with our kids in appropriate ways.”

Lesson Plans. In order to measure these ‘appropriate ways’ and the candidates’ understanding of how these issues could manifest in their teaching, I assigned the midterm, asking the teacher candidates to create a lesson plan addressing one of the issues captured in the presentation of Billy Strayhorn’s biography: race, class, or sexuality. The submissions yielded interesting results. Seven of the 49 candidates chose to complete the standard midterm (multiple choice, etc) and 42 chose to complete the amended midterm (attachment A) and submit a lesson plan addressing one of the issues from the presentation. Their submitted lesson plans addressed the three categories of comments found in the pre-service teachers’ post-assessment surveys: Use of the Arts, Racism and Classism, Misogyny and Homophobia. Table 1 indicates some representative examples of the general theme(s) of those lesson plans and the objectives for the K-5 students quoted from the lesson plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<tr>
<td>Use of the Arts</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>After viewing and listening to a power point presentation on the photographic art of Ansel Adams, his environmental work for the Sierra Club and national Parks, and specifically his photo book on Manzanar, the learner will complete a photo essay about a social injustice and a one paragraph summary explaining the injustice they photographed, to demonstrate the power of visual art as a mouth piece for commentary on social injustice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Following a lesson on Marian Anderson, the learner will write a reflection of at least five sentences about how racism affected Marian’s life, how it led to her singing at the Lincoln memorial, and why that concert was so important to her life and to the lives of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misogyny/Racism</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>After a lesson on which groups of people were not allowed representation or the right to vote at the time of the writing of the Constitution, the learner will answer a question about how our country would be different if one of the groups had a voice in government and answer two additional “Below the Surface” questions in their journals.</td>
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It is clear from these examples that the pre-service teachers actively took many of the
themes from the Strayhorn biography, as well as the stories from the personal testimonies of the
singers and created ways to address those themes in the K-5 classroom. There is higher order
thinking, active learning, and an attempt to address issues of social justice in each of these
representative examples. Pre-service teachers actively sought to integrate these challenging
social themes in developmentally appropriate ways into the K-5 classroom. Table 2 indicates the
ways in which those general themes were present in their submitted lesson plans.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Lesson Plan Theme</th>
<th># of Submissions</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Standard Midterm)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misogyny/Gender</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of the Arts</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classism</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia/Sexuality</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52 (double focus)</td>
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Not one lesson plan addressed the issue of sexual orientation or homophobia. The
presentation was given by the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles. It was about a gay composer
who was also Black and poor. After this presentation, 45 out of 49 candidates commented on
sexual orientation in the content of the presentation in some way. 28 said, in some way or other,
they had gained 'new perspectives' on how to address the gay stereotype in the classroom. Yet
not one candidate chose to address the issue in a lesson plan. There were a majority of
candidates who made some version of the comment, "This presentation was valuable because it
opens your mind and allows you to see things from someone else's perspective." The submitted
lesson plans indicate that there is a congruence between this perceived value in presenting the
perspective of race, class, and gender to elementary students. There is also an obvious
dissonance between this perceived value in presenting the perspective of homophobia and/or
sexuality to elementary students.
Pre-service teachers believe in the importance of a raised consciousness and instructing their students about sexual orientation and homophobia. But there is a dissonance between this raised consciousness and the ability to move toward implementation of instruction. This study captures why some of this dissonance occurs.

In a class session after the midterms were submitted and graded, I presented initial findings and the outcome of the themes of the midterms to the students. These teachers’ reactions and rationales demonstrate some congruity with the present literature. Pre-service teachers are familiar with issues of race and class and feel that there are resources available to them (Molina & Wittig, 2006; Ortiz & Harwood, 2007; Swartz, 2003). The following comment seems to capture this notion, “I’ve already seen lessons on racial issues and tolerance so it was just easier for me to come up with those ideas.” The issue of identity (Brown & Kysilka, 2002; Castells, 1997) also seemed relevant from the teachers’ comments, like, “I’m a woman so I could talk about that issue easier….And isn’t that a beginning?” Teachers teach from what they know and have experienced (identity), and this comment seems to mirror this notion.

The following two comments indicate another kind of reaction: “Well when I sat down to actually do it I just couldn’t see how I could do it” and “I totally get it. I know I need to teach about it. But this presentation just wasn’t enough to get me comfortable talking about it.” These comments capture much of what is in the present literature about fear, lack of comfort, and not having confidence in the vocabulary to address issues of sexual orientation with elementary students (Bickmore, 1999; Knotts, 2009; Macgillivray, 2004). In the safe environment of the college classroom, after two presentations from the Gay Men’s Chorus, with an openly gay professor facilitating the dialogue, these two students’ comments seem to capture this
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phenomenon: they could only say the word “it” when referring to sexuality. To even say the word ‘gay’ is difficult for some people. This lack of experience with even the word, let alone the sociocultural constructs it represents, captures a little of the difficulty in delivering instruction about sexual orientation to elementary students; or at all. It is clear that pre-service teachers are coming to be trained with constructed views of gender and sexuality (Foulks, 1999; Kempner 2003; Knotts, 2009; Quinlivan, 2006; Rienzo, Button, & Wald, 1996) and comments captured in this study (“You just seem so normal,” and “Really great to see gay guys who can sing and also look so masculine at the same time.”) seem to affirm this. And although presentations like AMP raised the consciousness regarding the need to implement instruction, when it came to writing lesson plans and intentionally planning to do this, not one pre-service teacher included issues of sexual orientation or homophobia in their lesson plans.

This study affirms Elsbree and Wong’s (2007) findings that it is possible to use the arts as a pedagogical tool to disrupt heteronormative and homophobic constructs in teacher preparation programs. Using the AMP curriculum disrupted the pre-service teachers’ constructs in theory, but did not move them to implement their new ways of thinking into their practice. Further work must be done on how believing in the need to instruct on issues of sexual orientation and homophobia is dissonant with implementation of content/curriculum regarding these issues.
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ATTACHMENT A

MIDTERM (60 points): Adapt the content of the Billy Strayhorn presentation to make it grade-level appropriate for the K-5 curriculum by:

3 pts. 1) Using one of the following standards as a beginning point.

3 pts. 2) Write a criterion-based objective for a lesson.

9 pts. 3) Write three activities that support the objective.

5 pts. 4) Write a minimum of three double-spaced pages describing how your lesson idea is:

5 pts. a. Grade-level appropriate;

15 pts. b. Addresses at least one issue: racism, homophobia, and/or classism – the three main facets presented in the biography of Billy Strayhorn’s life;

10 pts. c. Incorporates the arts;

10 pts. d. Aligns to the standard you chose.

K.1.2- Students understand that being a good citizen involves acting in certain ways by learning examples of honesty, courage, determination, individual responsibility, and patriotism in American and world history from stories and folklore.

1.4.3 - Students compare and contrast everyday life in different times and places around the world and recognize that some aspects of people, places, and things change over time while others stay the same by recognizing similarities and differences of earlier generations in such areas as work (inside and outside the home), dress, manners, stories, games, and festivals, drawing from biographies, oral histories, and folklore.

2.5 Students understand the importance of individual action and character and explain how heroes from long ago and the recent past have made a difference in others' lives (e.g., from biographies of Abraham Lincoln, Louis Pasteur, Sitting Bull, George Washington Carver, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Golda Meir, Jackie Robinson, Sally Ride).

3.4.6 - Students understand the role of rules and laws in our daily lives and the basic structure of the U.S. government by describing the lives of American heroes who took risks to secure our freedoms (e.g., Anne Hutchinson, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr.).

4.4.9 - Students explain how California became an agricultural and industrial power, tracing the transformation of the California economy and its political and cultural development since the 1850s by analyzing the impact of twentieth-century Californians on the nation's artistic and cultural development, including the rise of the entertainment industry (e.g., Louis B. Meyer, Walt Disney, John Steinbeck, Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, John Wayne).

5.7.5 - Students describe the people and events associated with the development of the U.S. Constitution and analyze the Constitution's significance as the foundation of the American republic by discussing the meaning of the American creed that calls on citizens to safeguard the liberty of individual Americans within a unified nation, to respect the rule of law, and to preserve the Constitution.