Happy places, horrible times, and scary learners: affective performances and sticky objects in inclusive classrooms

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on data from two studies conducted in US public schools, this paper traces the affective productions and performances of teachers to illustrate the role of affect in delineating (non)normative pedagogical practices in inclusive classrooms. Occupying a borderland space in narrative inquiry that permitted the straddling of differing philosophical traditions, we sought to both acknowledge the agentive work of teachers as well as the affectively constituted nature of their engagements with schools and learners. Data from teacher narratives disclosed particular preconceptions of schools as 'happy places,' that delineated affective norms for an inclusive classroom. As teachers took up the affective responsibility of schools, they managed and modified their own as well as their students' affective performances and orientations, producing meanings of disability that often worked at odds with inclusive ends. Their efforts indexed the importance of affect in the delineation of teacher competency for inclusive pedagogy.

The stories of teachers have been widely acknowledged as necessary for theorizing the work of schools, students, and teachers (Clandinin et al., 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1996; Kooy & de Freitas, 2007; Phillion, 2002). Yet even as narrative inquiry in educational research has become commonplace, its deployment often obscures the uneasy relations that may exist between the ontological and epistemological orientations underlying forms of narrative inquiry and the tenets of the intellectual traditions that inform such investigations. While not irreconcilable, such tensions nevertheless inject elements of uncertainty into the process, raising dilemmas that may remain unaddressed. Equally, such tensions may also be generative in strengthening alliances between competing traditions for pragmatic ends. Recognizing that interpretive research is both an orientation to a phenomenon as well as a method, this paper describes a form of narrative inquiry into teacher discourse that embraces such productive tension. We set out to investigate the role of emotion within the production of inclusive classrooms. Our questions emerged from a synthesis of differing orientations to inquiry that we brought as researchers, reflecting a poststructuralist emphasis in the circulation of discourses of affect (second author) while simultaneously privileging teachers' agentive construction of experience (first author). After laying out the theoretical landscape that grounded this inquiry, we subsequently describe the findings from an analysis of teacher narratives drawn from two studies, concluding with some implications for teacher education for inclusive education. We begin with an overview of how narrative inquiry informed our research.

Borderland spaces in narrative inquiry

The form of narrative inquiry that we have privileged in this paper studies 'either lived experience as storied phenomenon or the stories people tell about their experiences' (p. xiv, Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). These narrative inquirers see individuals' lived experiences as epistemically significant and as necessary for generating theoretical knowledge (Mohanty, 2000). This form of inquiry privileges individuals' experiences, but simultaneously registers the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which such experiences are shaped and enacted. It has also been successfully adopted to conduct organizational research (Czarniawska, 1997; Linde, 2001). Whether disclosing the process of 'narrative induction' or the particular devices that structure identity-making, personal and organizational identities are seen as a continuous process of narration co-authored by the narrator and the audience (Czarniawska, 1997; Linde, 2001).

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) acknowledge some uneasy spaces, or borderlands, that emerge in the intersection of narrative research and several schools of thought, including poststructuralism, whose philosophical underpinnings may conflict with the aims of narrative research. For example, even as poststructuralist researchers are interested in the stories of individuals,

> she or he will not be interpreting those experiences as immediate sources of knowledge and insight; instead, she or he will be listening through the person's story to hear the operation of broader social discourses shaping that person's story or experience. (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, 55)

Poststructuralists argue that representations of experience that portray the subject as the primary agent are misleading as they obscure the discursive practices that make available particular forms of actions and thought. In other words, experience is itself discursively produced and cannot exist outside the discourses used to represent it (Stone-Mediatore, 2000).

Inasmuch as such a privileging of discursive systems may seek to represent a reality independent of the knower (Clandinin, 2013), poststructuralist work has also been critiqued for not attending to the ways in which historical-material conditions are obscured or erased in the social constructionist argument for the primacy of discursive practices (Moya & Hames-Garcia, 2000). Stone-Mediatore (2000) argues that the poststructuralist analysis of experience does not account for the resources that create oppositional discourses. Individuals' narratives of experience that engage with tensions in reconciling lived experiences with available discourses are not simply unmediated representations of 'truth,' nor indisputable evidence of pre-existing discourses. Rather, they 'rearticulate' experiences such that 'they bring into public discussion questions and concerns excluded in dominant ideologies, ideologies which sustain and are sustained by political and economic hierarchies' (Stone-Mediatore, 2000, 120). In that regard, like Frank (2010), we privilege a mode of interpretation that is dialogical and which almost always presumes a relationship between the story, storyteller and the listener.

The borderland space with poststructuralism that we inhabit in our narrative inquiry arose from our interest in the discourse of emotion in inclusive classrooms. Inclusive education questions the premise of an ideology of ability within schools that not only devalues the presence and participation of students with disabilities but which structures systems for all students in ways that sort and categorize students on the basis of ability (Slee, 2011; Ware, 2010). This scholarship has disclosed the numerous ways in which schooling discourses of difference have positioned students with disabilities as peripheral members of their schools. However, even as the role of emotion in socially just pedagogy has garnered increasing interest (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Knight-Diop & Oesterreich, 2009), the significance of affects in delineating issues within inclusive practice has received little scholarly attention.

The purpose for this project, therefore, is twofold. Firstly, we seek to assert the significance of discourses of affects for establishing norms within the classroom and in delineating the dispositions required by teachers to implement inclusive pedagogy. Secondly, by drawing on teacher narratives to accomplish this end, we seek to privilege their sense-making for enacting inclusive pedagogy. The first necessitates the recognition of the interplay between emotion and prevailing discourses in schools that foster particular meanings of disability. The second grants primacy to the complex work of teachers in schools and acknowledges their agentive maneuverings to accomplish the ends of inclusion. While

not at odds with each other, they suggest differing orientations that afford primacy to differing aspects of experience, the former to the discursive construction of human experience or *discourses-in-practice* and the latter to the social-interactional processes that constituted the experience, or *discursive practice* (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011). We rationalized that given the paucity of work in this area – emotion – within inclusive education scholarship and our simultaneous commitment to teachers as agentive actors, our paper needed to accomplish both objectives. We turn now to explore meanings of inclusive education and the significance of affect theory for its development.

Affect theory and inclusive education research

Disability studies in education/inclusive education

Inclusive education emerged out of a recognition of the flaws within mainstream special education systems whose approach to students with disabilities has centered on the development of procedures of diagnosis, evaluation, and intervention that are predicated on 'fixing' the student and restoring him/her to a presumed normative state (Gabel, 2005; Skrtic, 1995; Slee, 2011; Thomas & Loxley, 2007; Ware, 2010). In the effort to remedy the historically separate (and often unequal) education of students with disabilities that arose from such an orientation to learning differences, 'inclusion' in schools continues to mean the placement of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. In this usage of 'inclusion,' the *ability-based* conceptual premises of the general education classroom are left intact while the focus is on ensuring that the effects of the student's disability are minimized in a setting primarily designed for students *without* disabilities.

For scholars writing within the disability studies in education (DSE) tradition, however, *inclusive* education begins with an appraisal of the affordances of schooling structures and classroom practice to permit students who bring diverse learning profiles (with and without labels of disability) to learn in an equitable manner. It seeks to understand disability not as located within the learner but as inherent in the social practices which construct a student as 'different.' Inclusive education, therefore, necessarily implies a multi-sector, whole-school reform effort to create schooling communities hospitable to diverse learners rather than the remediation of students found lacking in required skills (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

Over the last decade or more, disability studies scholarship has produced a sharp and comprehensive critique of schooling practices that use ability norms to restrict the experiences of students from a range of socially disadvantaged groups (Ferri & Connor, 2006; Skrtic, 1995). Such critique has been foundational to the concerted effort to investigate how schools and teachers can create communities that are not predicated on ability norms. Building on curricular frameworks to support diverse learners (Rose, Meyer, & Hitchcock, 2006; Tomlinson, 2014), such research has examined inclusive literacy practices (Kliewer, 2008; Kluth & Chandler-Olcott, 2007), a positive orientation to student behaviors (Danforth & Smith, 2005), communication differences (Ashby & Causton-Theoharis, 2012), family-professional dynamics (Ferguson, 2002), and peer relations (Rossetti, 2012), among many other facets of everyday inclusive pedagogy.

The role of emotion and/or affect, however, has played a minimal role within both the critique of the production of normative schooling and the investigation of imagined inclusive communities. Indeed, although emotionality in education has long been acknowledged, emotions have been generally obscured in the discourses on critical/socially just pedagogy, which have typically privileged a rational approach in understanding the ways in which differences have created social inequities (Callahan, 2004; Ellsworth, 1989; Knight-Diop & Oesterreich, 2009). Not surprisingly, the inevitability of emotion or affect for an understanding and enactment of inclusive pedagogy has also been missing in disability studies in education scholarship. While this issue can be explored in numerous ways, we have elected to focus particularly on the affective productions and performances of teachers to highlight the critical role that affects play in delineating normative practice in inclusive classrooms.

The selection of teacher narratives to explore this topic is deliberate. In recent months, teachers and teacher education in the US have come under increasing attack within public discourse. Teachers'

performance (as well as that of their preparation programs) is being increasingly determined by students' performance on standardized tests (Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2013; Ravitch, 2013). In order for inclusive education scholarship to remain relevant under these conditions, it is imperative to recognize the complexities of implementing idealized principles in the context of institutional demands, such as student preparation for high-stakes tests, that work against principles of inclusivity. As an exploratory analysis, the purpose of the paper was not to draw grand conclusions about the relationship between affect and inclusive pedagogy. Rather, we seek to offer persuasive grounds to initiate more concerted inquiry into this domain.

Tracing affects and its productions

Theories of affect draw on insights from a range of disciplines from neuroscience and psychology to philosophy. The most recent turn to affect draws on the work of Tomkins (1962, 1963) and his followers who disentangle affects from bodies and view affects as independent and non-intentional. Their views are in contrast to assumptions about emotions as embodied and directed intentionally toward objects that most psychologists propose (Leys, 2011). It is the non-intentionality of affects and its circulation that informs the work of the scholars whom we draw upon in this article. Here, affects are viewed as productive, delineating the surfaces of objects and subjects, and their encounters. While there are different ways in which scholars have taken up affects, including some who make distinctions between affects, emotions, and feelings (see Massumi, 1987; Thrift, 2004), in this article we align ourselves with affects as conceptualized by Ahmed (2004) to trace the work of affects in an inclusive classroom.

Ahmed (2004), who often uses 'affects' and 'emotions' interchangeably, theorizes affects as productive, delineating the very surfaces of bodies. She notes that affects 'do not reside in subjects or objects but are produced as effects of circulation. The circulation of objects allows us to think about the sociality of emotion' (Ahmed, 2004, p. 8). This way of considering affects de-centers the subject as the source or producer of emotions. Instead, it directs attention toward movements, flows, and circulations of affects, which bring into being particular kinds of objects; objects that appear to embody those very affects. In short, affects make bodies. Ahmed (2004) describes this as the 'outside in' model as opposed to the 'inside out' model of emotions that is dominant. The work of the researcher then becomes the exploration of how emotions flow and cohere around some bodies and objects while sliding over others. That is, the researcher aims to show that 'it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made' (p. 10). Ahmed (2004) uses the term 'affective value' (p. 11) to describe this phenomenon. By tracing histories of flows and movements of affects, a researcher can hint at the processes that lead particular objects to accumulate certain affective values and become 'sticky' objects (Ahmed, 2004).

At the same time, affects do not exist outside relations of power and reality. Grossberg (2010) argues that we need more theorizing around the specific modalities and apparatuses of affect because affects are always 'existing in and produced by machines – in ways that cannot be separated from the articulations together of reality and power' (p. 337). Thrift (2004) also directs attention toward institutional practices that consolidate, modify, invest, and/or engender particular kinds of affects. This means that we have to be attentive to how subjects and objects are articulated as embodying specific kinds of affects. We need to consider how these are produced, within what contexts and what happens when contradictions surface and what we have called, 'seepages' occur. For instance, we found that teachers delineated appropriate and inappropriate affective performances for students and for themselves within the classroom. Yet, at the same time, we noted moments when these norms were threatened by performances that violated them. Through an analysis of such performances, we can explore the production of affective value ascribed to particular objects and subjects. We do not suggest that teachers deliberately set out to modify affects within the classrooms or even are the only agents engaged in doing so. Yet, when considering the current schooling structures that place the teacher at the center giving her/him specific domains within which to exercise power (Grossberg, 2010), it often means that the teacher becomes a critical actor in modulating classroom affects.

Narrative as method

The critique of poststructuralist conceptions of experience noted earlier does not necessarily afford researchers engaging in narrative inquiry premised on privileging individual experience an easy way to straddle these competing philosophies. If the fundamental premises of these orientations are incompatible, can they co-exist? Is a purist stance a requisite for doing such narrative inquiry or could we adapt the notion of qualitative methodology as a 'continuum' with 'vast middle spaces' (Ellingson, 2011, p. 595) to make a persuasive argument for stretching borders and/or speaking across philosophical differences? What are the implications for designing studies, collecting data, and performing data analysis?

In pursuing these questions, we explored the work of Gubrium and Holstein who have written extensively on narrative approaches to research in the social sciences (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009; Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, 2011). Their analytics for an investigation of the 'technology of self construction' combines a focus on the individual's theorizing of the everyday world, the *hows* of the everyday production of the self (what they refer to as 'discursive practice'), and the cultural–historical discourses that create the conditions within which various configurations of the self are possible, the *whats* of the context in which the self is produced, ('discourses-in-practice'). The process by which they accomplish this interplay is through a method they term 'analytical bracketing' wherein the researcher alternates between the two orientations. We saw this method as offering a window to engage with the borderland space between a more Deweyan and poststructuralist narrative inquiries.

There are clear distinctions in emphasis between Deweyan concepts underlying narrative inquiry and the traditions that collectively constitute a 'constructionist analysis' (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011) for narrative inquiry. The former's absolute allegiance to individual sense-making departs from the latter's premise of denying primacy to either individual agency or to the discursive conditions for the construction of self and experience. Yet, its vagueness of method notwithstanding (Maynard, 1998) and in the absence of a clear methodology for occupying philosophical borderland spaces within narrative inquiry, it offers an analytics that can be concretely deployed with empirical data. Specifically, it offered us a means to reconcile the differing orientations we brought as researchers to this study. The first author's understanding of school phenomena grew out of the narratives of local actors, while the second author was situated within the poststructuralist tradition, which views social phenomena as effects of, and effecting, discursive practices. In a 'constructionist analysis' approach, we recognized the opportunity to retain our philosophical and political commitments to a significant extent, while also generating important knowledge that can serve teacher educators everywhere. The first author collected all data used for this paper and the second author participated in the analysis.

Data sources

Data for this paper draw on the narratives of three teachers whose classrooms were the sites of qualitative inquiry conducted by the first author (Naraian, 2008a, 2011, 2016a). Ethnographic techniques of prolonged engagement, participation-observation, interviews, and document analysis were utilized in the studies (Merriam, 2009). Jessica was a white first-grade teacher (general educator) in an elementary school in a Midwestern US suburban district. The student population in Jessica's classroom included one student with significant multiple disabilities, one with physical disabilities, one English-language learner, and several students labeled as 'gifted.' At the time of the study, the school was 75% white, and the remainder mostly black and Latino; 23% of the students qualified for free/reduced lunch. Data were collected through participant-observation (approximately 130 h) and 13 separate interviews with teachers, therapists, families, and other school personnel at this site over 9 months during 2005–2006. The research focus of this study was to investigate peer narratives of disability in an inclusive classroom. Qualitative products that emerged from this study (Naraian, 2008a, 2008b) disclosed the significance of 'paradigmatic narratives' (Linde, 2001) for the generation of peer relations between students with and without disabilities. The 'paradigmatic' narrative in this mostly white, middle-class suburban school

that served as the accessible elementary school in the district, included a school-wide commitment to positive behavioral supports and to the inclusion of students with significant disabilities.

Anita (general educator) and Maria (special educator), both teachers of color with Hispanic backgrounds, taught collaboratively in a fourth-grade classroom in a large urban district in Northeastern US. There were two students with labels of learning disability in the classroom who used the AlphaSmart™, a portable device into which they could type their writing. The school was comprised predominantly of Latina/o students, 94% of whom qualified for free/reduced lunch. It was a 'dual-language' school, which meant that on three days of the week, students were instructed in Spanish and in English for the remaining two days. The first author collected data at this site through participant observation (approximately 25 h) mostly during literacy instruction, three interviews with the teachers (held jointly) and two interviews with families of students with disabilities during February to June 2013. The focus of this study was to investigate the use of assistive technology to promote the literacy development of students with disabilities. Like Jessica, these teachers were deeply committed to inclusion and to providing supports to enhance the participation of all students including students with disabilities. School-wide practices reflected a strong commitment to culturally relevant pedagogy as well as the use of collaboratively taught classrooms in each grade where students with and without disabilities were served by both general and special educators.

We note the distinction between these teachers' commitment and our own understandings of *inclusive* education that encompass a range of pedagogical approaches to support many forms of diversity in the classroom. In describing their classrooms as 'inclusive' therefore, our intent is not to present them as exemplars, but rather to recognize that inclusivity remains an unfinished process wherein teachers develop complex rationales to continually enact their commitments within imperfect contexts (Booth, 2009; Naraian, 2016b).

Data analysis

Although data from each study have been subject to prior data analysis to address other questions within the realm of inclusive education (Naraian, 2008a, 2011, 2016a), for this paper we re-examined the data from teachers using the research questions: How do emotions delineate the contours of inclusive education in schools? What kinds of objects and subjects emerge as affectively charged in teachers' narratives? While teacher interview data served as a particularly important source for analysis, field notes and interview data from other members of the school community served a necessary contextualizing element in the development of codes and categories. The analysis for this paper sought to accomplish the 'analytic bracketing' suggested by Gubrium and Holstein (2009), Holstein and Gubrium (2011). Applied throughout the process of data analysis, this method is used to disclose the interplay between the individual's construction of the self through interactive processes and the institutional conditions and discourses that mediate such processes. This means that 'the researcher intermittently orients to everyday realities as both the *products* of members' reality-constructing procedures and as *resources* from which realities are reflexively produced' (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009, p. 347, italics in original).

This movement between the *hows* and the *whats* that made up teachers' experience was accomplished by alternately bracketing one and then the other. It may be seen as extending the interplay between a semantic (naïve) and semiotic (critical) reading that Czarniawska (1997) recommends when interpreting field texts. We began by coding data inductively so that the emergent categories closely reflected the priorities and perspectives of the participants. The development of broad categories emerged from our desire to understand how teachers in each study navigated their commitments to students with disabilities with other priorities, tasks, and responsibilities. Our next level of analysis entailed a somewhat more concerted focus on how affects were articulated to describe objects, i.e. schools, classrooms, and students, as well as what was permissible or not within these contexts. The immersion in their teaching lives as storied by teachers through an analytics of *discursive* practice allowed us to chronicle the flow of affects in these settings while the analytic of *discourses-in-practice* equally disclosed particular discourses of schooling that conditioned those flows. The thematic

categories, therefore, that emerged from these tracings and indexed the institutional context of teachers' work, allowed 'sticky objects' (Ahmed, 2004) to emerge more readily. We now began to create interim texts (Clandinin et al., 2006) that could represent this careful balancing of both the *hows* and *whats* of their narrative constructions. These interim texts facilitated the refinement of the preliminary themes that emerged in the analysis. In the following sections, we offer a description of teachers' pedagogy and present excerpts from their interviews that particularly illustrate their engagement with affect within classroom practice.

Inclusion and the management of affect

Working toward inclusivity, the teachers in the study drew on particular conceptions of school, which in turn prescribed specific affective performances for students and themselves. Given that the schooling contexts in which each of them worked were markedly different – urban/suburban; early elementary/late elementary; independent teaching/collaborative teaching models; predominantly white/Latino – it was not surprising that we distinguished two separate narratives, though they clearly overlapped in many ways. In her pedagogy, Jessica sought to ensure that schools delivered on their promise to serve as happy places. Anita and Maria also embraced this function of schools as invoking positive affect. But, while Jessica's emphasis on building a 'family' was itself her targeted outcome, Anita and Maria continually linked the significance of such happy places to academic outcomes. The following paragraphs illustrate teachers' assumptions about the affective responsibility of schools and their marking of particular affective performances as appropriate or inappropriate within the classroom.

The affective responsibility of schools

Jessica's ruminations about her class and her practice were situated within a particular expectation of schools that could draw students. She noted earnestly:

> I love the fact that we are about to have winter break and they say they are sad, because they enjoy coming to school. … They have to feel appreciated and valued, safe and smart. All of those things are what makes learning happen. And I know I am only a small piece of that.

Jessica envisioned schools as having the responsibility to create environments where students *felt* appreciated, valued, safe, and smart. In other words, it was the orientation of the school community toward students that allowed them to have the kinds of experiences that made them feel happy and return to it again and again. Student sadness when school closed for winter break was an affirmation of the affective achievement of the school community in creating a happy space that was a prerequisite for learning.

Jessica took her role within this affective responsibility of the school seriously, even if she acknowledged that she was only a small part of it. She reiterated the importance of socio-emotional development for academic achievement. Speaking of her professional goals, she noted:

> I think the biggest one is that I want this to feel like a family, like a school family. Where the kids can come and know that this is a safe place and it's OK if you make a wrong guess that nobody is going to laugh.

Schools could be 'happy' places when they permitted students to associate it with the comfort and security they might recognize within families. Not surprisingly, Jessica's classroom community included a variety of ways in which students were deliberately invited to support each other and create a caring community. This included classroom jobs, using literature to provoke conversations about differences among students as well as to address conflict that arose among them, and promoting the participation of students with differing disabilities in mainstream academic experiences.

Jessica likened the school to a 'family,' signaling affects of love, safety, and care that often attach themselves to the construct of the 'family' and determine practices among its members. It was commonplace, therefore, for students to participate with Harry, a student with significant disabilities, in typical classroom routines such as Morning Meeting, choice time, as well as in content area activities

of math and reading. Similarly, Jessica reported being amazed that a student would make an 'unkind' remark about a substitute teacher; such behaviors clashed with her conceptualizations of appropriate practices in the classroom. Her own affective orientation to her students was fueled by the desire to 'meet everybody's need,' such that she could identify that 'perfect spot that is going to get them to the next level.' Even when considering students (labeled as disabled) whose actions were hard to understand, she stated earnestly 'I want so much for this person to feel happy at school.' Her desire to effectively solve the problems facing her students transferred to the students whose 'happiness' at school was contingent on her ability to decipher them accurately. School as a happy place was achieved therefore through the continual reciprocal movement of positive affect between students and Jessica. 'I think they know that I care about them and that I really am invested in their learning and that means the world to me.' The production of schools as happy places owed as much to Jessica's *discursive* practices (it grew out of the particular kind of interactional classroom space that she created) as to the longstanding discourses of 'safety' and 'care' that accompanied ideas of 'community,' i.e. the *discourses-in-practice*.

In contrast, it was the institutional emphasis on accountability and the priorities of a working class, Latino/a community that constituted the primary *discourses-in-practice* and informed the goals of Anita and Maria within their fourth-grade classroom. Like Jessica, they maintained the normative notion of schools as invoking positive affects accomplished through teachers' mediation, but they were also more likely to emphasize the significance of this for learning outcomes. So even as they readily adopted class discussions on 'broadening the band of normal' (field notes, April 2013), their instructional approaches reflected a strong emphasis on explicit instruction (Archer & Hughes, 2011). This dual focus equally informed their pedagogical commitments to students with disabilities. For example, Marcelo (a student with learning disabilities) had a history of anger during previous years that still surfaced occasionally. However, it was his low self-esteem and general aura of negative affect, which hindered his ability to initiate participation in the classroom, that concerned them. Remarking on his fragile sense of self-confidence, Anita noted:

> If it is more than one step, by the time you get to three, he has forgotten one and two or mixed them up. And then you can see his face … this cloud goes over. … And then he shuts down.

Marcelo's tentative orientation to the academic material rapidly devolved into anxiety and then confusion, leading ultimately to a state of complete unavailability to external learning influences. Marcelo's affective performances induced Maria to liken him to 'Eyeore[1]'; the teachers seemed to suggest that excessive anxiety and/or fear in approaching the unknown was not appropriate. Inasmuch as schools needed to invoke positive affects, students were also required to perform affects that aligned with school expectations. Hence, though Marcelo's frustration may require a thoughtful response from teachers, its unregulated exhibition within the classroom context was simultaneously constituted as a threat to his learning.

The linkage between normative academic and affective performance was a recurring theme in their stories. For instance, Marcelo had 'more skills to be able to express himself' unlike Sam who was at 'kindergarten level in terms of like shutting down, in terms of not using language, and language being so difficult for him to access.' Skills in academic tasks were seen as nurturing the capacity to deliver proper affective displays in the classroom. For instance, the use of a technological tool to facilitate writing not only helped Marcelo deliver improved writing performance that was 'awesome' but also altered his affective orientation to school. Noting his rising self-confidence as a beneficial side outcome, Anita added: 'I think that we would praise him before, but if he didn't have some sort of output, then he didn't feel like the praise was worthy.' The positive affect induced by the learning tool owed partly to the incontrovertible evidence of his academic capability that it generated. The teachers hoped that the positive affect evoked in Marcelo through the use of the tool would transform into a more insistent and dynamic affect that could accomplish further practical ends for him in school, such as advocating for himself with future teachers.

Self-advocacy for managing one's academic needs, however, was equally premised on exercising proper affective management.'Before I get to that point where I'm totally frustrated, I need to be able

to take a step and be like, "I need help"' (Anita). By making self-regulation a prerequisite to attaining assistance from others, teachers inadvertently placed greater onus on Marcelo to be responsible for his own learning. Alternatively, it might even have served as a mechanism for *their* own affective management. The expectation that students with disabilities should acquire skills to manage their own learning placed a check on teachers' levels of frustration and anxiety while still sustaining their professional standing as educators knowledgeable about student needs and learning goals.

Cultivating desirable affective orientations toward disability

All three teachers consciously cultivated positive affective orientations toward disability in their students as part of their commitment to produce schools as happy places. Such intentional work might generally be reflected in the ways they included students with disabilities within everyday classroom routines as well as in their curricular decision-making. For instance, Anita described their rationale for selecting a book, noting that an essential question was to consider why physical differences are viewed differently from those that are 'academic' or 'language-based,' she commented even though theirs was an 'inclusion classroom' many of its students did not see themselves as being in one. This, however, changed in middle school, where such placement is seen as 'bad.' In their curricular planning, therefore, they took up the following questions: 'What does it mean to be in an inclusion classroom? What does it mean to academically struggle?' Their goal was to mediate students' affective orientations toward themselves as members of a classroom that typically signaled the presence of learning difficulties, and which in turn, could invoke negative affects. In the absence of an understanding of learning struggles, Anita worried that students in this classroom might just as easily adopt negative affects toward peer learning differences. Affective norms of an inclusive classroom seemed to require that learning differences of any kind be detached from negative orientations, thereby consolidating schooling spaces as generally positive places. The fictional text the teachers selected, 'Out of my mind[2]' (a first-person narrative of a student with significant communication disabilities) was intended to reorient students to the experience of struggle and develop more nuanced meanings of participation in the classroom.

Jessica similarly engaged in such deliberate mediational work around student affect to foster a true 'family' community. She described a particular student who avoided contact with a peer with disabilities, Melissa, and would 'not touch her [or] sit next to her.' When, on one occasion, he refused to extend her the customary greeting required of all students, Jessica deliberately set out to reorient him and assimilate him back into the affective norms set forth for the classroom: "So later that day, … . I really crushed it. I made him ... He ... didn't have to touch her, but at least go up and look her in the face and say 'Good morning, Melissa…'" She was convinced that her intervention resulted in a greater positive orientation on the part of this student toward Melissa. The sustainability of schools as happy places was predicated on positive orientation between students. Interestingly, this top-down approach to community was characteristic of the kinds of 'dialogues' that she initiated with her students (Naraian, 2008a).

Sometimes, students themselves were enlisted in the project of managing their own and peers' affective states in order to sustain the classroom as a positive space. Describing her efforts to enable peer understanding of difficult student behaviors, Jessica instructed them to say to a student who might display alarming behaviors, "'I know you are angry; why don't you go to the safe place.'" This would teach them 'the kind of language they can use, so that they feel more in control of the situation.' So peer interpretation of that student was mediated through a strategy that could replace fear and/or anxiety with a sense of control. Such mediation of peer affect simultaneously sanctioned recognition of the student with disability as needing to be managed and conferred peers with the authority to assert control over him. Jessica's approach drew, ironically, on the premise of tolerance through the notion that 'everybody needs different things.' The invitation to the student with disabilities to remove himself to the 'safe place' was presumed to have a restorative effect; it allowed peers to regain a normative affective state of composure in the face of disability and in doing so, it restored the happiness of the school space. However, by granting this strategy only to peer students, it implicitly suggested that some students were *needier* than others, thereby leaving students at different hierarchical locations.

Affective seepages

Teachers in our study sought to manage classroom affects according to their understandings of the kinds of affects that would produce learning and re-articulate schools as happy/familial learning environments. In their spoken narratives, excerpted below, particular affective performances of students emerge as threatening the coherence of their efforts and indexed the fragility of their pedagogical work. These non-normative performances, that often took the form of anger, crying, or screaming, and which we are collectively naming *affective seepages*, became occasions that demanded actions by the teachers to restore the norm. We theorize *affective seepage* as performances that exceeded the boundaries of collectively defined proper/acceptable affects within the classroom. These affects, as noted above, often entailed particular orientations to learning, peers, and the school; any performance that threatened such orientations was marked as unwelcome and hence, required active intervention by the teachers.

Jessica delineated distinctions between affective performances that she could manage and those that were either challenging, escaped her, or appeared as excesses:

> I think emotional and behavioral things can sometimes be more challenging to combat than just adjusting a lesson to different levels. That's something that I am very comfortable with. You know, giving two different problems so that some kids are working on a lesser number but its perfect for where they are. Whereas trying to help someone who is hiding under your desk and crying and screaming, it's different. …

Jessica links affective performances such as crying, anger, or screaming, with emotional and development disabilities marking them as dangerous (they needed to be fought against) and as more difficult to address in the context of inclusion. In contrast, her comfort with lesson modifications and adjustments designated the forms of differences they invoked (mild or moderate disabilities) as safe and innocuous. Jessica's delineation of extreme forms of behavior, which we understand as *affective seepages*, located these affective states as occupying unusual spaces (hiding under the desk) unlike the routine activities of typical students in implicitly normative classroom positions and locations. In another instance, Jessica recalled a student 'who would run from the building' and who was encouraged to go to a location in the building to 'decompress.' Excess affects had to be 'decompressed', constrained, and assimilated back to the norm. In fact, unsuccessful performances of affect by students were read by Jessica as personal failure: 'I think those kids [referring to the student described above] are my biggest puzzle and I am drawn to wanting to help them so badly that the feeling at times that I didn't know exactly what to do just created a feeling of unsuccessfulness.' This work of containing, assimilating, and controlling affects took a toll on her self-competence; it also implicitly marked some affects as generative for learning and others as disruptive, thereby extending teachers' roles in marking and producing boundaries of acceptable/unacceptable behaviors.

The teachers' discourse about such affective seepages often suggested that their origins lay outside of the instructional context. For example, describing Marcelo's struggle to be a participant and raise his hand in the classroom, Anita exclaimed: 'It's so scary! … He's so timid and so the hand starts going up and then it goes right back down. Then he goes … "Nope." … And he puts his head down. … And he shakes his head.' Marcelo's negative affect moves from him to the teachers to become inscribed as *their* fear. But Anita's appraisal of his learning process also seems to consign executive control of this phenomenon to something external to themselves, and which appeared to move him alarmingly to a state of extremely low confidence. With the cause of his negativity lying outside their control, not only did his negative affect evoke fear in them, it simultaneously located his behaviors as arising from factors outside the instructional context thereby releasing them from any participation in his affective performance. This is further substantiated in subsequent moments when the teachers referred to his bouts of anger as originating from his family or from 'hormonal stuff.'

Many forms of student affective seepages tested teachers' endurance. For instance, Anita and Maria described their inability to understand Sam's behaviors when he grew frustrated and 'slowly start[ed] s sinking underneath the table.' Stating wearily, 'we spend a lot of our time trying to decode Sam,' they described this process as 'draining,' 'challenging,' and 'frustrating.' The events that triggered Sam's incomprehensible reactions were unpredictable, barely noticeable, and almost impossible to identify. Sam

invoked continuous puzzlement that, in the absence of satisfactory resolution for pedagogic purposes, became transformed into teacher frustration and eventually, to exhaustion. Yet, the behaviors displayed by Sam also signaled an affective trajectory that drew him and the teachers into a relationship where his disability became one of many constituent elements of an endearing personality. Describing him as 'super funny' and 'hysterical,' Anita explained that when he was engaged in his work he might dance and sing/talk to himself, giving himself little 'pep talks' that could lead them to burst out laughing in the midst of class. The laughter that Sam invoked in the teachers pulled him to them, enveloping him in an endearing light. His learning efforts simultaneously produced something that demanded serious attention. The exhaustion induced in attempting to attach meaning and decipher his behaviors notwithstanding, their approach to him drew on their generalized affective orientation to all students that produced an inclination and desire to 'coddle' them. This meant that affective seepages could still be assimilated back into classroom norms through invocations of 'love' that they openly expressed for him. Such love attached itself to him (and his peers) transforming into anxiety when considering future placement options for him.

Sticky objects within inclusive classrooms

As noted earlier, we understand affects to be productive – that is, affects produce the very objects that appear to *have* said affects (Ahmed, 2004). This way of conceiving affects entails that we trace how affects – in their movements and circulations – produce the very surfaces of objects. Some affects seem to 'stick' to particular objects charging them with greater capacity to have particular kinds of effects on people. The form and structure of these objects develop in part from the ways these affects encounter them. Affects may also slide over objects producing fewer effects. The stickiness of some objects, i.e. the capacity of objects to invoke different kinds and intensities of affects, index relations between people, ideas, and objects. Below we note that in the teacher data we examined, *tests* and classroom *placement* emerged as two such 'sticky' objects around which affects of fear, distaste, and anxiety cohered. While these objects are typically understood as producing particular kinds of affects *in* teachers, students, and families, our tracing shows that these objects *become* formed as such, as a consequence of the circulations of affects within the classrooms. Our analysis of these objects disclose how the affective performances of teachers and students within classrooms (obtained through an analytic of *discursive practice*) are modulated by these objects which arrive in classrooms with accumulated affective values that are often beyond the control of teachers and students (i.e. *discourses-in-practice*).

Tests

The assessment of student learning typically conceived through standardized measures was a site of affective intensity particularly within the instructional practice of teachers in the urban setting and to a lesser extent in Jessica's classroom. The period of data collection in each setting (Jessica: 2005–2006; Anita/Maria: 2013), the urban/suburban distinction, as well as the grade levels in each study may account for this discrepancy to a partial extent, although data collection in Jessica's classroom occurred at the height of the accountability policies of the No Child Left Behind era. In any case, acknowledging the consequential nature of standardized testing in most school systems today (Lipman, 2004; Ravitch, 2013), we pay particular attention to the data from Anita and Maria in this section. Both teachers were cognizant of the particular significance of basic academic skills for the particular student community in their school. The testing mandate coexisted with their anxiety about the phenomenon of the 'school-to-pipeline' which Anita identified during her interview as driving her professional practice. She observed: 'I mean, this is like a real struggle. So they're nine and ten and we're not thinking about it, but what happens in ten years is really important to me.' The gravity invoked by the futures of these students moves to become her anxiety as well as her commitment to them. Not only did it bring a determination to help students acquire basic academic skills, such commitment also played an important role in her own affective management when implementing the accountability mandate.

It's a horrible time for me because I don't want to let the *sense of the test being so powerful* to then translate into me being frus- …, overwhelmed. And … coming out in the way that I speak to my kids and the way that I think about them. And I don't want that to cloud my judgment. So I think at this time, I'm working double time to meditate in the morning. To do things to take care of myself first, as a person, so then what I'm putting out to my kids is really loving. (emphasis added)

In this narrative, 'tests' arrive as objects of anxiety; affective values of fear and anxiety have already deposited onto them due to prior discursive practices. Anita, however, engages with these objects by figuring out ways to diffuse their negative affective value to her. She takes up meditation, but also invokes the memory of her ideological commitment to schools and students. Anita's image of herself in the face of mandatory assessment as comprised of 'wires that are bundled up really tightly' also relationally produces her students as vulnerable objects who must be shielded from teachers' stresses and pressures. In desiring to create a learning environment, therefore, that is still 'safe' and 'playful' she suggests that the stress induced by tests when managed well, can still produce happy spaces.

Still, such management of affects induced by tests was not easily accomplished. The following is an excerpt from an informal conversation between the first author and the teachers in the classroom.

As Maria spoke about Sam and his tendency to shut down, her face reddened and she looked ready to cry. Anita, glancing at her, smiled gently and noted, 'we get quite emotional about this'. She also mentioned that this was the very first week they actually had begun test prep. She emphasized that that was not how they thought about reading or how they wanted the students to think about reading. They also both agreed that it was likely that Sam would fail the state tests in April. A pained expression on her face, Maria explained that she felt terrible trying to make him do something that she knew was not good for him or was not helpful to him. Anita nodded in agreement and acknowledged the pressure she felt in having to prepare the kids for the test. (Field notes, 21 March 2013)

The orientation to tests as dreadful gave rise to uncomfortable pedagogical dilemmas for the teachers that invoked students as powerless. However, the anxiety induced by this situation simultaneously required that teachers' distaste for testing be transformed into a positive orientation toward tests in order to better prepare students to succeed in them. In this regard, Anita was observed introducing the metaphor of preparing for a marathon to help students understand the distinctive and temporary nature of test preparatory work (field notes, 21 March 2013). For Sam, however, such purposeful duplicity on the part of teachers could have little beneficial effect, inducing guilt in Maria.

Additionally, encounters with tests as anxiety-producing objects rubbed against students in specific ways as well. For instance, despite the fact that Sam took his test with a scribe in a small group of six to eight students, the very encounter with testing appeared to produce anxieties that appeared in and through his bodily movements. Maria recalled an earlier incident, when he began to throw his pencil and then crawled into the fetal position under the table. Asked to write, he simply repeated the same vowel over and over again. Sam's breakdown illuminates the embodied dimensions of affective circulations in the classroom. Encounters with affectively charged objects, in this case tests, elicited specific reactions from Sam. Such encounters when repeated over and over again accumulate, and deposit anxiety and fear onto the object of 'tests', such that later encounters automatically evoke tests as distressing. For his teachers, Sam's state of incoherence and fear further served to produce tests as contemptible (Anita: 'a crapshoot') and lacking any value; yet, as 'powerful' enough to impact his future placement.

Placement

Historically, the linkage between disability and placement (within general or special education class-rooms) has remained central to the education of students with disabilities (Danforth, Taff, & Ferguson, 2006). If they are included in the general education classroom, the accompanying tacit assumption is that they *could* have been placed in some other more restrictive environment. As much as the *threat* of removal is significant for students and their families, the *possibility* and necessity of such removal equally preoccupies educators. Teachers' affective engagement with discourses of schooling, ability, and learning in this study, disclosed 'placement' as another sticky object, whose 'stickiness' emerged in the (un)certainties that it evoked in the teachers.

Describing Harry, a student with significant disabilities, Jessica spoke about the conflicts among teachers in hosting Harry within their general education classrooms.

> I think probably there are people who feel like you know, he's not learning, why is he here? I think it can be easy to slip into that thought process unless you have seen the social component for the other kids. And so, possibly, if I hadn't seen any of the interaction or how the other kids were benefiting, then I think it could be easy for another teacher to think well, what exactly does he do here?

The uncertainties invoked by Harry's placement, could only be transformed into a more positive orientation when his inclusion was understood as delivering benefits to *peer* students. Her positive experience with Harry in her classroom notwithstanding, Jessica empathized with the uncertainties expressed by teachers toward the placement of Harry in the general education classroom. The memory of her own initial mix of nervousness and desire toward the responsibility of becoming his teacher, ('How is that going to look?') rendered her colleagues' doubtfulness and suspicion normal. The affective premise of disability as *threat* shared by all educators (inclusively oriented or otherwise) may contribute, in some part, to the thickening of place-boundaries that has left unquestioned the primacy of ability in structuring general education spaces (Slee, 2011).

Inasmuch as the affective orientations of teachers toward disability clearly framed the issue of where students with disabilities should learn, affective performances of *students* also warranted discussions of suitable placement. Anita and Maria explained their desire to see Sam in a small group setting (this might be self-contained special education classrooms) rather than a large general education classroom. In the latter, he was more likely to be found 'playing with fluff,' 'looking the complete opposite direction,' 'saying "I don't get it",' or returning to the teachers to say, 'Wait … this is what you want me to do?' In a large group, Sam's affective performances signaled uncertainty, boredom, rejection, confusion, and anxiety that collectively indexed a failure to align with proper classroom affects associated with large group learning. When placed in a small group, however, 'then you see him, like, it's SO amazing!' He seemed to magically acquire the affective control that permitted him to deliver appropriate academic products. Still, they rejected the assumption made by other school personnel such as the psychologist, that the inability to perform normative classroom affects should automatically predict placement in a self-contained classroom. Ultimately, however, the stubborn linkage between classroom placement and disability endured their tortured reflections, as they accepted the personnel limitations within their school ('we just don't have the manpower') and decided to pursue a self-contained placement for him. Placement, as an object emergent from contested student and teacher affective performances, was simultaneously lodged within teachers' allegiance to the school professional community. Such solidarity *with the school* could not invoke the assertive resistance required to advocate compellingly *against the school* for an inclusive alternative for Sam.

Discussion: the significance of affect for inclusive pedagogy

By focusing alternately on the specifics of the interactional context within which teachers produced norms for affective performances, and on affectively charged (i.e. discursively constituted) objects that enter inclusive classrooms, we have highlighted the affordances of an attention to affects for exploring the dynamics within teachers' efforts to engage in inclusive pedagogy. We specifically draw on recent theorizations around affects as productive of subjects and objects to trace how teachers delineate the affective contours of inclusive classrooms, the kinds of objects that emerge as most sticky, and how they configure teacher and student performances. We acknowledge that this paper does not account for the intersectionality inherent in the discursive construction of any experience, in this case, particularly of race, class, and disability, which might have strengthened the findings.

The conceptual and methodological orientation to investigating inclusive pedagogy that we adopted in this paper called for a suspension of belief in affects as inhering in people and objects. Instead, it directed us as researchers to pay attention to teachers' narratives and trace the role of affects in demarcating schools as specific kind of objects and (im)proper orientations within an inclusion classroom. At the same time, we had to pay attention to the ways in which commonplace discourses of schooling

moved teachers' practices to constitute their narratives; that is, we needed to consider that teachers and students are not freewheeling agents in managing the affective tenor of the classrooms. For instance, in this study, teacher conceptions of schools as 'happy places' or as places that can restrict the school to prison pipeline, played a critical role in influencing how they crafted their roles within inclusive classrooms. These ideas, which have long histories of articulation both within and outside classroom and school contexts, then mediated their conceptions of inclusive classroom communities and the student and teacher performances permissible within it. This focus on the circulation of affects, by alternatively focusing on *discursive practices* and *discourses-in-practice* was found to be significant for inclusive education research in two ways. Firstly, it disclosed affective norms that accompany notions of ability/disability; and secondly, it surfaced the role of affect in the delineation of teacher competencies for inclusive pedagogy. We address these findings in the following paragraphs.

The rational, if unquestioned, desire for schools as 'happy places' entailed forms of affective management that were bound with normative conceptions of a student-in-school. Schools, however, are not, and have not historically been, happy places for many students, particularly from disadvantaged groups (Anyon, 1980; Lareau, 2007). Inclusive education scholarship has focused on the ways in which norms of ability that structure schooling systems, procedures, and practices (Slee, 2011) marginalize students with learning differences from different communities and perpetuate deficit-based notions of disability. For instance, discourses of special education have been shown to systematically exclude students of color from participation in mainstream educational experiences (Artiles & Bal, 2008; Ferri & Connor, 2006). Despite policy reforms premised on redressing such inequities, deficit discourses in schools continue to marginalize students of color and their families (Artiles, Bal, & Thorius, 2010; Thorius & Maxcy, 2014). This study discloses additional ways by which such deficit discourses can infiltrate even sincere commitments to inclusive practices. For instance, notwithstanding her earnest desire to include all students, Jessica encouraged affective performances that ironically perpetuated conceptions of disabled students as a threat; for Anita and Maria, the mystery of disability and the protections it required did not preclude applying normative standards for student self-expression and self-advocacy. An engagement with the affective registers of inclusive classrooms, therefore, provides one additional way for researchers to understand microprocesses in classrooms that may lead to marginalization of students with disabilities.

The requirement to be suspicious of norms notwithstanding, the construction of an inclusive classroom community will likely presuppose affects that are deemed as proper or improper and which in turn, may generate seepages that escape the control of teachers. How such seepages will be addressed depends on teachers' sense-making of these events in relation to enduring discourses of schooling. So, while Anita rationalized their intent to place Sam in a self-contained classroom on the grounds of *his* affect management, Jessica drew on family narratives to re-orient her affect more positively toward Harry. Yet, the study also disclosed that teachers' management of their own affect in this process produced individualized meanings of disability that worked against inclusion. Issues of equity for students with disabilities that preoccupy inclusive education scholars were not deliberately ignored in this process, but layered in a complexity that defies facile prescriptions for inclusive practice. Such contingent responses to affective seepage in the classroom reinforces the significance of orienting to inclusive education not as an abstract ideal, but as a never-ending, unpredictable process that requires continual reflection (Booth, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001).

Even as we see teachers as agentive within classrooms, our study simultaneously hints at the ways in which teachers are but one element in a broader assemblage of inclusive classrooms. For instance, our tracing of teachers' production of, and engagement with, sticky objects of tests and placements sheds light on the ways in which teaching as a practice is strongly influenced by movements, flows, and affects outside the control of the teachers and beyond the space of the classroom. The sticky objects mediated the performances of teachers, students, and families arriving in the classrooms as already having accumulated affective values from the broader cultural narratives of schooling and (dis)ability. This calls for a conception of teacher agency within teacher education research for inclusive schooling as distributed across living and non-living objects. In addition, while we attended to the engagement

of families only peripherally in this paper, their practices too are part of the assemblage. Future research may consider the circulation of affects between teachers and families, as well as relations with peers, as additional parts of this assemblage that may play a significant role in the construction of schools as happy places. In short, an engagement with affect opens up the space of the classroom to disclose the movements across networks of people, objects, and ideas that bear heavily on inclusive practice. In this way, our study builds on the call to scholars of education to pay more attention to mobilities in researching schools, and to problematize school-centered conceptualizations of pedagogy (Burdick, O'Mally, & Sandlin, 2014; Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010).

We offer a final note on the generativity of 'jumping and straddling' (Ellingson, 2011) philosophical boundaries that we have attempted in this paper. While undoubtedly arousing discomfort at various times as we negotiated the interpretive process, we both came to recognize the necessity of the other's perspective especially as we contemplated the kind of social change that each of us sought. We were reminded that philosophical and methodological orientations to research are often informed by the particular transformations sought by researchers and the sites where they hope that will occur. While the first author has been invested in influencing teachers' practice, the second is interested in transforming ways of thinking about teachers and students that lead to the marginalization of those who are marked as 'different.' Both are critical projects of social justice that inevitably gesture toward different theories, methods, and resources. And, yet, both are critical precisely due to their complementarity.

Notes

1. A character in the popular children's story series about 'Winnie the Pooh' by A. A. Milne.
2. See, Draper (2012).

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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