

“Coming Out Crip” in Inclusive Education

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Background/Context: *The author argues that within inclusive education’s almost obsessive focus on space, there is a tendency to ignore the ideological assumptions that undergird the curricular and extracurricular practices in schools that serve to construct certain student subjectivities as deviant, disturbing, and dangerous, thereby justifying their exclusion.*

Purpose/Objective/Research Question/Focus of Study: *Sexuality is one such discourse that challenges naïve notions of inclusion. Heteronormative in its ideological content, discourses of sexuality, being both restricted and restrictive, play a critical role in defining the “normal” child, while at the same time intervening in the most personal/private space of intimacy. The pregnant teen, the lesbian gay bisexual transsexual questioning intersex (LGBTQI) young adult, and the disabled student are some examples of children and youth for whom the mere expression of their sexuality casts them as abnormal. Thus, the author examines the dominant discourses of sexuality in the school curriculum from the critical standpoint of disability studies.*

Research Design: *Analytic essay.*

Data Collection and Analysis: *The author demonstrates how discourses of sexuality rely on the ideology of the “normate” to segregate, to exclude, and to dehumanize those sexual subjects who disregard the rules of normativity.*

Conclusions/Recommendations: *Transformative possibilities in “coming out crip” for inclusive education are discussed.*

To prevent Constance McMillen from bringing a female date to her prom, the teen was sent to a “fake prom” while the rest of her class partied at a secret location at an event organized by parents.

McMillen tells *The Advocate* that a parent-organized prom happened behind her back — she and her date were sent to a Friday night event at a country club in Fulton, Miss., that attracted only five other students. Her school principal and teachers served as chaperones, but clearly there wasn't much to keep an eye on.

"They had two proms and I was only invited to one of them," McMillen says. "The one that I went to had seven people there, and everyone went to the other one I wasn't invited to."

Two students with learning difficulties were among the seven people at the country club event, McMillen recalls. "They had the time of their lives," McMillen says. "That's the one good thing that came out of this, [these kids] didn't have to worry about people making fun of them [at their prom]."

— Neal Broverman (2010), *The Advocate*

Just as I was beginning to write this essay on inclusion, the story of 18-year-old Constance McMillen from Mississippi swept through cyberspace. McMillen's "15 minutes" happened because she, with the help of the ACLU, successfully challenged her Itawamba County Agricultural High School's prom criteria of banning prom dates of the same gender and permitting only males to wear tuxedos. Rather than changing the rules, the school administration first cancelled the prom but allowed parents to hold another private "fake prom" where, according to McMillen, only five other students attended, two of whom McMillen identified as students with learning disabilities who had also experienced a similar painful marginality in their home school.

McMillen's story illustrates the conceptual pitfalls of inclusion in educational contexts that is narrowly specific to a (special) student population (students with disabilities) and that is restricted to the superficial spatial relocation of these students in (special) classrooms. McMillen unknowingly troubles these specifics by queering crip space and cripin' queer subjectivity (McRuer, 2006). In an offhand comment inadvertently laced with some paternalism, McMillen realizes her collective marginality with students with learning disabilities in a more radical "coming out [as] crip" (McRuer, 2006, p. 33). According to Robert McRuer, the act of "coming out crip" reveals the interconnectedness of compulsory able-bodiedness and compulsory heterosexuality as disciplinary formations that function "by covering over, with the appearance of choice, a system in which there actually is no choice" (p. 8). Thus, in the very concrete

event of the "fake prom," McMillen almost accidentally realizes that compulsory heterosexuality continues to reenact its violence via compulsory able-bodiedness to assert a form of normative homogeneity that denies students the right to be different even while paying lip service to inclusive education.

I realize as I write this that I am articulating a broader vision for inclusive education than the bureaucracy of [special] education is prepared to embrace, given its persistent commitment to pathologize difference in order to provide "appropriate" services in contexts that ultimately exclude. As Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, and Valle (2011, this issue) note, inclusive education has been used almost synonymously with *special* education for students with disabilities where "the 'natural' position of this group is one of 'dis-belonging'." Moreover, with inclusive education's almost obsessive focus on space, there is a tendency to ignore the ideological assumptions that undergird the curricular and extracurricular practices that ironically serve to exclude while simultaneously touting an inclusive philosophy. In other words, even if students enjoy spatial inclusion, ideologies present in the school curriculum serve to unwittingly construct certain student subjectivities as deviant, disturbing, and dangerous, thereby justifying their exclusion.

Sexuality is one such discourse that challenges naïve notions of inclusion. The McMillen story bears this out. Heteronormative in its ideological content, discourses of sexuality, being both restricted and restrictive, play a critical role in defining the "normal" child, while at the same time intervening in the most personal/private space of intimacy. The pregnant teen, the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual Questioning Intersex (LGBTQI) young adult, and the disabled student are some examples of students for whom the mere expression of their sexuality casts them as abnormal. In this article, I will examine the dominant discourses of sexuality in the school curriculum as already represented in the research from the critical standpoint of disability studies. I will demonstrate how discourses of sexuality rely on the ideology of the "normate" to segregate, to exclude, and to dehumanize those sexual subjects who disregard the rules of normativity. Then, in the final section of this article, I will discuss the transformative possibilities in coming out crip for inclusive education.

THE POLITICS AND PITFALLS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education is, now, no longer the radical idea it was once purported to be. In fact, most schools would say that they do some form of inclusive education in which students with disabilities are included in the

least restrictive environment best suited to their educational needs. However, what that least restrictive environment may be and how that environment may be used to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities is more ambiguous. As a parent of a child in the public schools and a teacher educator, I also hear a host of complaints, almost daily, of how paying attention to students with “special” needs eats into the valuable instructional time directed toward the vast majority of “normal/regular” students in the classroom. And often the discussion hovers around the importance of moving students into spaces that will not maximize their obvious differences (among other students just like themselves) and where it is presumed they will most likely thrive. So, armed with the most recent “research-based” practices, complicated assessment procedures, and questionable accountability standards, the dominant thrust of inclusive education is efficient service delivery, to the complete exclusion of the implications of such practices on students labeled “different.” In light of these practices, Graham and Slee (2008) argue that inclusive education is now no longer a progressive educational practice because it is more often used to explain, defend, and protect the status quo.

To “include” is not necessarily to *be* inclusive (Graham & Slee, 2008), especially if one is faced with a barrage of stringent demands to “fit” in. Inclusion presupposes what the “regular” student is like, against which the Other student is measured and found wanting. Thus, according to Graham and Slee, inclusion’s preexisting notion of normativity foregrounds the exceptional characteristics of those Other students whose hypervisibility now becomes, in contradictory ways, the grounds for both radical exclusion and tentative inclusion. Moreover, the rhetoric of inclusion sets into motion a complicated arsenal of labels that far exceed the medical appellations of disability to now include categories such as ELL (English language learner), at-risk, BD/EC (behaviorally disordered/emotionally challenged), disruptive/disordered (alternative school), TAG (talented and gifted), LD (learning disabled), and the pregnant teen. Many of the students with these nonmedical labels have other characteristics that further marginalize them from “regular” schooling and bring to the fore the complex interrelationships among race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability that further serve to exclude even while they exist outside the purview of the inclusion rhetoric (Artiles, Harry, Reschly, & Chinn, 2002; Erevelles & Minear, 2010). In the face of this smorgasbord of labels whose only purpose seems to be to fine-tune its differentiation practices, the main thrust of inclusion becomes the shifting of students around on the educational chessboard (Graham & Slee)—an act that purports to make these students *less intrusive* rather than to make schools *more inclusive*.

I argue here that the rhetoric of inclusion currently in vogue does little to critique how Other students, not just students with recognizable disabilities, are excluded by the normative discourses of schooling. Constance McMillen is a case in point. McMillen was excluded from a socially significant school activity—the school prom—merely because she not only came out as lesbian but also wanted to wear a tuxedo, both actions in direct opposition to the rigid codes of heterosexual femininity/ masculinity that would not permit any other alternative. Inclusion, in this case, is not just a spatial event. Instead, it becomes a profoundly political and philosophical stance that refuses to inquire into the process by which disciplinary discourses not only manage but also exclude Other student subjectivities. Graham and Slee (2008) explained this as follows:

Inclusion functions as a panoptic mechanism through techniques which allow "the assignment to each individual his 'true' name, his 'true' place, his 'true' body, his 'true' disease. (Foucault, 1977, p. 198)

Thus when realized through normative practices that identify and make visible difference as a form of alterity to include, inclusion works to (re)secure the position and "invisibility of the center" . . . through the *normalization* of culturally specific performances as particular expressions of academic, physical, creative ability; and the naturalization of particular ways of being which are characterized by whiteness, maleness, able-bodiedness, and so on. (p. 285)

To students like Constance McMillen and her classmates with learning disabilities who attended the "fake prom," their inclusion in the school system nevertheless marked them as "deviant"—a marking that became obvious in their vocal flouting of the normative prescriptions of gender/sexual performativity. Therefore, if, as Slee (2001) argued, inclusion, as it is currently conceived, appears more as a synonym for assimilation and normalization, then we need to challenge the ways its rhetoric efficiently manages difference by allowing schools to essentially stay the same.

I argue that for inclusive education to reclaim its transformative imperative, it would have to reimagine its original intent of (re)claiming disability by producing a refreshing new script that explores the radical possibilities of "coming out crip." By "coming out crip," inclusive education would need to reject its past practices of maintaining the marginality of disability even while being represented as "the included" (Graham

& Slee, 2008, p. 285). Rather, inclusive education should harness the transformative potential of disability to make visible the ways in which compulsory able-bodiedness disciplines not just disabled students but all students who dare to celebrate their “coming out” against the debilitating normativity that structures regular schooling. This “crippin’” of inclusive education, according to McRuer (2006), would entail:

- Claiming disability *and* a disability identity politics while nonetheless nurturing a necessary contestatory relationship to that identity . . .
- Claiming the queer history of coming out—“out of the closets, into the streets”—while simultaneously talking back to the parent culture (or, for that matter, any parent culture, including disability studies or the disability rights movement) . . .
- Demanding that . . . an accessible world is possible . . .
- Insisting that, even more, a disabled world . . . is possible and desirable . . .
- Moving “beyond ramps” as Marta Russell put it [or beyond inclusion] to questions of how . . . cultures of ability or disability are conceived, materialized, spatialized and populated, or . . . mapped onto bodies marked by differences of race, class, gender, and ability. (pp. 71–72)

McRuer conceived of “crippin’” as a paradoxical event that celebrates the transgressive act of “coming out crip,” not just as “what you supposedly already are” but also “as what you are, at least, apparently not” (pp. 70–71). In other words, the political act of coming out crip provides the means of talking back to discourses of compulsory normativity. In inclusive classrooms, one such occasion for coming out crip is the volatile context of sex education—a context that is held hostage to the cult of normativity that zealously monitors the disciplinary criteria for exclusion and inclusion in the social and academic life in schools. The context of sex education provides the most fitting stage for coming out crip because compulsory (hetero)normativity cannot even conceive of the disabled student as sexual subject. As a result, this exclusion provides fertile ground for the disabled student to enact the most flamboyant act of coming out crip in order to claim a sexual subjectivity. In “outing” what was once considered un-sayable and in-visible, the cripin’ of sex education can also launch other “coming out” narratives of Other students located at the interstices of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

ABSTINENCE IN/BY INCLUSIVE CONTEXTS

Talking about "sex" in schools is difficult. What can be said about sex, who can say it, and what age group is appropriate to receive this education are subject to the control of several competing ideologies as well as to the close surveillance by competing political groups such as parents/caregivers, teachers, school management, educational policy makers, civil liberties organizations, and conservative and liberal ideologues (Allen, 2008). If and when sex is talked about in U.S. public schools, the only pedagogical conversation that is usually legally permitted is one in which the terror of desire is propagated via the proliferation of fear. Thus, the "official knowledge" of the sex curriculum is restricted to health education classes where students learn about the biology, the methodology, and the epidemiology (sexual diseases) of intimate sexual activity (Allen, 2008; Ashcraft, 2006; Farrelly, O'Brien, & Prain, 2007; Fine & McClelland, 2006; Janssen, 2009; Lamb, 2010). In her 1988 article in the *Harvard Educational Review*, Michelle Fine identified the three most pervasive discourses in the sex education curriculum: *sexuality as violence*, *sexuality as victimization*; and *sexuality as individual morality*. More than 20 years later, little has changed. In fact, in the last few years, the predominance of abstinence-only programs to the exclusion of any other competing paradigm has reduced the sex curriculum to exhorting students to simply not do "it" (Fine & McClelland).

But sexuality is so much more than just "doing it." For example, the French philosopher Michel Foucault has asked,

How is it that in a society like ours, sexuality is not simply a means of reproducing the species, the family, and the individual? Not simply a means to obtain pleasure and enjoyment? How has sexuality come to be considered the privileged place where our deepest "truth" is read and expressed? For that is the essential fact: since Christianity, the western world has never ceased saying: To know who you are, know what your sexuality is. (quoted in Shildrick, 2005, p. 332)

The sex curriculum as currently taught in our public schools, however, refuses to recognize the centrality of sexuality in young people's lives, except as something they have to be taught to fear. In doing so, this sex curriculum does little to explore the social meanings of sexuality and the implications these meanings have for the construction of student subjectivities (Fine, 1988; Fine & McClelland, 2006; Pillow, 2004). And yet this reticence to discuss sexuality in the classroom is ironic given that

sexuality is central to the everyday practices of schooling. For example, important events like the school prom, activities such as beauty walks and homecoming parades, teams such as cheerleading and the dance line, and even athletics abound with (normative) sexual imagery, (normative) sexual expectations, and (normative) sexual behaviors that in turn mediate the social relationships between students. Thus, in public education, the hidden (sex) curriculum serves as both disciplinary tool and normative social practice that orients students to “a way of being in the world” (Fisher, 2006, p. 64).

It is here, then, that the sex curriculum in public education finds itself at odds with inclusive education. Caught in the normative mantra of emphasizing the presence of sexual risk while ensuring the absence of sexual desire (Fine & McClelland, 2006), the key elements of abstinence education, as articulated via Public Law 104-193, teach that:

- abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage is the expected standard for all school-age children;
- sexual activity outside the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects; and
- a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of human sexual activity. (Wiley & Terlosky, 2000, p. 79)

The oft-repeated directive in the above law permits sexual activity to occur only within the narrow purview of heterosexual marriage—a life choice that is assumed will sustain the social, emotional, and moral (sexual) health of all students. Such a directive is not based on scientific/psychological/medical facts. Rather, the basis of these directives lie in nonscientific anecdotal research (Wiley & Terlosky) mired in ideologies of sexuality and morality that reflect the perceptions of adults’ needs and interests rather than those of students (Allen, 2008).

In stark contrast, research conducted by several scholars on students’ perceptions of the sex curriculum demonstrated that students often positioned themselves as sexual subjects who are legitimately sexual, instead of preferably nonsexual (Allen, 2008; Ashcraft 2006; Fine, 1988; Fine & McClelland, 2006; Fisher, 2009; Pillow, 2004; Trimble, 2009). For example, Trimble (2009) draws on Louisa Allen’s research that describes how students were adept at distinguishing between official discourses that discussed sex in the contexts of prevention, diseases and pregnancy and erotic discourses that originated in the awareness flowing from their own sexual experiences and that included discussions such as “corporeal sensuality, logistics of bodily movements, emotional issues, and the micro-

politics of sexual decision-making" (Allen, quoted in Trimble, p. 53). Therefore, by ignoring the erotic, the abstinence-only curriculum, notwithstanding evidence to the contrary, offers a restrictive perspective on what counts as healthy/normal sexuality.

Moreover, if the very articulation of sexual desire by students is deemed dangerous and immoral, then students, whose expressions of sexual desire stand in sharp contrast to dominant heteronormative prescriptions of what constitutes "appropriate" sexuality, are deemed "unfit subjects" (Pillow, 2004). And herein lies the conundrum that inclusive education has to contend with. How can an inclusive education explain away the exclusion of those students whose articulation of alternative sexualities constructs them as outcasts in educational contexts? If sexual activity is permissible only in those contexts in which (heterosexual) marriage is a possibility, then does this mean that LGBTQI students (who will not be allowed to be legally married in most states in the United States) will never ever be allowed to be sexually active (Fisher, 2009)? How does inclusive education defend the sex curriculum when it targets various groups (like teens of color, teens from nontraditional families, teens who had been sexually abused, and teens who do not identify as heterosexual) as unhealthy and immoral (Fisher; Fine & McClelland, 2006)? For example, Fine and McClelland; Fisher; and Pillow (2004) demonstrated in their research how school policies on student sexual activity overwhelmingly discriminate against poor, working-class, female, disabled, Black, Latino, and LGBTQI youth; a form of "sexual vigilantism" is unleashed that defines their sexuality as corrupt and labels them as students who are unsalvageable. Additionally, how does inclusive education intervene in the gender stereotypes that abound within the sex curriculum in which young women are referred to as victims even while placing complete responsibility on them for birth control and in which young men are forced to bow to the pressure of acting uncontrollably sexual (Fine, 1988; Fine & McClelland)?

But perhaps most damaging to the credibility of inclusive education is its reticence in exposing the "active silence" that is present in the sex curriculum—the hush that occurs when the very persons charged with protecting our youth "not only violate but also coerce" their desires into silence (Fisher, 2009, p. 62). To expose the violence of active silence in so-called inclusive educational contexts, I advocate a political "outing" of several coercive discourses of normalization within the sex curriculum. Outing these normative discourses of sexuality is critical because these discourses not only structure the way we think but also constitute our subjectivities (Allen, 2008). Additionally, outing the spurious commitment of inclusive discourses to a language of effectiveness exposes how such

measures effectively cloak important power dynamics and naturalize strategies for approaching teen sexuality that often perpetuate unjust social conditions (Ashcraft, 2006). In the sex curriculum in particular, the active silence around “agency, initiation, and subjectivity” (Fine & McClelland, 2006, p. 86), I argue, not only is only damaging to students’ sense of self and well-being but also counteracts the emancipatory possibilities in inclusive education.

OUTING “EXCLUSION” IN THE SEX CURRICULUM

The national obsession with reality TV has produced several episodes of “outings”—the melodramatic act of betrayal of a privacy that is then publicly reviled. The violence in these outings is that they expose without consent one’s deviance from societal norms. But such outings are not just restricted to reality TV. They also abound in educational contexts in which the most threatening outings revolve around sexual subjectivities. Although an “outing” may culminate in one’s absolute exclusion from the educational context (a teacher being fired from her job for being lesbian), another less extreme, but nevertheless still damaging, outcome may cause one to be labeled, pathologized, and/or even more painfully rehabilitated. And much of this often takes place (despite the rhetoric of inclusion) in public education under the guise of efficiently managing difference.

In this section, I turn the tables on public education in order to “out” the practices and ideologies within the sex curriculum that label, pathologize, rehabilitate, and ultimately exclude those subjectivities that resist the dominant discourses of heteronormativity. More specifically, this outing of exclusion in the sex curriculum necessitates the foregrounding of that which is invisible and unsayable. This implies that we ask questions of the sex curriculum that go beyond the narrow focus on effectiveness (meaning how effective sex education is in preventing teen pregnancy) to raise questions that address how the cultural directives embedded in official policies position teachers and students within schools and how the valuing of certain subjectivities rather than others might impact students’ social and academic well-being in schools and in society at large (Fine & McClelland, 2006; Trimble, 2009; Wiley & Terlosky, 2000). Additionally, just like all the other outings, this one will also disrupt the taken-for-granted violence of heteronormativity with the intent to rehabilitate the sex curriculum for transformative purposes.

Although there is no dearth of literature that has asked critical questions about the sex curriculum in our schools, much of it is enmeshed

in ideological debates addressing pragmatic concerns, with very few exploring the philosophical basis of these concerns. On the pragmatic front, the narrow focus has been on the effectiveness of the sex curriculum in preventing teen pregnancy. But teen pregnancy is not the only problem that haunts the sex curriculum. More important, its knowledge base is woefully inadequate. For example, Wiley and Terlosky (2000) contended that if schools refuse to choose a math or science curriculum on the basis of nonscientific, anecdotal data, then why should the choices regarding the sex curriculum be any different? They therefore also ask that the criteria of effectiveness address the following questions: Does the sex curriculum have academic credibility? Do the faculty and staff have adequate staff training? Are there spaces for faculty and staff to examine their own personal attitudes about sexuality? Does the curriculum address the broad spectrum of sexuality? Does it acknowledge that sexual maturity is a normal part of adolescent development? Does the curriculum help build self-esteem and assertiveness skills to abstain from sexual activity? Does it provide a comprehensive discussion of contraception?

However, above and beyond these very pragmatic questions, I argue that there are some deeper philosophical and political issues that also demand attention but are usually ignored in the sex curriculum. It is through outing these active silences that it is also possible to out the exclusion that occurs under the aegis of the sex curriculum. For example, in her 1988 article aptly subtitled "The Missing Discourse of Desire," Michelle Fine identified "the authorized suppression of a discourse of female desire" in the sex curriculum (p. 30). Fine insisted, however, that this "official" suppression is ineffective in closing down *all* sexual expression. Instead, Fine described how young female students articulate through an "erotic" discourse their opposition to the "active silence" that allows only the narrative of female victimization to prevail. This narrative of female victimization supports heteronormativity that laughably recognizes only adult married women as capable of consent, and in doing so, it constitutes all other females as potential victims who are denied sexual subjectivity. Fine (1988) explained,

The ambivalence facing female heterosexuality places the victim and subject in opposition and derogates all women who represent female sexual subjectivities outside of marriage—prostitutes, lesbians, single mothers, women involved with multiple partners, and particularly Black single mothers. . . . "Protected" from this derogation, the typical adolescent woman, as represented in the sex education curricula, is without any sexual

subjectivity. The discourse of victimization not only obscures the derogation, it also transforms socially distributed anxieties about female sexuality into acceptable, and even protective talk. (p. 42)

In an attempt to suppress the discourse of female desire, one of the most blatant contradictions in the abstinence-only sex curriculum is even while young women are pathologized for refusing to maintain a stoic silence around sex, the actual abstinence-only curriculum is engaged in “explicit talk about sex, sexual immorality, and lewdness” (Pillow, 2004, p. 175). Pillow, using a Foucaultian analysis, named this practice “a continued incitement to discourse” (p. 175). Put simply, “incitement to discourse” can be described as the secret that one is endlessly urged to speak of so that the state can better regulate and contain it. In the specific context of teen pregnancy, Pillow’s (2004) book, *Unfit Subjects: Educational Policy and the Teen Mother*, describes in great detail the proliferation of discourses of alarm (sex is dangerous/dirty); discourses of heteronormativity (reassertion of traditional gender roles in heterosexual marriage); and discourses of control (Norplant implants) that surround teen sexuality and teen pregnancy. Thus, this incitement to discourse constructs teen mothers as “bad” girls through a variety of “stigma stories” that make both the sexually active teen girl and the teen mother hypervisible to the public eye. Moreover, the process of pathologizing these young women rests on overtly sexualized images of pregnant girls that inspire both visual consumption and moral condemnation, and rely on the trope of disability. To illustrate this argument, Pillow used this description written by another feminist scholar, Nancy Lesko, in response to a 1985 *Time* magazine cover story on teen pregnancy:

The image of a young girl with swollen belly dominates the discourse of teen pregnancy. . . . She stands sideways, to accentuate her fully pregnant, fully sexual body. Her ripe body is juxtaposed with her child’s face, which communicates sadness, pessimism, and confusion. Her face forecasts uncertainty—the apparent consequences of irresponsible sexuality. This image signals “disorder” or “alarm”: a child having a child, a young woman too soon sexual, a spectacle, a grotesqueness. (quoted in Pillow, p. 175).

In a similar fashion, Fisher (2009) also described the proliferation discourses of LGBTQI youth that represent them as socially and sexually maladjusted to mainstream life. With the insistence on the normativity of heterosexual relationships culminating in heterosexual marriage in the

abstinence-only curriculum, LGBTQI youth are often excluded from the curriculum except to describe them as lacking "high personal standards and strong character" because they are portrayed as expressing their desires in ways for which their bodies "were not designed" (p. 63). By insisting that sex should occur only within marriage, the only options available to these youth are either to remain celibate or to participate in heterosexual marriage, both of which are incompatible with their desires (p. 64). Even the more liberal discourses of sexuality portray LGBTQI youth as a social category of risk—at risk of suicide, discrimination, low self-esteem, and HIV/AIDS, even though being labeled at-risk is clearly an outcome of the discourses of containment that abound in the sex curriculum. Adding to all this is a further incitement to discourse regarding HIV/AIDS in the curriculum, which reflects societal fears about homosexuality, disease, and government intrusion into one's private life (Vander Schee & Baez, 2009).

Complicating this jumble of pathologized subjectivities are issues of race and class. Low-income students of color, both young men and young women, are more stigmatized than their White counterparts because the "innocence of white childhood" is usually juxtaposed against "the guilt of black childhood" (Fine & McClelland, 2006, p. 304). This is especially apparent in discourses of sexuality in which presumptions of guilt are assigned to the bodies of poor youth of color who are then expelled into spaces that contribute to their further marginalization. In one such example, Erevelles and Minear (2010) described how a 12-year-old African American girl, Cassie, who would be labeled "illiterate," was placed in an alternative classroom from which she was almost expelled because she performed oral sex on another student in the same classroom. Cassie's educational problems were never addressed even though she was shunted back and forth between segregated and nonsegregated settings. Labeled with an unspecified learning disability and accompanied by an IEP that was never actually implemented, Cassie's inclusion in the regular classroom without any support made her the butt of many jokes, ultimately resulting in several classroom brawls and participation in unsafe sexual activities as a way to fight back against her humiliation. In Cassie's case, it was the absence of educational, economic, and social resources that contributed to her exclusion from regular education and made her more vulnerable to sexual risks (Erevelles & Minear; Fine & McClelland). Thus, echoing an argument in disability studies, being labeled sexually at-risk cannot be attributed to personal characteristics but rather to the impact of the specific social, political, and economic contexts of (inclusive) education.

Similarly, in the context of pregnant teens, Pillow (2004) reported that

educational policy, in its pathetic attempts to offer support services to low-income pregnant teens of color, draws on the problematic discourse of “pregnancy as disability” (p. 103) to justify these special services. One would imagine that labeling teen pregnancy as disability (controversial as it is) would nevertheless call into play the more progressive elements of inclusive education. However, both Pillow (2004) and Fine and McClelland (2006) reported that school districts operating under this disability model overwhelmingly remove African American and Latina teen mothers, as well as low-income White teen mothers, to separate special school facilities. In this context, then, the sex curriculum excludes pathologized subjectivities not only via the ideological dictates of heteronormativity but also via the actual spatial segregation of these Other students from the normative mainstream.

Broadly speaking, then, the sex curriculum, with its commitments to heteronormativity, locates several bodies outside the realm of acceptable sexual subjectivities. Moreover, even when discourses of overt sexuality are readily deployed in educational contexts (e.g., school prom, the beauty walk, cheerleading, dance line, and so on), heteronormative discourses regulate which students can participate in the celebration of their sexual subjectivities. Those bodies that buck the normative sexual aesthetic (black/brown bodies, gay/lesbian/transsexual/intersex bodies, disabled bodies, poor bodies, and so on) are quite simply excluded even in presumably inclusive settings. Remember Constance McMillen! Thus, I argue here that the “outing” of the heteronormative discourses of desire in the sex curriculum, in turn, “out” practices of exclusion embedded in the hypocritical rhetoric of inclusion.

Perhaps most dangerous is how the sex curriculum exploits societal fears about “pandemic” diseases like HIV/AIDS to legitimize government intrusion into the intimate lives of students. For example, Vander Schee and Baez (2009) described how liberal and neoliberal policies use the sex curriculum to discipline students into embracing heteronormative sexual subjectivities through HIV/AIDS education. Using the New York City Department of Education HIV/AIDS curriculum that was implemented in December 2005, Vander Schee and Baez described how this curriculum used medical discourses such as “risk-factor epidemiology and psychosocial models of behavioral change” (p. 36) to support neoliberal economic and sociopolitical rationalities that urge responsible individuals to control their health not only for their own sake but also for the socioeconomic good of the nation. Vander Schee and Baez explained how medical language that carries the authority of professional expertise and appears to exist outside of politics is particularly productive for enacting governmental practices; by constructing “science” and “chastity”

as "unquestionable points of truth," sexual health becomes a value essential to determining the boundaries between "good" and "bad," as well as "normal" and "abnormal" health-related behaviors (p. 41). They therefore argued that the (sex) curriculum—by marrying medical knowledge and moral values—placed constructs such as "normal," "risk," "science," and "health" beyond political critique and accountability and, in doing so, was effective in normalizing the (school) population and making them more amenable to social administration (p. 43).

Because HIV/AIDS education uses language that is burdened by heavy moral baggage, HIV/AIDS is, therefore, predisposed to be the disease of "otherness" and "immorality" (Erevelles, 2006). Already mired in discourses of stigma because of its historical association with male homosexuals and intravenous drug users—who are also disproportionately African American and Hispanic—the discourse on HIV/AIDS separates the in-groups from the out-groups. Those whose infection resulted from "deviant" behaviors are contrasted with those whose infection resulted from circumstances beyond their control (e.g., infants, hemophiliacs, and those who received blood transfusions), thereby setting up a moral hierarchy of the deserving and "nondeserving victims" of this condition (Erevelles, 2006). McRuer (2002) quoted Paula Treichler when he argued that people living with HIV/AIDS face not only "an epidemic of transmissible disease" but also an "epidemic of signification" (p. 221). Here, preexisting racist, homophobic, sexist, and ableist fantasies are reinvigorated in and through the AIDS crises, especially by those who imagine themselves as "immune" from the epidemic.

Vander Schee and Baez (2009) also pointed out that the sheer brilliance of neoliberal curriculum lies in the strategic maneuvering by which subjects are controlled through their freedom. Using Michel Foucault's definition of the verb *to govern*, meaning "to structure the possible field of action of others" (as quoted in Vander Schee & Baez, p. 35), they described how "modern forms of government individualize in such a way that subjects understand their actions as based in autonomous choice and freedom to act" (p. 35). Because the school was deemed a crucial site for propagating governmental rationalities associated with sexuality generally, and HIV/AIDS specifically, the sex curriculum has a dual mission. On one hand, it supports the liberal mantra of the autonomy of individual choice, while on the other hand, it privileges an authoritarianism that molds the autonomous subject according to predetermined developmental norms and educational needs. Broadly speaking, then, the sex curriculum interpellates students into the politics of "intimate citizenship" (Trimble, 2009, p. 57), in which students are exhorted to exhibit "control over one's body, feelings, relationships, and

intimacies, etc.” (p. 57) and make socially grounded choices about their sexual identities. Thus, the sex curriculum serves as “a principle and a tool of normalization” (Janssen, 2009, p. 2), in which the act of exclusion is portrayed as an inclusive practice that is freely chosen by responsible sexual citizens who seem to patrol on their own volition “the parameters of personhood” (Shildrick, 2005, p. 333).

“ACTIVE SILENCES”: (NON) CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DISABILITY AND SEXUALITY

If the sex curriculum serves as “a principle and a tool of normalization,” then students with significant physical and cognitive disabilities are quite “naturally” excluded from its authoritative heteronormative domain. The grounds to justify this exclusion are really quite simple. So committed are the ideologies of “proper” sexuality to stringent standards of normativity that those bodies who are deemed unable to meet these standards are also perceived as not having any sexuality at all (Kafer, 2003; Shakespeare, 1999; Shildrick, 2005; Tepper, 2000). In fact, students with physical and/or cognitive disabilities are actively excluded from even participating in the sex curriculum in inclusive settings, where paternalistic professionals draw on the rhetoric of protection to deny these students choice and control in their sexual lives (Erevelles & Mutua, 2005; Tepper, 2000). Moreover, the sex curriculum is already enmeshed in the discourse of “moralism, law, stigma, shame, violence, and isolation” (Sherry, 2004, p. 775)—discourses that are so easily applied to disabled people that any expression of their sexuality is regarded as “inherently kinky, bizarre and exotic” (Kafer, p. 85). Thus, steeped in the ideologies of normalization, perversion, victimization, and protection, the sexuality of disabled people “is denied loudly and repeatedly, not silently” in the sex curriculum (p. 85).

These ableist assumptions about sexuality mirror similar myths applied to queer subjects in which discourses of contagion, infection, contamination, unnaturalness, and perversion abound (Sherry, 2004; Thompson, 2007). Such assumptions contradict the other overwhelming assumption of asexuality that is applied especially to people with cognitive disabilities. Thus, on one hand, the mere articulation of their sexuality is associated with sexual deviance, excess, and aberration, and on the other hand, people with cognitive disabilities are “taken as being asexual, or a third gender” (Shakespeare, 1999, p. 55) in which notions of asexuality are wedded to immutable childlike innocence at best, or outright incompetence and incapability to “really” understand what sexuality means at worst. Thus, caught between a rock and a hard place, the “official”

discourse regarding the sexuality of young adults with cognitive disabilities, in particular, rejects all notions of complexity regarding their gender and sexual identities.

Erevelles and Mutua (2005) illustrated one such example of how the "official" discourse of inclusive settings casts many disabled adolescents/young adults into gender/sexual passive positions as recipients of assistance and consumers of help. In a case study of Sue Ellen, a 19-year-old woman with Down syndrome, they described how adolescence propels disabled young people into a temporal space in which physiological transformations (e.g., breasts, menstrual periods, erections, and so on) can no longer sustain dominant constructions of the disabled adult as an asexual perpetual child. Sue Ellen's calm but insistent acknowledgment of her sexual desires and her assertion that she intended to realize these desires in a sexual relationship with her boyfriend was initially disconcerting to her mother, Martha, who tried to play off the relationship as purely platonic. Sue Ellen, on the other hand, was hell-bent on making known to her mother her (sexual) desire to kiss Billie Joe, and later on to marry and have children with him. Her disclosures regarding her sexual future, notwithstanding the traditional heteronormative narrative, forced Martha to rethink her own assumptions regarding her daughter as a sexual being—not a girl any longer, but a woman in her own right.

Rejecting the "official" discourse, Sue Ellen's articulation of the "erotic" discourse was smothered under an "active silence" because of the real fear that parents with disabled girls have regarding sexuality in a violent and sometimes misogynist world. For young women with developmental disabilities, sexuality is viewed more as a problem than an affirming part of human life (Sweeney, 2007). Thus, although school personnel, parents, and other caregivers may recognize the importance of relationships and sexual roles of young adults with cognitive disabilities, the primary focus of the sex curriculum (if even offered to these students) is to prevent sexual abuse (Addlakha, 2007; Aunos & Feldman, 2002; Dukes & McGuire, 2009), much of which hinges on the critical question of what constitutes valid consent to have sex. Because valid consent to have sex depends on access to knowledge and an understanding of both sexuality-related decisions and the different aspects of sexual expression, many caregivers worry that cognitive disabilities of young disabled adults may interfere with their ability to make responsible decisions regarding their sexuality (Dukes & McGuire). In the case of Sue Ellen, the traditional special education program she graduated from did not offer her any knowledge to make these critical decisions. And thus, just like the sex curriculum offered to nondisabled students, the

nonconversation regarding sexual desire, sexual knowledge, and sexual relationships becomes another dangerous exclusion in the school curriculum.

According to Michael Tepper (2005), students with disabilities learn that they are disabled even before they learn to see themselves as sexual people. He argued that sex educators need to be aware of medical aspects of disability, the range of abilities within individuals, and their psychosocial development. In another study located in Turkey, Isler, Tas, Beytut, and Conk (2009) argued that disabled adolescents are socially isolated and therefore have fewer opportunities to interact with and learn from their peers. They also noted that many of these adolescents lacked basic biological information about their bodies. Sullivan and Caterino (2008) also reported that in the case of adolescents with autism spectrum disorders, those who were denied access to sex education were more likely to masturbate under inappropriate circumstances, whereas those who had access to some form of sex education were likely to engage in more person-oriented sexual behaviors in appropriate contexts. Thus, it would appear that school systems seem hell-bent on producing a sex curriculum that excludes the central issues that would promote healthy sexual behaviors. Moreover, because educational structures neither view disabled students as sexual nor support their sexual activity, the exclusion of disability issues in the sex curriculum actively contributes to the problem that some disability scholars have dubbed "lack of sex access" (Shuttleworth & Mona, 2002).

This lack of sex access is often justified under the guise of protecting girls and women with disabilities from sexual abuse, rape, and other forms of sexual violence. In a study by Hassouneh-Phillips and McNeff (2005), it was noted that 72% of women with physical disabilities have been abused by an intimate partner, family member, caregiver, health-care provider, or other service provider. Low sexual esteem (one's sense of self as a sexual being) was seen as one of the major factors contributing to the vulnerability of disabled women to sexual abuse. This is because female sexuality in medical rehabilitation is limited to discussions on menstruation and the ability to conceive and give birth. Steeped in heteronormativity, these discourses assume that women are passive subjects, that there is a "usual" position for heterosexual intercourse, and that the ability to participate in sexual activities is measured by the ability to perform and not by the ability to feel. Tepper, Whipple, Richards, and Komisaruk (2001) observed that, as a result, many disabled women are mistrusting of their own body's ability to give pleasure to others and to themselves. Therefore, they often face "cognitive genital disassociation"—the act of shutting down and shutting out sexuality by assuming

that sexual pleasure is no longer possible.

Further, because the (hetero)sexuality of disabled people is always already deviant, any proclivity of disabled people for queer practices and desires only magnifies that deviance (Kafer, 2003). Because dominant ideologies deem disabled women as incapable of finding male partners, it is assumed that their turn to lesbianism is often a last resort. Moreover, Kafer noted that just like with the nondisabled population, children and adults with disabilities who live with their families may be prevented from even discussing their (same) sex desires with their parents and siblings. Even for those disabled adults living out in the community, the fear of coming out is still present because they are afraid that their personal assistants may quit on them. Here again, the "active silence," propagated by heteronormative discourses of sexuality, seeks to make even the smallest possibility of queer crip desire laughable. For example, Lofgren-Martenson (2009) reported the response of one caregiver in a short-term home for young adults with cognitive disabilities:

There are no people here with the usual sexuality. . . . That means that there can't be any homosexuals, right? (Laughter). In any case not in the sense of "sex." Maybe a guy will be really really close friends with a boy rather than a girl . . . that is possible . . . no, I have a real hard time imagining two fags here at the day center. (p. 23)

DESIRING DISABILITY OR COMING OUT (SEXY) CRIP

Notwithstanding the rather dismal landscape, disabled scholars activists have actively challenged heteronormative discourses of sexuality in the transgressive political act of "coming out crip." In doing so, they have celebrated their sexuality, while at the same time rejecting the rigid requirements of heteronormativity. Coming out crip, according to McRuer (2006), is a *critically disabled position* that "call[s] attention to the ways in which the disability rights movement and disability studies have resisted the demand of compulsory able-bodiedness and have demanded access to a newly imagined and newly configured public sphere where full-participation is not contingent on an able-body" (p. 30). Thus, in this section, I foreground how a critically disabled position, as articulated by disabled scholars and activists, can completely reconfigure our normative constructions of the disabled subject.

A critically disabled position would require that we (re)imagine normative conceptions of what kinds of bodies/subjects are worthy of sexual desire. A critically disabled position will also challenge prescriptive ways

of experiencing sexual desire and will reimagine alternative ways of giving and receiving sexual pleasure that meet the unique sexual needs of diverse sexual bodies. And, most important, a critically disabled position would ultimately force inclusive education to rethink sexuality and sex education in radically transformative ways. However, the hegemony of heteronormative discourses of sexuality has made this task especially difficult, because the stringent standards of what is conceived as sexually desirable are presented as predetermined, naturalized truth forms. As a result, in the rigid hierarchy of sexual desirability, people who do not fit the marketed profile, such as those who are older, larger, darker, gayer, or mentally or physically disabled are constituted as sexually undesirable (Tepper, 2000). Recognizing this dismal context, disabled scholar Tom Shakespeare has written that “the challenge for disabled people is not HOW to do it but WHO to do it with” (as cited in Sherry, 2004, p. 773).

In its casual acceptance of the sexual undesirability of disabled people as indisputable fact, inclusive education supports a sex curriculum (if it has one at all) that starts with the assumption that disabled students have low sexual self-esteem, which makes them vulnerable to sexual abuse and teen pregnancy. In this normative context, sexual desirability is conceived of as an individual problem even by disabled people, and not as a political construct, such that only very recently has sexual access become a critical agenda item in disability activism. Thus, for example, disabled sex scholar Barbara Waxman-Fiduccia asked,

Why hasn't our movement politicized our sexual oppression as we do transportation and attendant services? . . . [B]ecause we are afraid that we are ultimately to blame for not getting laid; that it is somehow a personal inferiority. And in the majority culture this secret is a source of personal embarrassment rather than a source of communal rage against the sexual culture itself. (quoted in Tepper, 2000, p. 284)

However, the new generation of disabled scholars and activists has refused the heteronormative sexual narrative of self-blame to write an alternative script that foregrounds the politics of crip sexuality. They have pointed out that that the dominant sexual narrative is one of exclusion that denies sexual access to disabled people in one of the most intimate and critical aspects of their lives (Stevens, in press). Moreover, they have argued that the mere articulation of one's sexuality is an intensely political act that links up with other oppressive practices. Thus, for example, in her blog, *Crip Confessions*, cripsex scholar/activist Bethany Stevens wrote,

Bodiosexual justice is a neologism . . . that is meant to convey how our trans and disabled bodies are similarly stigmatized, how this stigma impacts our sexual health, and how our oppressions stem from similar sources thus encouraging us to work together to further embodied justice. . . . [H]ow queer bodies—those deemed “Others” through the social construction of the imagined normate, including aging, poor, fat, raced, trans bodies, and disabled bodies etc.—are often denigrated through interlocking systems of structural and conceptual oppressions. (Stevens, 2010a)

I also think it’s really important to expose the social aspects of sexuality. We need to talk about the pain that stems from internalizing pervasive social assumptions that disabled people are undesirable and asexual. We need to talk about our exclusion from media representation, including pornography because it speaks to exclusion from mainstream conceptions of desirability. (Stevens, 2010b)

By locating the issue of sexuality squarely within the context of oppressive practices and structures, Stevens’s argument forces a critical examination of the inclusive education narrative of sexuality rife with pity and paternalism. By constituting sexual expression as dangerous to disabled young adults, and disabled girls and women in particular, the central focus of the sex curriculum in inclusive education continues to propagate fear—the fear of sexual abuse, the fear of sexual violence, and, most terrifyingly, the fear of reproduction. In fact, the sex curriculum’s almost singular focus on preventing disabled bodies from reproducing themselves echoes in many ways the eugenic-like policies of the earlier century. This imperative to control the reproductive capacity of disabled people is so rampant, it occurs not in dark and dangerous laboratories, but in the casual medical advice gynecologists offer their disabled patients. This is well illustrated in a poem, “At the Gynecologist,” by Petra Kupperts and Neil Marcus (2008) in their book *Cripple Poetics: A Love Story*:

. . . . You might not want children because
issues in his family
gene dance
she said, our chirpy gynecologist,
looking straight at me, slant at my lover
instruments out. . . .
Love him, but not children like him?

White coat atoms settle into their dance:
dream plane, wish bone, Galton's galvanized knowledge
eugenic technology that flies off our bodies' awkward edges
erasure of the spastic tender
touch, deliberate, the vaginal membrane. . . . (pp. 100–101)

Here, Koppers and Marcus, both disabled artists, capture in exquisite lyricism how the violence of eugenics, interwoven in the lighthearted medical advice of their gynecologist, produces much more potent damage than merely advising against pregnancy. Koppers and Marcus instead show us that such warnings not only cast disabled people as undesirable, both sexually and otherwise (*Love him, but not children like him?*), but also attempt to force disabled people to accept the very impossibility of sexual desire (*erasure of the spastic tender touch, deliberate*).

There have been several counter-discourses to this all-pervasive narrative that refuses to celebrate crip sexuality. I found one such narrative (among many) on the webzine *Bent: A Journal of CripGay Voices*, in which one of the authors, Julio Moreno (2002), wrote,

I want to demolish the belief system that insists crips are sexless, that our differently-shaped or oddly functioning bodies are repulsive. I reject the notion that we are powerless, ugly, needy, dependent. . . . I also want to talk about how our bodies can become vehicles for sexual satisfaction. I want to talk about how my stump, or your spinal injury, or someone else's muscle spasms can become tools for pleasure, loci of intense delight. I want to explore how the very texture of difference can be exciting. Visualize your hand or your tongue exploring a crip body, its unexpected curves, unusual shapes, the absence of an arm or a leg offering intensities a conventional body cannot provide, the lack of sight or hearing transforming the remaining senses.

Like Koppers and Marcus, Moreno rewrites a script that depicts disability not only as sexually desirable but also as expanding normative notions of sexual pleasure and sexual eroticism—both of which have rarely been associated with disabled bodies. It is for this reason that Shakespeare (1999) pointed out, “Non-disabled men have things to learn from disabled men, and could profitably share insights into gender relations, sexuality, and particularly issues of physicality and the body” (p. 63). In fact, the complexities of the disabled body allow for the freedom to reinvent sexuality in innovative and pleasurable ways. This sentiment was echoed by a disabled lesbian interviewee in an article by O'Toole (2000):

Aw yeah but what about things like masturbation, self satisfaction, finding out about different sexual options with women? Doing things that please oneself without following the rules. That is, don't we REALLY in some ways get a better deal than so many straight, narrow and sheltered women married to men? (p. 218)

However, even when the disability community loudly celebrates disability as desire, dominant discourses, even in inclusive settings, continue to paint this as deviant. This is especially true for young girls and women with cognitive disabilities, who, as I described earlier, are perceived as perpetually childlike or as nymphomaniacs perpetually hungry for sex. These were the exact traits attributed to the young woman with cognitive disabilities who was raped in Glen Ridge in New Jersey in 1993 by a group of male athletes. The young men took her to a nearby house, told her to undress, and performed various sexual acts on her that included the insertion of a fungo bat, a broom handle, and a stick into her vagina (Block, 2000). Block wrote that in the criminal trial, the defense attempted to prove that the young woman "craved sex" and was "aggressive in her attitude and approach toward boys" (quoted in Block, p. 248). And even the prosecutor participated in her dehumanization in the trial by using stereotypes of people with cognitive disabilities as being unable to say "no" and as being inadequately protected from sex. The real danger is that positions like these cloud the discourse on sexuality in inclusive education, so that rather than exploring and enabling young adults with cognitive disabilities to negotiate their sexual relationships in meaningful and satisfying ways, the only discourse allowed to remain unquestioned is one of sexual denial under the guise of protection.

However, notwithstanding these dominant narratives, disability scholars and activists continue to do the hard but exciting work of "coming out [as sexy] crip." Even in the midst of denial, stereotypes, silencing, and sterilization, there are loud whispers of what Stevens (in press) called "a Cripsex Revolution." One such example, Stevens described, is the performance art collective *Sins Invalid*, which provides "an unashamed claim to beauty in the face of invisibility." It would be a shame if inclusive education ignored these radical voices. Put quite simply, a critically disabled position in inclusive education would pay close attention to the voices of disabled young adults in the articulation of their sexuality. As disability studies scholar Alison Kafer (2003) wrote,

It is in imagining the stories disabled queers might tell each other about intimacy, touch, desire, and identity that . . . provides

inspiration, guidance, and ground for thinking. What are the possibilities—for intimacy, for relationships, for politics—that emerge when we start to question our assumptions, to interrogate our privileges, to tell our stories? Possibilities that cannot be known in advance, that cannot be restricted to particular bodily norms, that cannot be limited to certain desires. (p. 85)

CRIPPIN' INCLUSION: THE MORNING [HERE]AFTER

What, then, would the Cripsex Revolution look like within inclusive education contexts? To answer this question, I revisit the five tenets of “crippin’ inclusion” that I referred to in the introduction of this article and describe the implications that this *critically disabled perspective* has on both inclusive education and the sex curriculum. More specifically, I argue here that this *critically disabled position* demonstrates that it is not just disability that benefits from this analysis, but all student subjectivities, especially those living at the intersections and who are marked as deviant because they challenge heteronormativity. As a result, I also argue that this critically disabled position will enable us to build alliances across differences so that we can collectively “out,” and thereby transform, the oppressive practices of the sex curriculum.

First and foremost, “crippin’ inclusive education” requires that we embrace disability identity in educational spaces. Here, inclusive education, rather than domesticating disability so that it can fit in, would explore the radical possibilities inherent in claiming a disability identity within the sex curriculum. Because disability is already an outlaw identity, a celebration of disability offers the most trenchant critique of heteronormativity. More significantly, because sexuality is much more than “doing it,” a critically disabled position would take a more critical look at how the sexual identities of students impact their social relationships that go on to form the school’s inclusive/exclusive social fabric. For disability to thrive, inclusive education contexts would have to embrace the transgressive standpoint of “dismodernism” (Davis, 2002)—a standpoint where difference is the only thing we have in common, where identity is not fixed but malleable, and where disability is the beginning of a discussion of possibility. According to Rembis (2010),

“Dismodernism” has the potential to transform a society where people are expected to live a life free of pain and discomfort, a society where strict social norms concerning beauty and physical fitness compel people to alter their bodies in drastic, often violent ways, through surgery, dieting, exercise, and other

"cosmetic" procedures, a society where youth, physical prowess and a very narrow idealization of heteronormative sexual allure are highly valued and sexual performance is wedded to one's physicality. Sex, eroticism, and desire, will look very different in a "dismodern" world where "cosmopolitanism," interdependence and a reliance on technology are the "norm." In a "dismodern" world, dis/abled bodies will become "sexy" bodies. (p. 59)

Second, embracing a standpoint of dismodernism in the sex curriculum in inclusive education contexts will therefore also open up the sex curriculum for a very different conversation about sex. Thus, by (re)claiming the queer history of "coming out" and talking back to the dominant culture, the Cripsex Revolution celebrates the sexy out crip. Coming out [sexy] crip can also benefit nondisabled people because it celebrates a very different kind of sexual subject—one that embraces diversity, encourages experimentation, and radically reimagines the desired sexual subject.

Third, a critically disabled position insists that a sexually accessible world is possible. If inclusive education is not afraid to acknowledge the sexual possibilities of disabled students, then there is a distinct possibility that the sex curriculum will enable sexual access for all its students. To do this, inclusive education would have to recognize that all students, even those with cognitive disabilities, have the right "to explore intimacy, [enjoy] reciprocal affection, express their needs according to social norms, receive sexual education and family planning services, and marry, procreate, and receive needed services and supports" (Aunos & Feldman, 2002, p. 285). To do so, inclusive education, if it is to be empowering, would have to offer a curriculum that would, in the words of Waxman-Fiduccia (2000), "arouse the senses of disabled people and policymakers into feeling the urgency to transform social policy, which would fulfill our intrinsic rights to cultivate love, form families, and secure our privacy" (p. 167).

Fourth, inclusive education would have to support the radical vision that a disability is, in fact, desirable. This argument, however, has been more difficult to contest in the dominant heteronormative imaginary. The feminist scholar Margrit Shildrick (2005) has used psychoanalytical theory to explore how issues of desire and lack work together to thwart positive models of disability and sexuality. In the course of her inquiry, Shildrick also explored the discomforts that are called into play when challenges to the normal body result in the disqualification of nonnormative bodies from discourses of sexuality. However, it is not just nonnormative bodies that are disqualified from manifesting erotic desire.

Childhood sexuality and sexuality expressed by old people are also excluded—a disqualification so sedimented in contemporary life that it is rarely questioned. Based on such observations, Shildrick raised a much more fundamental question: Who, then, can really count as a sexual subject?

Although the philosophical inquiry that Shildrick takes up is beyond the scope of this article, I find her question pedagogically useful because it demonstrates that sexual desire is, in fact, a social construction and not an individual preference. From a critically disabled position, then, inclusive education would need to read critically the complex sexual hierarchy that is constructed via school practices—cheerleading squads, the dance line, the homecoming court, and the beauty walk are all nothing other than the sponsorship of sexualized educational events that celebrate very normative sexual subjectivities (e.g., White, preppy, slim, tall, nondisabled, heterosexual, and feminine) as desirable. On the other hand, students, particularly low-income young women of color, LGBTQI youth, pregnant teens, and disabled women who are not afraid to flaunt their sexuality in opposition to the norm are neither socially nor morally validated and are often cast as sexually undesirable.

In this context, then, a critically disabled position in inclusive education would use the sex curriculum to foreground the insecurities that emanate from nondisabled people about their own restrictive notions of self and to highlight the possible aesthetic and intellectual value of disability (Solvang, 2007). Tobin Siebers (2010) defined disability aesthetics as that which

refuses to recognize the representation of the healthy body—and its definition of harmony, integrity, and beauty—as the sole determination of the aesthetic. Rather, disability aesthetics embraces beauty that seems by traditional standards to be broken, and yet it is not less beautiful, but more so, as a result. (p. 3)

More important, rather than looking at aesthetics merely as an affective quality, Siebers argued that it is a social practice that harbors oppressive possibilities. He argued that aesthetics as a social practice of disqualification “removes individuals from the ranks of quality human beings, putting them at risk of unequal bodily treatment, bodily harm, and death” (p. 23). By locating aesthetics in this context, Siebers constituted the celebration of certain aesthetics as a radical injustice—one that it is necessary for inclusive education to both recognize and transform.

And last but not least, it is important to note that the very act of “-

coming out crip" in inclusive education is not just an ideological intervention; certain critical material conditions are necessary for it be possible. For inclusive education to encourage sex access for all its students, the curriculum must go beyond the ramp approach to inquire into the material conditions that can celebrate different sexual subjectivities. To do so, I return to Fine and McClelland's (2006) essay in which they drew on a concept they called *thick desire*. By *thick desire*, they meant that "people are entitled to a broad range of desires for meaningful intellectual, political, and social engagement, and the possibility of financial independence, sexual and reproductive freedom, protection from racialized and sexualized violence, and a way to imagine living in a future tense" (p. 300). In the specific context of this article, the realization of thick desire provides students (especially teen women) with

- a) a set of publicly funded options that give . . . [them] the opportunity to develop intellectually, emotionally, and culturally;
- b) imagine themselves as sexual beings capable of pleasure and without the danger of carrying the undue burden of social, medical, and reproductive consequence;
- c) have access to information and health care resources;
- d) be protected from structural and intimate violence and abuse;
- e) rely on a public safety net of resources. (p. 301)

Additionally, Fine and McClelland (2006) argued that the absence of all of those provisions, especially in low-income, low-performing schools, has further adverse effects on students, especially poor students of color. For example, high-stakes testing and the unequal placement of young women of color in juvenile detention facilities creates the conditions that place young Black, Latina, Native, poor, and working-class women in very dangerous sexual situations. Further, the absence of educational, health, sexual, and reproductive resources in these facilities may cause many of these young women to return infected with a sexually transmitted disease or a baby with a disability who may be placed in foster care. In making this argument, Fine and McClelland reminded us that intimate choices are never wholly private, but are often profoundly economic, political, and social. Therefore, I would argue that a critical disabled position would theorize youth sexuality as the thick desire for "opportunity, community, pleasure and protection from coercion and danger" (p. 326).

Clearly, then, cripin' inclusive education moves us away from the mainland into the messiness of the borderlands—transgressive sites that celebrate hybrid subjectivities and a mestiza consciousness that rejects binaries for the proliferation of difference (Roque-Ramirez, 2006). It is

at these borderlands where we once again find Constance McMullen in tentative alliance with her two classmates with learning disabilities, located at the outskirts of her school prom while claiming a defiant voice to challenge their collective exclusion. Her defiant protest against the public derision of her difference finds its echoes in the Cripsex Revolution described earlier and in the encouraging and hopeful video clips that have gone viral all over YouTube in recent months: “It Gets Better!” In these videos that have mushroomed all over the Web in the wake of a rash of teen suicides of LGBTQI youth in the span of 3 months beginning in September 2010, celebrities, activists, and even politicians have come out to say that, notwithstanding the violence of heteronormativity, things can get better! If inclusive education were truly committed to challenging the oppressive heteronormative narratives in the sex curriculum that excludes all students construed as Other, then life would definitely get better. The Morning (Here)After may be fraught with struggle, but it also promises amazing possibilities for “coming out crip.”

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