

“MISS, YOU’RE SO GAY.” QUEER STORIES FROM TRAINEE TEACHERS

David Nixon & Nick Givens

Abstract

This study focuses on interviews with six lesbian, gay or bisexual trainee teachers, and explores their experiences in relation to sexual orientation. Initial analysis reveals interesting perspectives on the lives of trainees in Higher Education, during school-based work and socially; it also provides a window onto the attitudes to sexuality (individual and institutional) encountered by interviewees. Further analysis takes theoretical tools from three overlapping discourses in which these trainees are participants: the local campus culture, the construction of sexualities in schools, and wider society’s perceptions of gender and sexuality. These tools uncover significant concerns around identity management, vulnerability and powerlessness, institutional silence, and the hegemonic masculinity of some student cultures. They also reveal significant creative resistance to discrimination, enabling us to conclude that, in spite of some methodological difficulties, idealism is not misplaced as an inspiration to emancipatory endeavour.

Introduction: Purpose and Methods

A study into the experiences of a small number of minority ethnic British-born teacher trainees recommended explicit anti-racist and multi-cultural curriculum content in order to support wider participation in Initial Teacher Training. Further theoretical work around the relationship between ethnicity, social class and personal identity was also advocated (Givens et al., 1999). The above paper prompted discussion between the researchers about the experiences of other minorities in initial teacher training; this, combined with the pastoral insights and observations of one of the researchers, created the imperative for a matching investigation into the lives of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) trainee teachers. These students represent a similarly small group, but one which is largely invisible, both in terms of presence in the University and, more especially, research evidence about their experiences and perceptions. At the point this

study was initiated, however, the Labour government's attempt to repeal the discriminatory Section 28 had raised public awareness about issues of sexuality within the education system.¹

The local context is potentially significant. With its roots as an Anglican teacher training college with a strong reputation for sporting prowess particularly on the rugby field, the present campus is not at first glance a propitious place of study for LGB trainee teachers. Additionally, with the presence of only three academic Schools, there is not the diversity of students that might be found on a larger campus.² While this research focuses exclusively on Education students, reference to Sports Science undergraduates is frequently necessary given the distinctive sports culture on the campus; indeed there is some progression by students from a Sports Science BSc to the one year Physical Education postgraduate teaching certificate (PGCE). The personal and professional commitment to equal opportunities of both researchers (one of us an Anglican Chaplain serving the campus communities, the other a PGCE tutor), completes the background to a study that aimed to learn from the experiences of this minority group.

We recognised from the outset the ethical complexities of using our power and privilege to 'give voice' to the lives of lesbian and gay trainee teachers (Dewar, 1993, p. 222). Riddell (1989, p. 96) highlights:

the moral dilemma [concerning] the balance of responsibilities to those who the research is on, against the need to present the findings in an uncompromising way to a wider audience.

We were also guided by Lincoln's notion of authenticity that: 'the reader should come away from such texts with heightened sensitivities to the lives being depicted' (1993, p. 37), and Richardson's suggestion that 'we can choose to write so that the voice of those we write about is respected, strong and true' (1990, p. 38). The writing of LGB life histories will, we hope, promote wider awareness of these experiences of campus life, as well as adding to the limited research literature in this field.

Participants were sought through personal contacts with students, and then through a much-reduced version of snowball or chain sampling (Patton, 1987). The rationale of the study, together with an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity were presented to potential participants. Of the six individuals who agreed to be interviewed, two were men - something of a breakthrough as lack of data from gay teachers or trainees led Sparkes (1997) to write an ethnographic fiction. Men and women were represented in those studying both primary education (four students) and secondary education (two students). In contrast to other studies (Clarke, 1996, 2002b; Griffin 2002; Sparkes 1994, 1996, 1997; Squires and Sparkes, 1996), all but one of the interviewees were training to teach a subject *other* than physical education. Interviews lasting up to an hour were conducted by one of the authors in a student advice room. These were recorded, transcribed and analysed initially according to grounded theory (Charmaz, 1994). Questions were formulated around six areas of interest similar to those of the ethnicity study previously cited, namely: academic curriculum, school-based work, life in a hall of residence and on the campus, social life in the city, and the experience of parental home. Some level of verification was assured by allowing participants the possibility of commenting on and adjusting their own remarks, as well as responding to the more general findings. Three out of the six took this opportunity.

Our initial analysis, which followed the questions of the semi-structured interviews, produced a set of profiles that allowed comparison across the different areas of interest (horizontally) and produced a snapshot of each individual (vertically). This has been summarised in the table below, using the actual words of each participant to illustrate significant points. (Figure 1) [*Figure 1 about here*]. The picture that emerges is depressingly consistent with the (scarce) literature on the experience of LGB teachers: reticence by the heterosexual majority to address openly the issue of homosexuality, and its concomitants - heterosexism and homophobia; a wider social ignorance about the reality of life for LGB people, both its similarities to and differences from the heterosexual community; and some expected but still surprising evidence of prejudice.

What stands out from the data, however, is the individuality and diversity of interviewees' experiences, challenging any assumed uniformity of view among even

these six. For example Nikki's experience of school-based work was influenced positively by the presence of an 'out' gay teacher in the staff room. A more accurate summary is made of the group when we say that what they share most is the difficulty of constructing an identity for themselves both as teachers and individuals. This first analysis suggested that their various homosexualities allow the dominant heterosexual culture to impose an identity on them which they are unable to resist. This is captured in Sally's words when she wonders 'if I told anybody, I wouldn't be allowed to be a teacher' (See also Clarke, 1996, 2002b).

We are encouraged therefore to deepen our analysis with the intention of exploring this dynamic disequilibrium in the light of the interview data and by reference to feminist and feminist poststructuralist methodology. If feminist research allows us 'to put the social construction of gender at the center of one's inquiry' (Lather, 1985, p. 294), then a later poststructuralist version opens the possibility of examining the operation of power within potentially competing discourses - still centrally focussed on gender:

Feminist poststructuralists believe that in order to disclose which discourses should be privileged it is important to have a clear analysis of how discourses are structured, what power relations they produce and reproduce and the implications of different meanings for social relations. (MacNaughton, 2000, p. 56)

Feminist poststructuralism allows us to recognise that lesbians, gay men and bisexuals may have similar positions within a discourse of alienation, at the same time as in other respects being differently placed from one another. A more general account of lesbian feminism, and how it differs from gay liberation, is given in Jagose (1996). A weakness of poststructuralism alone lies in its failure to imagine ways of privileging anti-discriminatory policies and practices; the introduction of the feminist element allows this balance to be redressed. Further discussion of this argument is found below.

Interview data allows us to construct a model which configures the three overlapping worlds which these trainee teachers inhabit and which impinge on their day-to-day

lives and consciousness. Most immediately, the campus has a significant impact on these students as the quotations in the Profiles indicate; more widely than this, the discourse in schools around the areas of gender and sexuality will have some influence in their lives; more widely still, the prevailing cultural and societal views on homosexuality will, actively or not, affect the way many of this generation of trainee teachers react and behave. This is shown in Figure 2. *[Figure 2 about here]* Our observations include the extent to which these different cultures are successfully negotiated in the professional socialisation of becoming a teacher. Each of these worlds has its own distinctive discourse in respect of sexuality, which we then placed against the interview data to arrive at a second construction. This process identified three dominant themes: Coming out/Being out/Staying out; A Conspiracy of Silence; The Assault on Patriarchy. Each theme draws material from the three worlds in which the students live; for example, Coming Out is experienced and theorised in different (and sometimes similar) ways on the campus, in schools and in the wider reaches of society. Their inter-dependency is represented by the common ground between the circles. (Figure 3). At the centre, the common ground of all three, lie issues of power and identity, paralleling the position of trainee teachers situated at the intersection of three sometimes complementary, sometimes competing discourses. *[Figure 3 about here]*

Coming out/Being out/Staying out

The ritual of ‘coming out’ dates, according to Annamarie Jagose (1996), from the Gay Liberation movement, initiated by the Stonewall Riots of 27th June 1969 in New York. The twin intentions of challenging and discrediting psychiatric and medical models of homosexuality on the one hand, and on the other attempting a large-scale transformation of society in the areas of gender and sex roles, had given way by the mid 1970s to an ‘ethnic model’. In contrast to the liberationist stance, the ethnic model was committed to establishing gay identity as a legitimate minority group, the ‘gay community’, whose official recognition would secure citizenship rights for lesbian and gay subjects (Jagose, 1996). Evidence from these interviews establishes the fact that such a ritual, explicitly or not, is still enacted thirty years later.

For Andrew, it is a significant rite of passage: 'I didn't come out properly until I was in my third term ... whereas I'm in London, I'm out, I know how to handle myself in public.' Kenny and Laura found things more problematic and do not use this specific phrase, preferring instead to talk about who they told - the wrong person in Kenny's case. Sally and her girlfriend Jo are both practising Christians, so the first people they told were their Christian Union house group leaders, who were surprisingly supportive. On arriving at university, Nikki, who had not questioned her sexual orientation before, was faced with meeting Judy who was very 'out there'. She suggests that Judy's motivation was: 'I'm at university, so I'm going to let everybody know I'm gay.' By contrast Nikki phrases her own way of letting people know - 'I'm in a relationship with a woman'. Susan problematises the whole concept on two levels. She is irritated that 'You have to go round and tell everybody one by one, so they don't feel that they've been deceived'; and she is surprised how backward she finds the city in this respect, adding that 'it actually became an issue that you have to come out'. A comparison across the lives of these six implies that their personal history affects how they experience being a trainee teacher in the city and how these experiences are interpreted. It is likely that those who had only owned their sexual orientation after joining the course had different perspectives to those who had been 'out' for some years, and had enjoyed a large, urban gay 'scene'.

A sociological analysis of masculinity (Connell, 1995, p. 151) suggests that gay identity is established enough to be seen as a separate social category, so that 'Gayness is now so reified that it is easy for men to experience the process of adopting this social definition as discovering a truth about themselves'. In this model, 'coming out' actually means coming in to an established milieu with its own customs, language, culture and so on. It is a category which others are able to impose - 'I wasn't really sure myself, but when the rumour came out, everybody made up their minds for me, so that was all a bit exciting ...' (Kenny). Yet Nikki, Susan and Kenny himself ('I don't need membership of a group to be aware of it ...') undermine any suggestion of a single gay identity or community. Though none use the term, the cross-section of experiences to which these interviewees refer may reflect closer affinity to the Queer movement of the early 1990s than the identity politics of Gay Liberation a decade before. Influenced by postmodernist and poststructuralist thinking, Queer champions

the choice and construction of multiple identities exemplified here, rejecting (for lesbian and gay people) both an assimilationist position and the exclusionist tendency of identity categories. It owes much to Foucault who positions sexuality as a 'discursive production rather than a natural condition' placing it in the larger arena of modern subjectivity as 'an effect of networks of power'. Going beyond lesbian and gay studies, Queer shares with poststructuralism the concept that identity 'as a coherent and abiding sense of self' is simply 'a cultural fantasy' rather than an objective reality (Jagose, p. 82).

Questions of identity formation and management (Being out) are central to the way in which the LGB educator seeks to reconcile the difference between the public and private self, responding to questions both in the staff room (what did you do at the weekend?) and in the classroom (have you got a boyfriend, miss?) (Kehily, 2002; Sparkes, 1994, 1996). For our interviewees this operates in a number of different arenas requiring potentially different responses: on the campus, in the wider University, at a teaching practice school, in the parental home, and in a future permanent teaching post. There are differences too between the formal curriculum of academic study and the informal curriculum of life in the student population. In terms of school placements Andrew comments, 'I've got no problems with people knowing at all, but it would then depend on where I was teaching and who I was teaching with as to whether I felt comfortable enough to tell them or not'. There is also an issue of geography with local rural schools being perceived as more problematic than those in London³ - 'I definitely wouldn't want to stay [here] ... because I find it quite small-minded, the people here' (Nikki). Laura differentiates between two city schools, deciding that to be open in the staff room is generally inadvisable, and highly so in one case. The most extreme form of management is denial, which is exemplified by Susan. Describing how she uses what Sparkes (1996) might classify as a 'passing strategy', she is shocked, and disappointed with herself:

it's the first time I've ever actually denied it, the first time ever. I've always been honest if anybody's asked me. I haven't denied it straight out, but, you know, it's ... in the staff room it's very 'everybody's involved in everybody's lives', you know, three of the teachers, only two are getting married now because one of them broke up, and everybody knows about it straight away,

and they're all on top of each other ... we went down the pub for lunch, and they were saying, 'So are you seeing anybody?' and I just go, 'Oh, no' just to brush it aside, don't make an issue of it.

Laura makes an important link between her personal and professional lives. She feels that her failure to be authentic and honest in one area of life is of detriment to her professionally - it forces her to be a different sort of person in the classroom to how she perceives herself to be in reality. Nikki comments that she doesn't want to lie or tell selective truths. Clarke (1996, 2002b) identified such 'dual identities' as a source of tension for lesbian students and teachers. All the interviewees aspired to working ultimately in schools where they could be honest with colleagues.

None of this would be needed were there not the threat or reality of homophobic harassment. A comparison between the interview material here and the literature with particular reference to schools (Clarke, 1996, 2002a, 2002b; Ferfolja, 1998; Lilley, 1985; Sparkes, 1994, 1996; Squires and Sparkes, 1996; Squirrell, 1989) reveals both similarity and difference. For example, the use of the word 'gay' as a generalised form of abuse is mentioned by Laura and Susan (see also Clarke, 2002b; Kehily, 2002; Sparkes, 1996):

S. Everything's gay, well everything that is bad is gay. He's gay, she's gay, this work's gay, this game's gay, everything.

R[esearcher]. And that's automatically something negative is it?

S. Yes, it's a negative word. It's gay or lame, they kind of run together.

In this situation Squirrell (1989, p. 32) focuses on the powerlessness of the teachers: 'It is impossible to calculate the effect on teachers of hearing prejudicial comments and being able to do little about it'. Kenny reveals another form of harassment, unexpected but equally disagreeable, when he is propositioned by another male teacher from his school in a local night-club. The tentacles of heterosexism and homophobia spread wide - Sally was prompted to volunteer for this study by the experience of a straight male friend on her course. He asked her to go with him to a parent-teacher meeting to 'prove' his sexual orientation. The irony is not lost on her.

In the formal curriculum and in the hall of residence, there is evidence of tacit heterosexism. For example, Nikki and Sally both desire an explicit statement that being a LGB teacher is not a contradiction in terms - 'I think I would have liked a reference to being gay, and to it not being a problem'. Out of this comes evidence too of internalised homophobia. Clarke (1996, p. 203) observed a 'fear of being viewed as perverted and as a corrupter of young innocent children'. In this study, Nikki expresses her recognition that she and others had perhaps doubted their suitability as teachers, and taken on for themselves the easy conflation of homosexuality with paedophilia.

I find it strange that there were three of us asking ourselves that question, whether we should or not be teachers, because of it, because we were almost taking on that opinion, and then, when you realise what you're actually saying by that, it's just sick.

Andrew is amused and a little embarrassed by course tutors assuming that he is straight when the rest of the class know that he is not. In the hall of residence, there is an assumption that everyone is straight, so much so that Susan cannot believe that no one has guessed her sexual orientation. However, once she is acknowledged as lesbian, she is perceived solely as that. More than one student suggests that life has become easier as they became older and accepted within a peer group.

By comparison, on the campus and with other students (an informal curriculum) there is more blatant abuse. Andrew finds that older Sports Science students are aggressive towards him:

The years above, I know the ones you feel intimidated by, and they're the ones that have given me hassle and grief, and that's what I've found the hardest part is dealing with them, when you don't know them, but they're giving you the grief, but you still recognise them and you have to see them on a daily basis. They don't remember that they groped you the night before when they were pissed up or whatever ... That's been the hardest part, dealing with the Sports Scientists.

Though Andrew might disagree, Kenny identifies the female Sports Science students as unthreatening, 'It's just the whole masculinity in sport thing'. Yet, the same phenomenon affects the women on the campus too (Clarke, 1996). Laura comments that, 'If two women stood within a radius of a metre, when I first arrived, they would have been burned at the stake.' This is a manifestation of what is termed below as 'jock culture' - the realisation through sport of orthodox or hyper masculinity.⁴ It is important to note that it is not synonymous with the community of PE/Sports Science students.

Given the ever-present threat of harassment, LGB teachers and trainee teachers require personal examples if they are to preserve and maintain healthy identities (Staying out); but beyond this, tolerant and affirmatory role-models are needed for all pupils as they are growing up, irrespective of sexual orientation. This is part of a programme for the re-education of society about homophobia and heterosexism, including the naming of homophobia (Ferfolja, 1998). Yet, teachers who challenge homophobia in the interests of diversity and equality are not without their opponents, particularly from the religious lobby (Donovan, 2001). The DFES 2002 guide to bullying *Don't Suffer in Silence* records that at present only 6 per cent of schools refer specifically to bullying around sexual orientation. Role-models for young males are particularly significant if Head's analysis of schools is taken seriously. The macho male culture of suppressed emotion, objectivisation of body and pride in physical survival which was once essential to the working man, and rewarded him with income and status, is now redundant, and the 'Faustian contract' between men and society has been broken (Head, 1999).

The significance of role models is partially reinforced by our sample of trainee teachers. Andrew volunteers the thought that greater openness about sexuality is beneficial not just to LGB students, but to all those intending to teach. Nikki has taught alongside an openly gay teacher in London and found that 'it was just brilliant to see him in the staff room, because he wasn't going to pretend for anybody ...'. She hints that reciprocally she has become somewhat of a role-model for other students. This is desirable until she is viewed as 'the resident gay counsellor' to whom other women students then become attracted. The management of identity for trainee

teachers on placement is not the province of lesbian and gay students alone. Andrew remarks that straight trainee teachers engage in a similar process to avoid discrimination, even avoiding smoking at school.

A Conspiracy of Silence

The power to name, the provision of role-models, an agenda for re-education are all strategies for breaking the ‘conspiracy of silence’ and ‘cycle of invisibility’ surrounding the issue of homosexuality in schools. To remain silent is to signal consent to homophobic and heterosexist practices, among which there is a good measure of confusion and conflation: homosexuality is lumped in with education about AIDS, feminism and lesbianism are confused, and lesbianism is associated primarily with sexuality rather than identity. (Squires and Sparkes, 1996; Squirrel, 1989). Our interviewees express the same concerns in the courses they are following. For some, as we have seen, it is almost an ontological question which requires reassurance: is it possible to be gay and a teacher? For Andrew, there are practical issues around the lack of guidance, ‘We’re only in the second year, but we’re on our second placement’. Kenny notices a disjunction between what students discuss (‘all the time’) and what has only just been introduced in the third year. Laura’s criticism is more stinging because it reveals a desire to silence discussion even within the area of Equal Opportunities where homosexuality might be properly discussed, together with an ignorance of legal provisions:

L. It’s certainly never ever been brought up when we talked about Equal Opportunities within our course ...

R. And so issues about sexual orientation

L. Were all brushed aside, brushed aside, everything. We were talking about race and religion at one point and it did come up and they said, “Well, you can’t talk about it in schools so don’t get yourself into that situation.” It was very much brushed under the carpet ... I think it should be addressed. If we’re addressing all the other sort of areas that discrimination occur in, you know we talk about sex, we talk about gender, we talk about race, religion, then why aren’t we talking about homosexuality? It seems to be an area which is a ‘no go’ area.

She recognises that an open discussion is required on two pastoral fronts: there is a very real possibility that any teacher, regardless of their sexual orientation, may be called upon to provide advice to vulnerable pupils or combat homophobic bullying; for a lesbian or gay teacher this counselling role will take on a different dynamic, while they themselves may be subject to harassment from pupils or other staff.⁵ Laura mentions a specific example (quoted in the Profiles), when she was unprepared to deal with a casual remark from a student. In later correspondence, she underlines this point by saying that she is now facing these issues in her first year of teaching. A recent discussion in a *TES* website ‘chat room’ voiced similar concerns from current LGB teachers.⁶ Susan recognises that homosexuality is not the only ‘big issue’ not discussed. Her teaching group prefers the non-controversial, apolitical subjects of a functional curriculum. When the interviewer asks what the class does want to talk about, she replies, ‘How to teach history of rivers’.

This curricular silence contrasts not only with Kenny’s experience but with the much greater visibility of ‘out’ gay and lesbian public figures, and a greater public awareness of homosexuality. For example, the television series *Queer as Folk* featured Nathan, a very provocative gay school-boy; and more recently, another series, *Teachers*, starred JP who is again openly gay. These fictional accounts provide not only an opportunity to initiate discussion, but also challenge out-dated stereotypes of male homosexuality. In view of the School of Education’s reluctance to debate this matter more freely, we are persuaded by Laura’s own analysis: ‘I think [the tutors] are not willing to face up to reality. They’re living in “Oh no, that sort of thing doesn’t happen here.”’

The Assault on Patriarchy

The gay identity of Nathan and JP remains however a structural subversion within patriarchal society; they have made ‘the wrong object choice’ (Connell, 1995, p. 157) just as their LGB sisters and brothers do in the tougher world outside TV make-believe. Intentionally or not, simply by being themselves these interviewees undermine a certain conception of western society which translates itself in different ways to the particular context in which they are studying to be teachers. If they are

perceived to be mounting an assault on patriarchy, it may be simply that patriarchy had first decided to attack them.

Evidence from schools and from another teacher training institution reveals that the boundaries of both gender and sexuality are policed by the troops of hegemonic masculinity. Personal accounts make grim reading - Mark Lilley (1985, p. 20) describes his schooldays as 'a terrible ordeal, one full of loneliness, anxiety and isolation', concluding with the charge that of all state institutions schools are 'the most cruel enforcers of heterosexist norms'. More recent reports point to even nursery children using gay as the 'ultimate put-down', with teachers uncertain how to tackle homophobic language (Wallace, 2001). Mac an Ghail's close observation of staff room, classroom and playground exposes a culture where both teachers and heterosexual male students defend the 'administration, regulation and reification of sex/gender boundaries' (Mac an Ghail, 1994, p. 45). The identity of the heterosexual male is established by an interplay of misogyny and homophobia. Insults like 'poof' and 'nancy boy' seek to control not only the sexuality of boys, but the specific forms of permitted masculinity.⁷ Among negative behaviour traits which result, the academic underachievement of boys has been widely noted. Epstein remarks that:

The main demand on boys from within their peer culture (but also, sometimes, from teachers), up to the sixth form at least, is to appear to do little or no work, to be heavily competitive (but at sport and heterosex, not at school work), to be rough, tough and dangerous to know. (Epstein, 1998, p. 106)

The construction of such masculine identities in which teachers and boys take part is over and against the 'dual others' of women and gay students. This exclusion from the mainstream raises serious issues about the support of and effect on both boys and young men who resist these stereotypes, and on girls and young women who are socialised into traditional roles. Mary Jane Kehily (2001) expands this, suggesting that for young men homophobia acts as a structuring presence in their lives, whereas for young women notions of sexual reputation shape their experiences. Lesbians are doubly excluded by prejudices - both as women and as lesbians. One example of the moral panic created by the challenge to these stereotypes is analysed by Epstein (1996). She describes the personal attacks in the press on the head teacher Jane Brown

who turned down the offer of ‘free’ tickets to *Romeo and Juliet*, and remarks that such abuse ‘serves as an illustration of the energy devoted to the policing of heterosexuality, particularly in the context of schooling’ (p. 267). (See also Clarke, 1996). Mac an Ghail (1996) also observes that ‘lezzie’ is a parallel term of abuse for girls who step out of line.⁸ Susan acutely observes a similar process of informal demarcation in the joint classes of primary maths and science:

it’s really obvious in my class that there’s a table of loud lads who shout and dominate and then there’s a table of women who are connected with them, young, female, giggly, and then there’s a table of everybody else, who’s big, gay ...

In this study, it is Kenny who uncovers the link between behaviour in schools and the jock culture on the campus. He alludes to difficulties during his own time at school, and his hope that at university everyone would be more mature. On the contrary, he found that there was ‘no difference at all, it’s all hierarchical, everyone is still in their little groups’. These observations and Laura’s, (see the Profiles) bear out Skelton’s findings in his study of his own ‘Major PE College’ (1993). He seeks to show that the particular form of masculinity which ‘emphasises pride, physical prowess, competition and aggressiveness’ became hegemonic because no other form of masculinity could be envisaged. In turn this undermined the new approaches to teaching and learning which were being advocated through official channels, indirectly contributing to the sense that PE was anti-intellectual.

Further evidence of the past enforcement of patriarchy on the campus where this research is based is provided by a final year PE student studying in the mid 1990s, who worked ‘undercover’ observing and analysing the behaviour of his own peers. His unpublished undergraduate dissertation makes similar claims about a sub-culture whose distinct language and strong sense of group identity was enhanced by highly competitive behaviour on and off the sports’ field, and by initiation rites centred around alcohol and the stories of (hetero)sexual exploits. The rules were enforced by physical and verbal pressure to conform within a rigid hierarchy, with the ultimate threat being summary exclusion from the prized group. Homophobia and

heterosexism were elements in the controlling of masculinity's boundaries. He also identifies a circular recruitment process for PE by both schools and university departments. There was a deliberate selection of men who would maintain the status quo and act almost as mirror-images of the recruiters, thereby perpetuating discriminatory practice. Such discrimination might better lead us to talk of hetero-patriarchy, underlining in addition to gender prejudice the compulsorily heterosexual nature of patriarchal structures. By contrast, an insight into the potential difficulties of a gay PE student is provided by Sparkes (1997) in a fictional ethnography around 'Alexander'.

Silence surrounds the activities of female PE students in both studies, though other (non-PE) women students in the dissertation express their dislike of the jock culture by calling it sexist. The typical PE male is rendered ironically by one as 'the equivalent of the blond bimbo'. Laura describes the same phenomenon thus:

[Male Sports students] are meant to be these gorgeous, muscular, tall, handsome men that we're all meant to fall madly in love with and drool over, [but] because we're not, then they don't like it.

She also alludes to the common assumption that women in sport are automatically classed as lesbians (Woods, 1992). Griffin (2002) refers to the way in which women athletes are 'feminised' before matches and in the media because 'the underlying fear is not that a female athlete or coach will appear too plain or out of style, the real fear is that she will look like a dyke, or even worse, is one' (p. 196); and Clarke (2002a) writes of a lesbian teacher's existence as 'somewhat perilous' and 'precarious'.

The change from PE to Sports Science at this University, and the latter's popularity, has led to a much greater diversity of student intake, with around half now being women. The old patterns of hegemonic masculinity are breaking down, nevertheless it is still possible for Andrew to observe: 'I know Sports Scientists that have had a lot of hassle and just won't even hang around with people off their course.' Although it relates to administration, Capper's (1999) conclusion about the pervasive negativity of heterosexism in schools or universities is pertinent here. She writes that 'Queer research in administration can open another window on power and oppression in

schools, and further expose how heterosexism constrains everyone' (Capper, 1999, p. 5). Given the strength of patriarchy in both schools and universities, and the varied forms of discrimination against those who contest it, the degree of resistance demonstrated by these lesbian and gay students, and their personal resilience, might be considered surprising. A theoretical explanation of such resistance begins our conclusions.

Power and Identity - an unstable nexus?

Our initial thoughts that those interviewed for this study had very little in common except for their difficulties in constructing and maintaining identities is supported by a comparison to the American gays-in-the-military debate. There are real resonances with the experiences outlined above:

Gay people confronted a circus-full of generals, senators, religious ideologues and media commentators, all proud of their ignorance of homosexuality, and busily engaged in legislating the meaning and worth of their lives. Like other inferiorized people, gay people discover themselves as symbols manipulated in the transmission of the dominant culture. Their 'objective' identity lives beyond their control; the image of self, institutionalised by cultural agents, exists alien to their own experience and self-expression. (Adam, 1998, p. 469)

Yet this conclusion sits uneasily with the postmodern/poststructuralist lens employed for this analysis. Foucault's exploration of the complexities of power networks reminds us, together with Weeks (1996), that every attempt to control sexual variation by legal, moral or social pressure has resulted in the reinforcement and re-shaping of homosexual behaviour rather than its repression. For the individual, anxiety and suffering may have been intense, but at the level of society there has been a significant history of resistance.

On a smaller scale, the readiness of these six men and women to be interviewed, their public openness about their sexual orientation, their frankness in speaking to us, and the acuteness of their observation form another part of this canon of resistance. Humour is a powerful weapon in this respect, and Andrew shows his self-confidence in this little vignette told against himself:

We was in the [gay] pub on Tuesday, doing the karaoke, and these two new guys got up, and one of them was only one of the kids that I'd taught off my last teaching practice, and the other kid was a sixth former at my boyfriend's school. We felt so old, we really did. I'm only twenty! And there was one of my kids that I've taught, and there's one of his sixth-formers there. Nightmare!

Perhaps too, the suggestion from the male interviewees that among Sports Science students there must be at least a few who are gay (but deeply closeted) reflects a wish to recruit subversive allies to collapse the jock culture from within. Similarly, Pronger (1990b) talks of the ironic experience of gay athletes who challenge negative models of homosexuality. Desire itself is seen to contain the seeds of resistance:

The homoerotic desire for athletes is a paradox; it is at once a reverence for and a violation of masculinity. It presents us with the ideal form of homoerotic paradox, which is an attraction to masculinity that simultaneously undermines the object of attraction. (1990a, p. 135)

The same postmodern and poststructuralist analysis also raises questions in the area of identity. Mac an Ghail (1994) employs these tools in his investigations of schools, when he draws attention to the instability of all sexual identity (including heterosexuality), but also rejects the essentialist binary division of either straight or gay. Queer theory, using the same methodological tools, began life with a focus on sexuality, but then expanded its remit to enquire into 'those fictions of identity which stabilise all identificatory categories' (Jagose, p. 125).

There is evidence in our own study of this unstable nexus of power and identity. Without wishing to minimise in any way the harassment and bullying these interviewees have evinced, nor the curricular silence which echoes patriarchal collusion, none of our respondents could be described as, or would wish to be described, as problems or victims (Clarke, 1996). In the same way as the sixth-form boys in Mac an Ghail (1994), they seek 'creative strategies that served to challenge the ascendancy of heterosexism and homophobia' (p. 167). Kenny reverses the hierarchy of which he has been so critical by encouraging dialogue with those who believe he should be afraid of them - they are effectively silenced:

that's what people want, they want you to be upset, they want you to walk away. "What's your problem? If you want to talk about it rationally, we'll sit down and talk about it." I would never have done that in my first year, and people say, "You've got to be very careful because they'll beat you up." And they won't, they'll be no way they'll beat me up now because the amount of friends that I have, they wouldn't do it because people would stand by me.

While difficulties with sustaining authentic identity may be partly down to the dominant heterosexual culture, this positive and imaginative resistance leads us to revise our initial interpretations. Both interview data and theoretical insights indicate that, in addition, there is a complex mix of three other factors: a spirited resistance to the imposition of an external 'straight-jacket', a refusal to adopt a single LGB model (even one favoured by gay sub-culture), and a general destabilisation of fixed identities. Such resistance also refuses the researchers' too obvious temptation of falling into the same trap of assuming homogeneity in the original choice of research subjects.

However this conclusion raises theoretical problems of its own. The analytical tools which deconstruct gender and sexuality and so give voice to those previously silenced also tend to relativise any discourse (for example, of justice and equality) which wishes to oppose homophobia and heterosexism. The emancipatory endeavour of feminism and its adjuncts is seen as another 'grand narrative' among many, with little inherent ascendancy. As Riddell (1989, p. 79) writes: 'It is hard to imagine how a programme after a political change might emerge from the view that all accounts of reality have equal value.' More acutely, there is no point in simply advocating an alternative power system, for 'exchanging positions does not disrupt hierarchy...' (Lather, 1995, p. 303). The authors also wish to refute the view that by championing liberatory resistance they are in some way condoning the discrimination which engendered it.

If we are to go beyond a theoretically satisfying but essentially passive account, we need to traverse this impasse. While Francis (2001, p. 73) recognises that postmodernism and poststructuralism tend to deny the possibility of speaking for

anyone except the self, leading to a ‘fragmented emancipation’, a learning and listening process allows us a degree of agency.

We can choose to talk to, form relationships with, and read about the experiences of people with different material characteristics. In this way we are able to learn about and to imagine what it is like to experience life from their perspective.

She contends that there is also some coherence to our personalities, which are formed by a mixture of consistency and inconsistency over time, space and experience, both within ourselves and in relation to others. With these two arguments in place, Francis posits the existence of feminism as an ‘interpretive community’, one among many, where members share enough common ground to continue the idealistic liberatory endeavour to which this paper subscribes. Such a community allows the theoretical possibility of engaging with further work in this area, and of developing the findings of this small-scale study.

Conclusions

The constant strand through these various discussions is the complexity of similarity and difference, collision and continuity, found between the students we interviewed and the theory we have described. For example, we expected greater homogeneity of LGB student experience and perception: what we found was that six individuals had their own distinctive outlook on life. We then saw a certain similarity in the way in which LGB students were positioned by peers and academic staff: another look at the data through the lens of postmodern and poststructural theory discovered a more subtle balance of power and creative resistance to such discrimination. There was collision between the values and lifestyles espoused by the heterosexual majority (the jock culture, at its most extreme) and the mere existence of our group of students; there was continuity between the experiences LGB people (and women) in the worlds of the campus, the school and society.

We have constructed two models to understand firstly how any student is at the intersection of overlapping cultures and discourses, both shaping them and being

shaped by them; and secondly, with particular reference to the discourse around sexuality in these cultures, to analyse the narratives of LGB students. This gave rise to the dominant themes described more fully above. In reference to the narrow world of the campus, we need to ask whether such findings are typical of other university Schools of Education, or particular to those with a sports college background, and whether the combination of church training college and PE produces a uniquely antipathetic culture. From the perspective of the students, we might question in more detail whether these findings are typical of LGB students' experiences across disciplines and universities. We would hope also to relate these findings more closely to evidence of discrimination in the areas of gender, race, disability and so on. When Section 28 is finally repealed, which seems more likely now that the Conservative Party intends to allow a free vote in Parliament (Perkins, 2003), a more open attitude to the discussion of sexuality will be possible in classrooms and the concept of sexuality education will be re-opened for debate along the lines mentioned above.

We remain shocked, however, that research done in a liberal academic community at the start of the twenty-first century should expose a culture which by means ranging from silence to physical threat and assault marginalises one group of students in their pursuit of professional qualification. Further work needs to be done which respects and reciprocally learns from the voices of the gay and lesbian 'other': firstly in the area of raising awareness and curricular inclusion, both for education courses and across the campus; secondly, in the provision of non-judgmental administrative and pastoral support⁹; thirdly in pursuing research about the experiences of queer teachers, administrators, students and trainee teachers in both the school system and in Higher Education; and lastly in continuing to challenge discriminatory practice. When asked about his vision for the future, one of our interviewees said that he wanted to see '[LGB] men and women holding hands on the campus', adding that he could not imagine it ever happening. This research aims to contribute to proving him wrong.

REFERENCES

- Adam, B. D. (1998) Anatomy of a Panic: State Voyeurism, Gender Politics, and the Cult of Americanism, in: P.M.Nardi & B.E.Schneider (Eds), *Social Perspectives in Lesbian and Gay Studies* (London, Routledge).
- Capper, C. A. (1999) (Homo)sexualities, Organisations, and Administration: Possibilities for In(queer)y, *Educational Researcher* 28 (5), pp. 4-11.
- Charmaz, K. (2000) Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructionist Methods, in: Denzin, N. & Lincoln Y.
- Clarke, G. (1996) Conforming and Contesting with (a) Difference: how lesbian students and teachers manage their identities, *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 6(2) pp.191-209.
- Clarke, G. (2002a) Outlaws in sport and education? Exploring the sporting and education experiences of lesbian Physical Education teachers, in: S.Scratton & A.Flintoff (Eds) *Gender & Sport: a Reader* (London, Routledge).
- Clarke, G. (2002b) Difference matters: sexuality and physical education, in: D.Penney (Ed.) *Gender and Physical education: Contemporary Issues and Future Directions* (London, Routledge).
- Connell, R. W. (1995) *Masculinities* (Cambridge, Polity Press).
- CUCO, (2000) *Guidelines on sexual orientation for universities and colleges in higher education* (London, CVCP).
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (Eds) (2000) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (London, Sage).
- Department of Education and Science (1988) *Local Government Act 1988: Section 28: DES Circular 88/90* (London, DES).
- Dewar, A. (1993) Will all the generic women in sport please stand up? Challenges facing feminist sport sociology, *Quest*, 45, pp. 211-229.
- Department for Education and Skills, (2002) *Don't Suffer in Silence*, www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/
- Donovan, T. (2001) Teachers defend their attack on the bullies, *The Pink Paper*, 695.
- Epstein, D. (1996) Corrective Cultures: Romeo and Juliet, Jane Brown and the media, *Curriculum Studies* 4(2), pp. 251-271.
- Epstein, D. (1997) Boyz' Own Stories: masculinities and sexualities in schools, *Gender and Education* 9(1), pp. 105-115.

- Epstein, D. (1998) Real Boys don't work: 'underachievement', masculinity and the harassment of 'sissies', in: D.Epstein, J.Elwood, V.Hey & J.Maw (Eds), *Failing Boys* (Buckingham, Open University Press).
- Ferfolja, T. (1998) Australian Lesbian Teachers - a reflection of homophobic harassment of high school teachers in New South Wales government schools, *Gender and Education* 10(4), pp. 401-415.
- Francis, B. (2001) Beyond postmodernism: feminist agency in educational research, in: B.Francis & C.Skelton (Eds), *Investigating Gender: Contemporary Perspectives in Education* (Buckingham, Open University Press).
- Givens, N., Almeida, D., Holden, C. & Taylor, B. (1999) Swimming with the tide: ethnic minority experiences in initial teacher education, *Multicultural Teaching* 17(2), pp. 30-36.
- Griffin, P. (2002) Changing the game: homophobia, sexism and lesbians in sport, in: S.Scratton & A.Flintoff (Eds) *Gender & Sport: a Reader* (London, Routledge).
- Harris, S. (1990) *Lesbian and Gay Issues in the English Classroom* (Buckingham, Open University Press).
- Head, J. (1999) *Understanding the Boys* (London, Falmer Press).
- Jagose, A. (1996) *Queer Theory An Introduction* (New York, New York University Press).
- Kehily, M. J. (2001) Issues of gender and sexuality in schools, in: B.Francis & C.Skelton (Eds), *Investigating Gender: Contemporary Perspectives in Education* (Buckingham, Open University Press).
- Kehily, M. J. (2002) *Sexuality, gender and schooling* (London, Routledge Falmer)
- Lather, P. (1995) Feminist Perspectives on Empowering Research Methodologies, in: J.Holland & M.Blair, with S.Sheldon (Eds), *Debates and Issues in Feminist Research Pedagogy* (Buckingham, Open University).
- Lilley, M. (1985) *Gay Pupils*, Times Educational Supplement 5(4), p. 20.
- Lincoln, Y. (1993) I and thou: Method, Voice and Roles in Research with the Silenced, in: D.Mclaughlin & W.Tierney (Eds) *Naming Silenced Lives* (London, Routledge).
- Mac An Ghaill, M. (1994) *The Making of Men* (Buckingham, Open University Press).
- Mac An Ghaill, M. (1996) Deconstructing Heterosexualities within School Arenas, *Curriculum Studies* 4(2), pp. 191-209.

- MacNaughton, G. (2000) *Rethinking Gender in Early Childhood Education* (London, Paul Chapman).
- NASUWT, (no date) *Sexuality and Employment : Support and Advice for Members* (Birmingham, NASUWT).
- Patton, M. Q. (1987) *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation* (London, Sage Publications).
- Perkins, A. (2003) 'Tories get free vote on section 28' (January 16) www.guardian.co.uk
- Pronger, B. (1990a) *The Arena of Masculinity* (London, GMP).
- Pronger, B. (1990b) Gay Jocks: A Phenomenology of Gay Men in Athletics, in: M.A.Messner & D.F.Sabo (Eds) *Sport, Men and the Gender Order Critical Feminist Perspectives* (Champaign Illinois, Human Kinetics Books).
- Richardson, L. (1990) *Writing strategies: Reaching diverse audiences* (London, Sage).
- Riddell, S. (1989) Exploiting the Exploited? The Ethics of Feminist Educational Research, in: R.Burgess (Ed.) *The Ethics of Educational Research* (Lewes, Falmer Press).
- Skelton, A. (1993) On Becoming a Male Physical Education Teacher: the informal culture of students and the construction of hegemonic masculinity, *Gender and Education* 5(3), pp. 289-303.
- Smith, A. M. (1990) A symptomology of an authoritarian discourse: the parliamentary debates on the promotion of homosexuality, *New Formations: a journal of culture/theory/politics*, 10, pp. 41-45.
- Sparkes, A. C. (1994) Self, Silence and Invisibility as a Beginning Teacher: a life history of lesbian experience, *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 15(1), pp. 93-118.
- Sparkes, A. C. (1996) Physical Education Teachers and the Search for Self: Two Cases of Structured Denial, in: N. Armstrong (Ed) *New directions in physical education: change and innovation* (London, Cassell).
- Sparkes, A. C. (1997) Ethnographic Fiction and Representing the Absent Other, *Sport, Education and Society* 2(1), pp. 25-40.
- Squires, S. L. & Sparkes, A. C. (1996) Circles of Silence: Sexual Identity in Physical Education and Sport, *Sport, Education and Society* 1(1), pp. 77-101.
- Squirrell, G., (1989) Teachers and Issues of Sexual Orientation *Gender and Education* 1(1), pp. 17-34.

Townley, C. (1993) Lesbians play football too: Widening the gender debate, *Gender and Education* 5(3) pp. 321-324.

UNISON (no date) *Equality standards for lesbians and gay men in higher education* (London, UNISON).

Wallace, W. (2001) Is this table gay? *Times Educational Supplement, TES Friday*, 19th January 2001, pp. 9-10.

Weeks, J. (1996) The Construction of Homosexuality, in: S.Seidman, *Queer Theory/Sociology* (Oxford, Blackwell).

Woods, S. (1992) Describing the experiences of lesbian physical educators: a phenomenological study, in: A.C Sparkes, (Ed.) *Research in Physical Education and Sport: Exploring Alternative Visions* (London, Falmer Press).

Figure 1 Interviewee Profiles

(course abbreviations: s=secondary, p=primary, ug=undergraduate, pg=postgraduate)

	Andrew	Kenny	Laura
Gender	M	M	F
Course	s/ug/2nd	p/ug/3rd	s/pg
experience of course & school-based work	It hasn't been a problem or a difficulty. I haven't been in contact with any pupils at school that have come up with anything like that ... but nothing's been said at University either.	Lecturers have only started discussing it this year, the first two years it hasn't been mentioned. The other students, we all talk about it all the time, it's not a problem; I don't think it's a problem with the lecturers either ... I just think they probably don't know how to go about it.	It was very much brushed under the carpet. I had a situation at my school last week, two weeks ago, and a kid actually came up to me and, I don't know what context he meant it in, but in the middle of one of my lessons, he was in year 10, and he came up to me and said 'Miss, you're so gay' because I gave him 'out' in rounders.
Hall life	That was all right.	I was going to say horrific, but I don't think that's the right word at all, challenging	It was horrendous. ... It was awful because you knew that everyone was talking about you.
Campus life/city	When you're out in town, like down the quay and that, when you're in the student clubs and everything, you can feel as though you're being watched, things are said as you pass by ...	I thought that coming to University everyone would be a bit more mature. This is University, this is Higher Education so to speak; no difference at all; it's all hierarchical, everyone is still in their little groups.	I think here as a female you're expected to fall in love with the big PE handsome men, and if you go against that law, then you're strange. I think that works equally for the lads, because the lads are meant to fall in love with the tall, blonde, long-haired ... netballer.
Home	Whereas I'm in London, I'm out, I know how to handle myself in public and things like that.	so many friends, I've told them and they're fine, so easy. I've never experienced a place with so much sympathy towards gay people.	As far as my family are concerned, they haven't got a clue. Well, I say that, I think my father has, but I think he's waiting for me to tell him.

	Nikki	Sally	Susan
Gender	F	F	F
Course	p/ug/4th	p/ug/4th	p/ug/2nd
Experience of course & school-based work	At my last teaching practice there was a teacher who was openly gay, and it was just brilliant to see him in the staff room, because he wasn't going to pretend for anybody, and obviously in front of the kids he didn't seem camp at all, but he was so camp in the staff room it was just really funny.	I had my first relationship here at college, in Freshers Week and the whole of my first year I was completely convinced that if I told anybody I wouldn't be allowed to be a teacher.	we don't seem to have had any issues in a school sense, whether it's women and the hidden curriculum, whether it's race, sexuality, none of these issues have been touched upon at all. it's the first time I've ever actually denied [my sexual orientation].
Hall life	It's very bitchy anyway.	That's why I was convinced that everybody knew. I couldn't believe that people didn't know, I still can't, I reckon those people suspected, and yes, it's very public, very, very public.	Very wrapped up ... I knew like my love life was watched, because I was on one side of the corridor and the person opposite and the room next to her and the room along, were three girls who just sat in and did work.
Campus life/city	I would say amongst my friends, it's fine, because they don't see me as someone who is gay, they just see me as me, but I would be very aware if, like, I was with somebody, I wouldn't be that open with somebody, sitting in the bar on a Thursday night or on a Friday, because I'm definitely aware that there's this hostility.	I now have some friends where I can be completely open about it, like last night we went out for a drink and I was aware that everybody I was with was aware of the whole situation and so I could just talk about things normally.	There's all that thing that you are just sexual because you're gay, you've just become a sexual being, people become very suspicious, and you're always up to something. If you're nice to somebody of the same sex, well then you're obviously up to something and being suspicious.
home	I do feel like I'm leading a bit of a double life when I'm at home, because I'm sort of claiming that me and Judy are just friends.	[My parents] moved here after I started University, it's cruel.	It's not an issue like my Mum's gay ... so me and my two brothers haven't got an issue at all. My big brother, he's straight.

Figure 2 Mapping the discourses

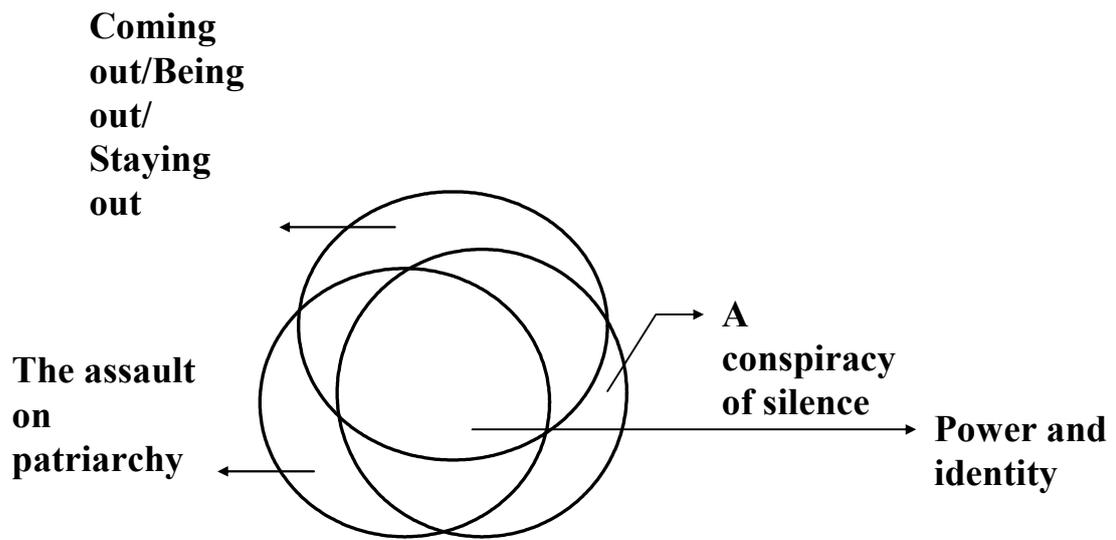
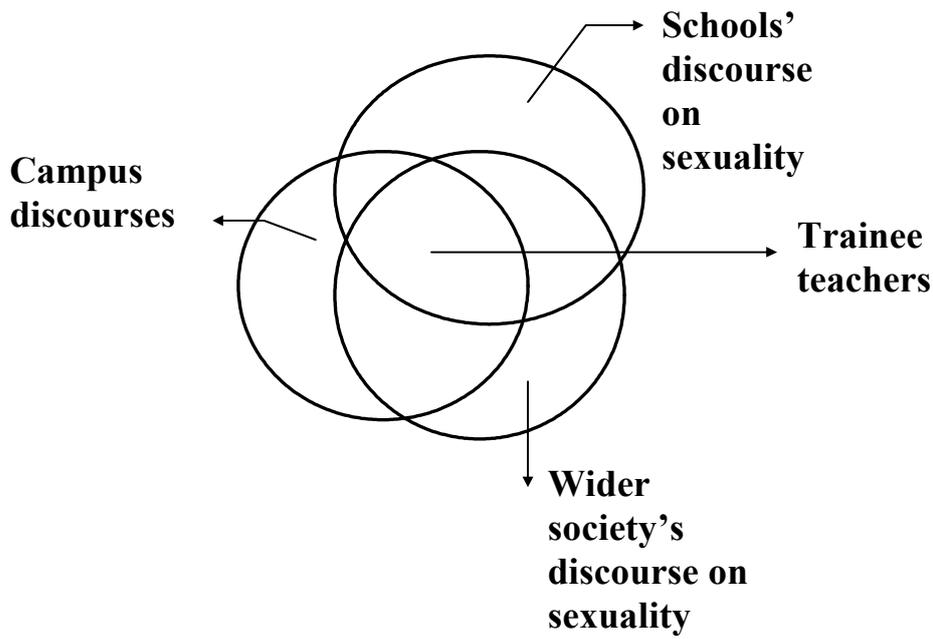


Figure 3 Mapping the dominant themes

NOTES

- ¹ Harris (1990), pp. 5-6, gives details of Section 28 and legal opinion on how it applies (or does not apply) to individual schools and teachers. The relevant provisions are as follows: “(1) A local authority shall not (a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality; (b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship. (2) Nothing in subsection (1) above shall be taken to prohibit the doing of anything for the purpose of treating or preventing the spread of disease”. Smith (1990) in Clarke (1996, p. 52) points out that: “It is not accidental that Section 28 prohibits the intentional promotion of homosexuality, what this encourages is an intellectual self-examination, a policing of one’s own intentions”. For full details of Section 28, see Department of Education and Science (1988).
- ² The independent Anglican teacher training college became part of the local University in 1978 but retained its position on a separate, neighbouring campus. The four year undergraduate PE degree was replaced by a three year BSc degree in Sports Science in 1995, still within the Faculty of Education. In 1998 the School of Education and the School of Health and Sports Sciences separated administratively, though they both remained on the same smaller campus. Education students either follow a four year undergraduate degree or a one year PGCE. Numbers of Education undergraduates have dropped after the courses were closed for new entrants in 2000. Within the small number of interviews undertaken there was a range of students from different courses. Additionally, since 2002 there has been a Medical School on the same campus.
- ³ The School of Education offers a number of teaching practice placements in Tower Hamlets, London.
- ⁴ ‘For boys, sport is an initiation into manhood, a forum in which they can realise their place in the orthodoxy of gender culture. Sport gives them a feel for masculinity, a sense of how they are different from girls. For those who wish to emphasize their masculine sense of place, the masculinity of sport is a happy discovery, a way of expressing and exploring an important sense of themselves.’ (Pronger, 1990a, p. 19)
- ⁵ Two Trade Unions involved in education (NASUWT and UNISON) both produce advice booklets, and the Commission on University Career Opportunity (CUCO) has a series of guidelines for HEIs; see References.
- ⁶ ‘I am an NQT who is out to the staff in my school.
A Year 7 pupil in my form made an offensive comment to me a couple of weeks ago; my choice was to allow it to go unchallenged, or to make it clear to pupils that homophobic attitudes will not be tolerated.
Considering my response, I sought the advice of a number of staff members with a variety of attitudes. Ultimately, I felt that I owe it to myself and to my gay/lesbian pupils to challenge homophobic remarks, and explain why sexuality cannot be used as an insult. (This in keeping with the current law on bullying).
In doing so, I have sought the support of senior management and explained that I feel homophobic comments should be dealt with in the same way as racist comments, since all run the risk of offending and alienating some pupils. I have

received this support 100%. This is no less than I expect as part of a comprehensive discipline policy which meets teachers needs.' Posted by michael24uk www.tes.co.uk (16th Nov. 2001).

⁷ This echoes the experience of one of the researchers who, when teaching in a mixed 16-19 college, noticed how readily male students used 'queer' or woman' as interchangeable insults (also reported by Townley, 1993).

⁸ The case of Shirley Pearce, a former teacher, makes the same point. By the Autumn of 1994 she was often distraught by the end of the day due to verbal taunts from pupils of 'lezzie, lemon' dyke' in corridors, lessons and in the street. She lost her case in the Court of Appeal under the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA), because a gay man might have suffered the same treatment. When women take a case under the SDA because of being called a 'lesbian' etc. but do not reveal their sexual orientation to the Tribunal/ Court, their experiences have been ruled as Sex Discrimination. (BBC Radio 4 *Woman's Hour* 3rd August 2001) See also "Shirley's Story", *Stonewall* 1(1), December 2000.

⁹ This is not to suggest that we found any evidence of discrimination in the administration of education degrees; however it was pointed out to us beyond the interview process that while a straight student might quite easily be able to talk about relationship problems during a school placement (and perhaps be given some short term accommodation of workload or deadlines), an LGB student in the same situation dared not shared their circumstances for fear of prejudice.