

## Chapter 2

# GLBTIQ Students; What's the Problem?

*Paul (gay male, 17yrs, Western Australia) has been called 'a fucking disgusting faggot' at his government school. He was also told 'god hates you' and 'you're gay because your daddy raped you aren't ya?' He suffered cyber-bullying, written abuse, graffiti and rumours. At 12yrs old he was exiting the school when other students 'dragged me off to the nearby park where they punched me and kicked me and beat me merciless with planks of wood. After they had finished they left me in a pool of my own blood and I literally had to crawl home where I was lucky I had gotten home before anyone else so I could clean myself up. I am surprised I am not dead!' His need to clean himself before seeing his family after being subject to this homophobic crime illustrated his belief they would not support him; that the 'problem' was him and not his abusers. Now Paul can't concentrate in class and his marks have dropped. He hides at recess and lunch or skips school. He wishes school would 'let me be myself' and take a 'harsher view to homophobic abuse'.*

*Lisa (lesbian female, 21yrs, Northern Territory) refused to come out as a teenager, as she had witnessed a friend be the target of horrific and ongoing homophobic attacks. 'My school was very homophobic,' She comments. 'All the people I knew used to make jokes about gay people... sometimes even jokes about me being gay. I denied this for years'. Lisa felt a huge pressure to be perceived as bisexual or straight so that she could fit in and overcome the rumours, and even slept with some boys due to what she termed the 'societal push'. Even now she feels like she knows 'nothing' about being a lesbian, as her Christian school's sex education was silent on the topic of same sex relationships.*

### Key Points

- Both international and Australian research overlooks the content of education policies in this field; particularly their constructions of GLBTIQ students.
- Our beliefs about GLBTIQ students stem from the ways they are constructed in sexuality education discourses.

- Most scholars see sexuality education discourses in a binary: as good or bad, conservative or progressive.
- I argue that there are four key types of sexuality education discourses: conservative discourses transmit dominant sexualities, liberal discourses teach skills and knowledge, critical discourses redress marginalisation, and post-modern discourses deconstruct gender and sexuality frameworks.
- Through these discourses GLBTIQ students can be constructed in education policies as a degenerate threat, a controversial but tolerable 'other', a marginalised minority, or part of the general diversity in schools.

## 2.1 Introduction

Amongst secondary students, about 10 % identify as gay or lesbian and bisexuality may count for over one-third of adolescents' sexual experiences, while 1.7 % are 'born intersex' (Sears, 2005, p. xx). A growing number of students identify as 'other' to such male/female models; these include 'queer', 'transgender', 'genderqueer' and 'gender variants' (Carroll, 2005). However, enforced 'corrective surgery' and a lack of education obscure the full numbers of intersex infants, and strict or action-based definitions around sexuality and gender identity in research surveys can limit the ability of research to capture GLBTIQs representatively. Education research and GLBTIQ students have increasingly overlapped in the last four decades. Before this period, issues of 'inversion' were framed in psychiatry and their overlap with education research concerned seduction of students by 'deviant' teachers (Sears). In the early 1970s 'homosexual' issues were framed in psychology, benefiting from a reversal of illness classifications by key psychiatry bodies; by the late 1970s academics from linguistics and history considered the topic (Sears). By the 1980s interest in 'gay and lesbian' scholarship extended to social and health sciences, with studies on college students, risk behaviour and homophobia (Jones, 2013a). Since the 1990s 'GLBTIQ/LGBT studies' and queer studies have been more widely embraced, and GLBTIQ education networks<sup>1</sup> are now increasingly involved in advocacy-based research on secondary students. The field *shifted its focus from problematising the psychiatric state of GLBTIQ students to problematising the school environment*, framing the education policy governing it as a 'solution' as discussed in Chap. 1. I now review the education problems (and presumptions about policy's role in their management) this recent research offers.

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<sup>1</sup> Examples are the Gay and Lesbian Educators Network (GLSEN) in the United States, Stonewall in Britain and China's aibai.

### 2.1.1 Research on GLBTIQ Students

Education research on GLBTIQ youth (mainly from the US and UK, and parts of Europe) usually incorporates a positivist frame. There are three main types of studies conducted in this area, both internationally and in Australia: small contextually specific qualitative studies, larger population studies in which GLBTIQ young people form a subgroup and, least commonly, large surveys solely focused on GLBTIQ young people as a national demographic. There is much research on how GLBTIQs can be poorly treated by family. Grossman, D'Augelli, Howell, and Hubbard (2005) interviewed 55 American transgender youth and found 54 % of mothers and 63 % of fathers initially reacted negatively. More gender nonconforming the youth faced increased risk of verbal and physical abuse by their parents. Indeed, much of the research suggested GLBTIQ students were much more likely to seek support from a member of school staff on identity issues than other students, and schools should not presume they have their parents' support. Yet there is a strong message across the literature that this support is not necessarily available in schools, and that its lack is associated with negative health outcomes for GLBTIQ students. Students who knew that their school had a harassment policy that specifically mentioned sexual orientation were more likely to feel safe at school (61 % compared to 50 % at schools with no such policy). Safe Schools Coalition & 4-H Centre for Youth Development (2004) reported on an online secondary students survey in which a total 8 % of the 237,544 participants had been bullied because they were gay or lesbian or *perceived to be*. These students were over three times as likely to make a plan for attempting suicide. Hunt and Jensen (2009) conducted a similar survey in Great Britain, finding that of 1,145 lesbian, gay and bisexual secondary students 65 % experienced homophobic bullying at school (75 % in faith schools), while 97 % heard homophobic phrases at school. When students reported the bullying to a teacher, 62 % of the time nothing was done, although students were three times more likely to feel that their school was supportive if it responded to incident reports. GLSEN found that of 7,261 American LGBT students aged 13–21 years surveyed online, 85 % were verbally harassed at school because of their sexual orientation and 64 % because of their gender expression; 19 % were physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation and 13 % because of their gender expression (Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2010). These abuses were related to poorer psychological wellbeing, including higher levels of depression and lower self-esteem. Of the 18 % of LGBT students whose school had a comprehensive school level policy, two-thirds (66 %) heard homophobic remarks often or frequently (compared to 74 % with no policy). They were more likely to report that staff intervened when homophobic remarks were made (27 %, compared to 10 % at schools with no policy). The GLSEN studies didn't consider intersex students, and conceived policy simplistically as present (and covering a characteristic) or not.

Research directly on GLBTIQ issues in education policy had only been conducted internationally. Methodologies only included either a basic review of

whether policies existed or not, or interviews and surveys. GLSEN's (2004) report summarised the laws affecting LGBT students in 50 states and the District of Columbia. This report framed 'safe schools policies' as those passed by a local educational agency (LEA) or school board, and found that only eight US states and the District of Columbia had state-wide legal protections for students. Russo (2006) found a similar absence of civil protections in education statutes. Unfortunately the studies lacked deeper investigation of the policies' messages or constructions of LGBTs. Two district-based studies revealed factors that enhanced 'gay rights policy adoption' in schools using interviews, finding that urbanism, political opportunity structure, resource mobilisation, and communal protest were key (Button, Rienzo, & Wald, 1997; Macgillivray, 2004). Macgillivray (2004) found some morally conservative parents opposed the policies as the 'promotion' of homosexuality, while advocates for the policies framed them as 'enhancing safety'. Similarly, Rienzo, Button, Sheu and Li (2006) later argued that religious opposition was an inhibiting factor, whilst anti-discrimination law contributed to policy production. While these studies' findings were interesting, they do not embed these so-called 'oppositional' positions within the broader sexuality education discourses potentially at work in the policy field. Szalacha (2003) conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of the Safe Schools Program (SSP) for Gay and Lesbian Students for the Massachusetts Department of Education via interviews and a survey of students and faculty. She found that only 36 % of schools examined did not implement any of the SSP's recommendations. Students in schools implementing any of the SSP's recommendations believed their school was a safer, less prejudiced environment. Nevertheless most sexual minority students (63 %) wanted the school to spend more time addressing sexual diversity issues. Sexual minority males found their schools most homophobic. Szalacha noted that some of the schools developed policies, but as with *all these studies the supportiveness of these policies was 'assumed' rather than examined*, attributed simply to their *mention* of sexual orientation. Repeatedly, the focus on 'getting policy to happen' lead researchers to assumptions that 'happening' policy was *necessarily useful*.

Australian research mainly includes quantitative data on GLBTIQ students. A 1997 survey of 3,500 secondary schools found 8–11 % of survey participants were same-sex attracted; a later comparative run of the survey revealed almost one-tenth of secondary students had their most recent sexual encounter with someone of the same sex (Smith, Agius, Mitchell, Barrett, & Pitts, 2008, p. 2). The *'Writing Themselves In'* national surveys provided more detailed quantitative and qualitative data solely on Australian same-sex attracted youth. The 2005 report discussed data from hard-copy mail-out surveys through community-based groups, and comparative data from the initial 1998 survey (Hillier, Turner, & Mitchell, 2005). Of the 1,749 participants (aged 14–21 years), 44 % reported verbal abuse because of their sexuality, and 16 % reported physical abuse (increased figures to those in the first report). Of those who were abused, 74 % experienced the abuse at school: this had increased from 69 % in 1998. The study's sex categorisations did not consider transgender or intersex youth, or adequately cover the topic of suicidal ideation. The report called for education policies to promote coverage of sexuality issues and

to ensure student safety and wellbeing (pp. 84–86), making key assumptions about the power of policy expressed by many of the researchers. No Australian research on GLBTIQ students directly investigated education policies. Smith et al. (2011) conducted a small online survey of 328 Australian secondary sexuality education teachers and found two-thirds followed a policy in teaching sexuality education (Smith et al., p. 44), although the policies were not explored. The majority usually taught other areas and thus many had no training at all. Only 16 % did not cover the topic of sexual orientation; mainly addressing the topic in middle-school (Year 9 and 10; p. 23). The study only reported on teachers' perceptions of content – whether the messages taught were received by Australian GLBTIQ students was unclear. Sorenson and Brown (2007) interviewed 88 young people (aged 15–20 years) on their sexuality education; most agreed only 'straight sex' was discussed in their WA classrooms, and they were frustrated by how messages limited to sexual risks, biology and hygiene. It was unclear whether teachers were required to cover GLBTIQ issues, or how GLBTIQ students in particular perceived the attempts.

### ***2.1.2 Research Gaps***

There is clearly a research gap on Australian education policy context regarding GLBTIQ students; and policy content generally. Policy should not simply be considered present or absent as it often is in the literature; the contents of policies and their particular powers and limitations need to be understood. Theorists considering Queer perspectives like Monk (2011) point out the need to explore how images of gay people in the past animate ongoing political struggles, rather than to just take the representations of gay youth as 'tragic victims' in research around homophobic bullying used to promote education policy as 'a given'. The complexity and any conditionality of the function of policy constructions must be considered. Further, Australia GLBTIQ students have become increasingly subjected to homophobic abuse at school and face particular wellbeing risks (Hillier et al., 2005). The usefulness of new policies at both state/sector and school levels addressing such emerging problems needs attention, as does the possibility of links between policy and impacts for GLBTIQ students' experiences of sexuality education messages, homophobia and support (including distinct considerations of thinking about and engaging in self-harm and suicide). The opportunity to capitalise on the ability of education to shift homophobia, and the general willingness of school staff to do so, was suggested by both the international and Australian research. Such research also revealed the importance of exploring the usefulness of discourses and constructions of GLBTIQ students (particularly including transgender and intersex students for example) in education policy's achievement of its presumed emancipatory functions. Finally, there has been a distinct need for research in this area that does not rely solely on educational bodies for access to information on GLBTIQ students; restricting the collection of data on more problematic contexts. Research in this area must seek other types of access; providing

advice to the stakeholders of national, state and sector-specific, and individual education organisations and schools – yet remaining free from the restrictions of operating solely through them.

## 2.2 'GLBTIQ Student' Constructions Are Discursive

Constructions of GLBTIQ student subjectivity in sexuality education discourses within policies must be examined more closely. Fairclough's application of the noun and verb-like quality of subjectivity to teachers and pupils, wherein by occupying these positions teachers and students reproduce them, showed that these GLBTIQ student positions remain social structures 'only through being occupied' (1989, p. 33). Butler locates the construction of the gendered, sexed, desiring subject within what she and Foucault term 'regulative discourses' (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1979). Also termed 'frameworks of intelligibility', these discourses predetermine the possibilities of sex, gender, and sexuality socially permitted as 'real'. The performance of gendered, sexed or sexual identity is not a voluntary choice however; Butler considers discourses as including within them regulatory 'policing' techniques which coerce subjects to perform specific stylised actions, maintaining the appearance in those subjects of an 'essential identity' that is actually produced by the discourse itself (1990, pp. 175–190). Butler thus explicitly challenges biological accounts of binary sex, sexuality and gender; reconceiving even the sexed body as itself discursively constructed (pp. 145–150). Thus, GLBTIQ subjectivity can interpret or make intelligible (or not) the bodies of agents; GLBTIQs can navigate or resist the dominant and alternative discourses available to them ... whether intentionally, or simply because they call them into crisis by the ways in which they disrupt them through elements of identity which are unintelligible within the discourses. But GLBTIQ students cannot be comprehended outside of the discourses creating them. Foucault argues subjects are instead **effects of power**, located in political and interpersonal arenas:

... the main objective is to attack not so much 'such or such' an institution of power, or group, or class, but rather a technique, a form of power. This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise and which others must recognise in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects (quoted in Halperin, 1995, p. 175).

I therefore theorise the GLBTIQ subject positions used in policies as verb-like effects of power formed in the intersection points of various sexuality education discourses, requiring particular enactment (accomplishing discursive functions) in order to be claimed. This 'social construction' model of subjectivity has also been critiqued as reducing gender to language and ignoring bodies, and too abstract to be usefully applied to 'real-life' (in Hekman, 2008). Yet these critiques miss Butler's assertion that bodily performance and repetitious physical actions are part of what both constitutes and disrupts sexual subjectivity; discourse interprets (rather than

ignores) the body, and the discursive (un)intelligibility of some bodies can indeed have extremely physical consequences (suicide and physical abuse are examples). The criticisms divorce discourses from the ‘real world’ and assume an ontological reality exists beyond them. I instead argue that discourses are the lenses creating (more or less useful and livable, as opposed to more or less true) ‘real world-views’ interpreting the self, others and experience.

This theoretical framing suggested key research questions for the study’s exploration of the usefulness of constructions of GLBTIQ student subjectivities in the dominant sexuality education discourses of Australian secondary schooling policy:

1. **What are the orders of sexuality education discourses positioning GLBTIQ student subjectivity in Australian secondary schooling policies and their processes?**
2. **How are GLBTIQ student subjects constructed and positioned?**
3. **Are these policies useful?**

Considering usefulness for GLBTIQ students must include their reflection on their own positioning and experiences in practice (not individually or as an ‘authentic’ group, but more broadly as a diverse socially constructed group), and in terms of the liveability of such positioning (for example students’ perspectives on school climates, how they feel about their identity, and wellbeing considerations). To enable concise articulation of the orders of sexuality education discourses, GLBTIQ subject positions and uses *particular to the Australian education policy contexts examined*, it is necessary to frame these more broadly in the contemporary international discursive field.

## 2.3 Discourse Exemplars

The literature offers varying ‘exemplars’ (taxonomical frameworks) of sexuality education discourses and their constructions of GLBTIQ youth. Lamentably, the politics or locality of particular researchers usually narrow these exemplars. For example, most researchers describe a dichotomy between conservative sexuality education and a more liberal approach based more on scientific facts (Blair & Monk, 2009). In their descriptions, the focus is on showing the ‘improvements’ in factual knowledge over time. Similarly, Irvine (2002) and McLaren (1992, pp. ix–xiv) simplify the discursive field to ‘good’ (non-homophobic) and ‘bad’ (homophobic) discourses. Other researchers uncover more variety but with little detail. Carlson (1992, pp. 34–58) suggests four approaches, with little description of classroom methods. Elia (2005, pp. 785–789) provides the broadest offering of eight approaches, but offers barely a line on several of them. Also, Elia mainly considered approaches in the United States and Sweden, with a bias toward Comprehensive Sexuality Education (other countries were framed by their lack of this approach, not the alternatives they offered).

## 2.4 Orientation-Based Sexuality Education Discourse Exemplar

Redressing such limitations, I offer a new broader '**orientation-based sexuality education discourse exemplar**' in Table 2.1 (for more details see Jones, 2011a, 2011b). It draws on both Australian and international literature, sexuality education policy and curriculum documents; sexuality education pamphlets, books, and empirical evaluations; existing frameworks in journals and books; and historical information across the fields of sexuality education, sexology, and sociology. Although applied in this book to Australian education policies, it can be used to analyse other contexts and artefacts. Criteria used to distinguish an official 'sexuality education discourse' were that it can manifest in education texts/contexts as part of a systematic theorised approach to student sexes, genders and sexualities in Australian or international education. It must also be linked to legitimate, recognised sexuality education policies and practices and not simply constitute unofficial learning, correlating to structural and pedagogical approaches in schools pertaining to GLBTIQ students. Yet this exemplar makes no pretence at including all approaches; hybrid and interpretative approaches are possible in practice. This exemplar is *only a construct* identifying, categorising and distinguishing discourses conceptually for *analysis*, and does not presuppose discourses exist only as single entities, or that theory and practice align cleanly. Rather, as explained in Chap. 1, discourses may appear in combinations or be tactically used in diverse ways. The exemplar outlines 28 separate sexuality education discourses. It uniquely differentiates these discourses by their general 'orientation to education': either conservative, liberal, critical, or postmodern. This is the most essential and consistent defining feature throughout the discourses and draws together key differentiating factors in a new, yet cohesive framework. Following I describe each orientation in the exemplar (starting with 'conservative') and how the discourses 'within' that orientation address GLBTIQ issues.

### 2.4.1 Conservative

Researchers have discussed the dominance of the conservative orientation in education generally since modern history began, and in education policy tied to particular administrations in Singapore, Africa, America and beyond (Jones, 2013b). Within this orientation, schools and teachers take an authoritarian approach and inculcate students with the dominant values, beliefs and practices of the time (Jones, 2007, 2009a). Education is preparation for work and students are merely passive recipients of it; 'empty vessels' to be filled with knowledge. Thus, the education discourses within conservative policies focus on shaping students to fit social or religious conventions. A key belief throughout conservative education discourses is that education should maintain – or further strengthen – the status quo,



**Table 2.1** Orientation-based sexuality education discourse exemplar

Orientation	Discourse	Key ideas/identifiers	GLBTIQs
<i>Conservative</i>			
Transmitting dominant sexualities	Storks and Fairies	To protect children, sexual information is intentionally substituted with a pleasant fiction drawing on popular culture. Students are taught a stork, fairy or mythical occurrence brings fully-formed babies to established loving and hopeful family homes that consist of a married (and implied heterosexual) female and male. Mystical language is used (magic, miracle)	None/Invisible
	None/non-approach	Sexuality content – seen as the domain of parents/the church/ an exterior authority and developmentally, socially or morally inappropriate for schools to disseminate – is withheld/censored in pedagogy, texts and the school environment. Students are banned from touching the opposite sex, or asking sexual questions. Sexual language is censored and shamed	Immoral, unspeakable
	Physical hygiene	Bodily emissions related to sexual functioning must be managed/hidden. (Hetero) Sexual sublimation beyond marital sex is necessary to maintain hygiene; deviation leads to loss of masculine power and creativity, female hysteria, disease and degeneration. Boys and girls are separated to learn about hygiene and consumer products, cisgender puberty and problematised ‘deviance’. Acts, objects and people may be termed ‘dirty’ or ‘clean’	Unhygienic, deviants, inverts, degenerates

(continued)

**Table 2.1** (continued)

Orientation	Discourse	Key ideas/identifiers	GLBTIQs
	Sexual morality	Religion/God is at the centre of a sexuality system based on asceticism, body/mind and flesh/spirit dichotomies. Marital procreative heterosexual sex only is affirmed, other expressions are condemned temptations of the body, to be controlled by the mind for the purity of the spirit. Students are preached to through sermons, lectures, virginity pledges, uniform guides, holy texts etc. Religious terminologies are used	Sodomites, sinners, evil
	Birds and bees	Sexual interaction is seen as part of a naturalist world. Natural metaphors are used to protect childhood purity but satisfy curiosity. Human sexuality is only metaphorically discussed in lessons on the contact of bees with flower pollen, cross-pollination and the fertilisation of bird's (or other animals') eggs. The mother animal and its care are emphasised, and mating for reproductive reasons only. Naturalist frames are used (mating, natural)	None/invisible, or failed fertilisation
	Biological science	Scientific understandings of biological reproduction of the human species are privileged; embedded in broader study of bodily systems, human life cycles, animal reproduction or genetics. Students may study anatomy, physiology, "correct" functioning and disease prevention. They may label diagrams of mainstream human body parts and un-erotic charts of fertilisation processes. Scientific terms are used (ovum, gamete)	None/invisible, or Thwarted heterosexual

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**Table 2.1** (continued)

Orientation	Discourse	Key ideas/identifiers	GLBTIQs
	Abstinence education	Students are told to abstain from sexual interaction until married, and monogamous heterosexual marriage between a male and female is idealised as central to social order and cohesion. Prior sexual activity and birth outside wedlock are presented as a cause of psychological and physical harm – depression, shame, guilt, sexual infections and loss of long-term committed relationships. Intercourse basics may be taught. A language of restraint is used (chastity, wait, abstain)	None/invisible, or pathologised
	Christian/ex-gay redemption	This born-again Christian discourse casts masturbation, homosexuality and gender diversity as “not part of God’s plan” but as representing modern cultural distractions. Sexual orientation and gender behaviours are believed to be controlled and even converted to “God’s will” (cisgender heterosexuality) through effort, prayer, counselling, camp activities etc. Youth are encouraged to be “ex-gay” identified/heterosexual. Gay liberationist language is subverted (pride, tolerance etc. are reframed as pride in and tolerance of redeemed “heterosexuals”/ex-gays)	Non-practising GLBTQ or redeemable heterosexual

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**Table 2.1** (continued)

Orientation	Discourse	Key ideas/identifiers	GLBTIQs
<i>Liberal</i>			
Teaching sexuality skills and knowledge for personal choice/development	Sexual liberationist	An individual's sexual rights are foregrounded, with the individual deciding what is right for their own behaviour, on the basis of an ethics of reciprocity and consensuality. A broad range of sexual acts are deemed "normal" and acceptable. Youth are encouraged to "feel comfortable" with sexual acts, concepts, language and vocabulary. Explicit sexual language is used (erection, mutual masturbation).	Inhabit 3–6 on Kinsey scale, normal population
	Comprehensive sex education	The ideal is to get developmentally relevant sexual concepts out into the open, often in a spiral curriculum with increased detail over time, so potential problems can be addressed. Wide-ranging sexual education covering sexual anatomy and physiology, contraception, sexual communication, relationship development and maintenance, sexual victimization, sexual values, sexual minority issues, sexual prejudice, and abstinence as a choice. Detailed language is used	Tolerated rarity, possible acts or invisible
	Sexual risk/progressive	Often arising where institutional needs to manage sexual dangers due to disease or pregnancy epidemics have increased, this discourse frames sexual activity of any kind outside of marriage as involving emotional, social and physical risks. These include heartbreak, being ostracised, exposure to STDs, unwanted pregnancy etc. Youth are taught about perceived dangers, and protective	High/at risk groups

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**Table 2.1** (continued)

Orientation	Discourse	Key ideas/identifiers	GLBTIQs
		and contraceptive choices. Acts and identities are discussed in terms of risk (safe sex, safer sex, unsafe sex, high risk, low risk, risk-free)	
	Sexual readiness	In this discourse virginity is valued; whilst students are seen as having a choice when to become sexually active, it is not to be exchanged lightly. Sex before readiness is seen as damaging, and the consequences of not being ready are a focus. Approaches equip students with decision-making skills regarding their sexual readiness. Readiness is an almost unattainable state that involves individual, emotional, physical, relational, practical and other concerns. Key terms are ready, unready, readiness and related words	High/at risk, or unready heterosexual
	Effective relationships/relationships education	Loving relationships are seen as central to holistic human health and wellbeing, and child-rearing, based on therapeutic understandings, and for couples a 'healthy' sexuality is framed as part of relating. Alternatives (single life; single parenting; divorce; dating widely etc.) are possible but implicitly devalued. Sexual and other relationships are seen in terms of effectiveness of communication, emotional exchange, and support and other key features. Students are taught communication, negotiation, empathy and other relating skills using the language of therapy	Possible relationship alternatives to the ideal of marriage

(continued)

**Table 2.1** (continued)

Orientation	Discourse	Key ideas/identifiers	GLBTIQs
	Controversial issues/values clarification	Schools are seen as a neutral space for rational, objective study. Sexual issues (such as homosexual marriage) are considered controversial. The individual student must be encouraged to express and form their own opinion on them. Teachers should present evidence impartially to help students debate and make up their minds and build academic arguments about sexual issues, without advocacy or propaganda for their own personal views. Staged values clarification models are privileged	Controversial, students’ own view
	Liberal feminist	A female is considered equal to a male and can choose her career/occupation, within a meritocratic world. She should receive equitable working conditions and remuneration, and should have more choice about her roles within a relationship regarding child rearing and the sharing of domestic duties and dynamics. Changes within traditional systems and institutions are seen as key, as opposed to abandonment of these structures. Early feminist concepts are used (e.g. patriarchy)	Tolerated, trans as mutilated victims of patriarchy
<i>Critical</i>			
Facilitating integrated student action based on alternative sexuality principles. Redressing marginalised sexualities	State socialist/sexual-politics	This discourse links repressed sexuality to the support of the political insubordination of lower classes. Freudian genital gratification in the context of “politically correct” non-monogamous heterosexual relations is seen as a healthy way to channel energy, rather than purely into a life of capitalist work cycles or for reproduction which prevents the energy needed for a class revolution. Greater	Tolerated unnecessary pervasions of repressed polygamy

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**Table 2.1** (continued)

Orientation	Discourse	Key ideas/identifiers	GLBTIQs
		acceptance of working class and adolescent sexualities is encouraged. Psychoanalytic socialist language is privileged (e.g. repression, class struggle)	
	Sexual revolutionary socialist/radical Freudian	Focussing on how a revolutionary sexuality can be celebrated in a context of civilised and labour-free technological utopia which potentially already exists without a revolution, this discourse asserts polymorphous pre-genital exploration that celebrates the body in a post-labour utopia. Creative exploration, love and play are encouraged. Socialist revolutionary language is typical (free love, revolution, enlighten)	Liberating freedoms for collective pansexual enjoyment
	Radical feminist	A woman is different to a man and these differences should be valued. Feminine writing styles, knowledge, emotions, experiences and concepts of time may be explored. Child rearing is valued as labour, however a life that is autonomous from men is also a possible and legitimate lifestyle. A more radical feminist vocabulary can be used separating feminine style and women from masculine style or even the word 'man' (e.g. womyn, grrls, alternate spelling and lack of capitalisation)	Radical vs. pol lesbians, Trans MTFs as invaders of fem space
	Anti-discrimination/anti-harassment/equity	In this discourse it is believed that human rights concepts, acts and legislation based on sexuality, sex, orientation etc. must be understood and respected. Discrimination or harassment on the grounds of such personal traits is seen as inherently wrong. School	Protected SOGI groups, victims of inequity, complainants in law

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**Table 2.1** (continued)

Orientation	Discourse	Key ideas/identifiers	GLBTIQs
		codes, posters, class rules, and equal access policies may be used to reflect this message. Use of legal language, citing of key statutes and rights-based arguments are key indicators	
	Inclusive/social justice	There are particular groups with special needs commonly excluded from school settings who this discourse propounds must be actively included. Inclusion is to be achieved through the provision of special resources, services and counselling, and sexuality and puberty information etc. that allow the particular needs of these students them and their family members to be met by school settings, as needed. There can be an emphasis on a whole-school approach and allowing the students and their guardians, or key groups, a say in defining what the term ‘inclusion’ should imply	At risk of failure, diverse families
	Safe and supportive spaces/ caring communities	Schools are considered to be ideally a safe and supportive space which promote a physical and psychological protection for all students. They ideally engage in holistic strategies incorporating the students to prevent bullying-based, education-content-based and sexual-abuse-based risks to their students’ wellbeing. Students of diverse sexualities, gender identities and bodies etc. should be supported in school events, activities, class resources, etc. This support is actively affirming, beyond “acceptance”. Anti-bullying language is key	Victims of bullying, need support

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**Table 2.1** (continued)

Orientation	Discourse	Key ideas/identifiers	GLBTIQs
	Gay liberationist	This discourse focuses on combating direct and indirect homophobia by identifying and eliminating it. Education efforts may incorporate community members and emphasise the need to acknowledge, protect and support gay and lesbian people as a marginalised group within society. There is an effort to make gay and lesbian identities (seen as essential/not chosen) and issues “visible” in sexual and other frames. Key terms include pride, visibility, tolerance, homophobia etc.	Marginalised groups
	Post-colonial	The post-colonialist view understands the historical and socio-cultural colonisation of a country from the perspective of its original inhabitants. In sexuality education the aim is to change negative stereotyping and reclaim Indigenous sexuality knowledge through provision of local teachings about sexualities and sexuality frameworks. This can incorporate oral histories, elders, parent-child nights and engaging in traditional activities/ceremonies. Native concepts and language are used	Varies with tribes (e.g. the Navaho intersex as ‘Nadle’)
<i>Post-modern</i>			
Theoretically exploring sex, gender and sexuality frameworks and positions	Post-structuralist	Teachers and students explore how “reality” is constituted through the language we use to name the world and the (always partial) representations we create to reflect our view of it. They de- and co-construct texts and contemporary theories/beliefs about sexuality and gender, and consider how sexual	Constructs countering discourses of ‘the other’

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**Table 2.1** (continued)

Orientation	Discourse	Key ideas/identifiers	GLBTIQs
		identity plays a central political role in emancipation. Teachers may play 'devil's advocate'. The deconstruction of language is key	
	Post-identity feminist	Sex is political and serves as a source of both liberation and oppression. Its meaning and experience is shaped by social and cultural differences such as race, gender, social class, and orientation. Many masculine and feminine gender identities are limited; shaped by cultural institutions, language, media etc. Gender identity is not seen as innate. Suspicion of gender/sexuality concepts is expressed through the use of inverted commas, or discussing identity "construct/ion/s", or using other vocabulary that questions "truth"	Politically significant constructs, valid, varied
	Multi-cultural/general Po-mo	This discourse aims to ensure schooling equitably educates culturally diverse populations. Ideally multiple cultures can co-exist peaceably, with people experiencing the world through different lenses. There is a theoretical and practical relinquishing of monoculture, and the notion that (sexual) reality can be understood in a singular universal voice. Sexuality education should acknowledge the various heritages of the child, as well as mainstream/"general" sexuality efforts. Multiple frames/languages may be used	LGBT 'cultural group'

(continued)

**Table 2.1** (continued)

Orientation	Discourse	Key ideas/identifiers	GLBTIQs
	Diversity education	Diversity is conceived as one broad outlook covering all variation; inconsistency in identities and within identities is highlighted. Sexuality and gender are not limited to a two-sex bi-polarised model. A whole school approach is taken to welcoming people with diverse sexualities and gender identification, including students, staff and families. Variety is celebrated. Constructions of “family” are reconsidered. Many critical languages are used (to identify sexism, homophobia, racism etc)	‘Diversity’ includes all variations of identity, and is celebrated
	Queer	Queer Theory aims to disrupt and destabilise the structures (sex, gender, orientation) that uphold the illusion of heteronormativity (the normalisation of heterosexuality) through revealing their performative nature. This can be achieved through deconstruction and (re)creation of texts, including the self or others as texts. In this outlook theoretically specific terms may be used (heteronormative, gender performativity, cisgender, cissexism)	Queer, non-heteronormative

which leads to a policy making goal of protecting the interests of dominant groups in society (Irvine, 2002). The utilitarian strand in political economy and dogmatic sense of what is morally right and wrong means policy is conceived as a problem-solving tool designed to rectify concerning issues (Kenyon, 2007). Policy-making processes may be perceived as emphasising leadership in a top-down model; with the production of sweeping, prescriptive policies 'from above' (Kenyon). There can be use of arms-length third-party agencies which 'fall under' leadership in the power dynamic, ultimately enhancing the sense of policy/curricula centralisation and nationalisation; localised democratic governance is distrusted (Kenyon). Neo-conservative views are differentiated from more 'emergent' conservative perspectives through their retrospective focus. They are guided by an equivalent vision of the conservative 'strong state/institution', but with a goal of 'returning to' this ideal with a romanticised view of the past – where people 'knew their place' within the 'natural order' and morality based on patriarchal Western structures (Apple, 1998, p. 12). The neo-conservative push is often compromised by the necessity of at least in part recognising 'the contributions of the other' or promoting 'voluntary' standards where strong control of education bodies are lacking (Apple).

Policy implementation processes are standardised and their application can be monitored, sometimes with 'pass/fail' approaches, wherein schools not meeting set benchmarks may be closed (despite contextual issues making these benchmarks inappropriate) (Jones, 2013b). There can also be confusion across education policy research created by some researchers' conflation of conservative tenants emphasising 'standard practice' ideals with the liberal orientation's emphasis on 'best practice'; yet in the conservative orientation the emphasis is more on *maintaining internal strengths and traditions* than external market competitiveness. This approach can feature an assumed hierarchy of policy functionaries imposing the authority of the policy from above – from the institution asserting the policy through to the school leadership, staff and students (Raab, 1994). Funding allocations and resource-development are also distributed 'from above'. The desired policy impact is to further ingrain existing dominant cultures and institutions. School-based sexuality approaches in conservative discourses (or their neo-conservative manifestations) vary, but all transmit dominant sexualities. They can be based on religious *or* secular conceptions of sexuality, for example. However, sexuality frameworks are always predetermined by an exterior authority – whether the 'natural' order, an omnipotent creator, or culturally determined. The 'sexuality problem' pollicised and educated against includes perceived threats to this privileged sexuality ideal. Authority figures are from the status quo; religious organisations, medical professionals, psychiatrists and parents. Sex, gender and sexuality are conceived as existing in a fixed, bipolar opposition (one is either a feminine heterosexual female or masculine heterosexual male). Diversity beyond this model is negated: rendered invisible, demonised or declared a fallacy. Sexuality models vary, but legitimised sexual expression is always procreative and occurs within the context of an established heterosexual marriage. Classroom pedagogy is seen as ideally characterised by the undisputed authority of the teacher and the unproblematic transmission of authorised knowledge. Methods do not allow student

agency. They range from censorship and rules, to lectures/sermons and storytelling, through to pledges, hell houses and camps/clinics. Conservative sexuality education discourses include: Storks and Fairies, None/Non-Approach, Physical Hygiene, Sexual Morality, Birds and Bees, Biological Science, Abstinence Education and Christian/Ex-Gay Redemption.

### **GLBTIQs as Degenerate Threat: Invisible, Impossible, Iniquity**

There are several constructions of GLBTIQ students within the conservative orientation; represented in Paul and Lisa's quotes at the start of this chapter. The overriding logic is that they simply don't exist, as they are not 'conceivable' within most of the key sexuality frameworks in use (Robinson, 2002). For example, Storks and Fairies, Non-Approach and Birds and Bees Discourses all prevent direct discussion of human sexuality in school settings, avoiding GLBTIQ topics entirely. Similarly, the insistence on avoiding sexual contact outside heterosexual marriage in Abstinence Education Discourse means that GLBTIQ sexual acts and identities simply aren't considered. Further, Birds and Bees and Biological Science Discourses mainly explore animal sexualities in strictly (heterosexual) reproductive terms (Elia, 2005). Where metaphoric examples of same-sex encounters can be deduced in texts manifesting Birds and Bees (as in the entry of bees into the "backdoors" of flowers in Howes, 1915) these are negated as reproductive failures that have a corruptive impact on the species in question, as in the logic of early naturalists who considered homosexuality in nature as abnormal (Bagemihl, 2000). Likewise, texts manifesting Biological Science (Shryock, 1951) cast homosexuality as the influence of, and as creating, corrupted sex drives. Thus, the figure of the 'adult homosexual as corruptive influence' arises as a contaminant to (*essentially* heterosexual) GLBTIQ students. This is similar to the construction of GLBTIQs as 'unhygienic degenerates' in Physical Hygiene, where homosexuality and gender difference constitute direct contamination threats (physically or socially) to youth (Carlson, 1992). In this discourse, there is an added perception of GLBTIQs as deviant, psychologically inverted through a misidentification with sex-based identity, and as coming from bad environments or biological issues. There is a sense that medical or psychological intervention may assist the GLBTIQ in a 'return to health'.

Both Sexual Morality and Ex-Gay Redemption frame the contamination of GLBTIQ students as having a moral or spiritual aspect. The former discourse can cast these students as sinners or sodomites, or as engaging in evil practices, depending on the religion shaping the discourse. While Ex-Gay Redemption may seem to promote a less dismissive attitude to GLBTIQ students through actively welcoming them into Christianity, this discourse posits that GLBTIQ students should ultimately practice heterosexuality and gender normative lifestyles, and thus does not provide an 'affirming' subject position but one in which their sexual or gender expressions must be denied. Overall, the conservative orientation makes GLBTIQ student subjectivity invisible, impossible, or the basis for inequitable (and

even cruel) treatment such as exclusion or interventions. GLBTIQ status may also be seen as a threat to others and to the student asserting it. It may seem logical to therefore declare these constructions useless for GLBTIQ students, purely from a theoretical basis, and Robinson's (2002) study suggests they can reduce sex education coverage in schools. Yet the complex model of subjectivity used in the thesis – particularly Foucault's argument of the 'trap' of discursive visibility (which suggests invisibility is potentially useful), Butler's argument of how unintelligibility can call discourses into crises, and both theorists' assertion of the possibility of resistance – suggest further investigation of their usefulness (including students' perspectives) is warranted before conclusions can be drawn.

### 2.4.2 *Liberal*

Since the 1960s the rise of the liberal orientation within Western education policy is widely acknowledged (Jones, 2013b). It is linked to 'human capital theory' and post-industrial shifts from preparation for set careers to multifarious 'up-skilling' of individuals for flexible, insecure workforces (Francis, 2006). Trends of raising educational standards and 'education marketization' spread from the US, impacting education policy in Britain, Canada and Australia (Francis). Within this orientation, schools and teachers facilitate students' development of knowledge and skills towards personal decision making (Jones, 2007, 2009a). Schools ideally prepare the 'whole' student for 'life', not just work (Jones, 2013b). Key beliefs in liberal discourses are that education should develop the potential of all individuals, achievement should be rewarded and competition encouraged. Educators promote excellence, happiness and progress. Policy-making processes are generally leadership-initiated but also revised across implementation; with policies often designed to include 'choices' for schools. Parents and communities are deemed clients and consumers of the 'education policy product' (Jones, 2013b). Neo-liberalism falls within the liberal paradigm, and centres on further separating the 'overly-merged' state and citizen, as a pre-condition for greater choice. While it shares neo-conservatism's goal of returning to (the separation of) 'earlier times', it is also focused on choice ideals not yet achieved; framing bureaucratic control as peppered with inefficiencies caused by bureaucratic self-interest (Apple, 1998). 'Self-interest' is only considered valuable if harnessed by education *consumers*, stimulating school competitiveness, improvements and profits; education is thus ideally marketised with public schools mimicking the private sector to allow for competitive choices (Jones, 2013b). 'Equality' in neo-liberalism applies to *opportunity* for an *individual's* meritocratic pursuit of competitive excellence; not aid for marginalised groups.

Policy implementation processes are competitively standardised; 'best practice models' may be offered, yet many practices are 'acceptable'. Creative excellence and resource-development are encouraged, although achievement can sometimes be narrowly defined as 'higher exam marks' (Francis, 2006). With greater

recognition of how the power of the policy is affected by functionaries' agency (Raab, 1994), ideal implementation may attract funding, awards or be publicly hailed. However, as neo-liberal policy movements locate achievement or underachievement within individuals, rather than social structures, particular students or schools can be 'problematized rather than valorized', overlooking social issues affecting implementation (Francis, p. 187). The desired policy impact is increased school competitiveness; measurable betterment of the individual's outcomes and increased consumer satisfaction (allowing protection from consumer backlash or legal redress). Individuals become 'entrepreneurs of the self' (DuGay, 1996). Liberal sexuality education discourses (including their neo-liberal versions) emphasise students understanding the impact of sexuality on the self, personal development and individual agency. Both affective and cognitive domains are engaged; students can express curiosity, feelings and opinions. While some sexualities are implicitly privileged, individual choice is crucial to self-actualisation; the aim is to encourage the development of consistent codes of personal sexuality. Where social issues (like gay marriage) are critiqued, consideration constitutes individualistic rather than social processes. The 'sexuality problem' pollicised and educated against is the *individual's* lack of the perceived requisite knowledge and skills essential to their self-interests (medically, socially or emotionally). While authority is partially recognised in this orientation and teachings have influence, elements of authority progressively shift to students' personal choice (Jones, 2011b). Sex, gender and sexuality primarily exist in a fixed bipolar opposition, but alternatives also exist. Such alternatives do not disrupt the model altogether, they are simply choices revealing its variable relations. Sexed identity is seen as fixed, whereas behaviour, desire and roles are more flexible. Individual variables include values, preferences and readiness. Teachers act as facilitators of sexuality messages which students may question (without radical activism). Pedagogical methods privilege democratic models allowing choice (discussion, debate, personal reflection) and instrumentalist models (testing knowledge and skills). Liberal sexuality education discourses include: Sexual Liberationist, Comprehensive Sex Education, Sexual Risk/Progressive, Sexual Readiness, Effective Relationships, Controversial Issues/Values Clarification and Liberal Feminist.

### **GLBTIQs as 'Other': Controversial, Rare, at Risk**

GLBTIQ students potentially emerge within liberal discourses, which can incorporate terms such as homosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, intersex and transgender into their vocabularies. Versions of Sexual Liberationist have seen homosexuality normalised within the Kinsey Scale of sexual orientation, and along with Comprehensive Sex Education may provide limited education opportunities around GLBTIQ sexual acts, identities and issues (Carlson, 1992). In such cases, as in some Liberal Feminist teachings, homosexuals or gender diverse students may be represented as tolerated rarities that 'occur' within society at specific rates or engage in specific lifestyles. In addition, due to the key construction of the child

as a 'decision-maker' in liberal discourses, there can be a sense of homosexuality or diverse gender expressions as a private and individual 'choice' for students that schools must respect rather than inhibit. This is particularly so in Controversial Issues Discourse, where schools and particularly teachers are not to impose their beliefs on students and must respect their privacy regarding disclosures (Dewhurst, 1992). Similarly, there is room in Effective Relationships Discourse for discussion around the possibility that students may enter same sex relationships, particularly in countries where same-sex marriage is legal. However, GLBTIQ identities and choices are not celebrated, just 'alternative options/feelings' students less commonly experience.<sup>2</sup>

Even less affirming are the constructions of GLBTIQ students as being 'at high risk' of disease transmission, sexual mistakes or social controversies contained in Comprehensive Sex Education, Sexual Risk, Controversial Issues and Sexual Readiness Discourses. Gay males and transgender male-to-female students can particularly be portrayed as being at high risk of HIV/AIDS (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008); lesbian, bisexual, male-to-female and intersex identities that correlate less with such risk are rarely covered. These representations can lead to stereotyping as 'white working/middle-class adolescents are presumed uninfected, gay teens yet to be infected and youth of colour already infected' (Patton, 1996, p. 62). The Liberal Feminist view can conceive trans individuals as tragic victims of patriarchal role norms (Tuttle, 1986, p. 326). Thus, while the democratic underpinnings typical of the liberal orientation tolerate GLBTIQ students' individual rights to privacy and freedom of sexual and gender expression, and may conceive them within varying sexual demographics related to sex acts or risk rankings, sweeping or cohesive social change in support of GLBTIQ students is not the aim. The usefulness of such constructions discursively relates to upholding individualised concerns based on broader social problems; however their use in context may offer different functions.

### 2.4.3 *Critical*

The critical orientation to education became popularised in 1970s movements engaging students in social issues linked to wider class-system reforms, post-colonialism, feminism and gay liberation (Jones, 2013b). Policy movement examples include various feminist education reform, civil rights and inclusion movements (Elia, 2005). Within this orientation, whole-school reforms are considered necessary for improved treatment of marginalised social groups. Teachers empower

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<sup>2</sup>For example, in sexuality education in The Netherlands, homosexuality is framed in this liberal sense as related to (the alternative of) feelings of same-sex attraction under the broader theme of relationships (Ferguson, Vanwesenbeeck, & Knijn, 2008). Notably, The Netherlands recognises same-sex marriage (Jones, 2009b), so recognition of homosexual relationships does not disrupt marriage ideals.



students to question deep-seated social values and unjust practices and to undertake activism towards equity (Jones, 2007, 2009a). Education is understood as having the potential to revolutionise society, challenging established social orders (Beckmann, Cooper, & Hill, 2009). Thus critical education discourses within policies envision overhauls reforming schools to fit the needs of marginalised groups. Believing education can improve social realities, educators aim to provide awareness of ‘the structural determinants of oppression and social injustice, and the formation of a cohesive political strategy for social change’ (Beckmann et al., 2009, p. 336). Policy-making processes are *perceived* bottom-up, as critical policy directions may be stimulated by critique from advocacy groups and community members (Macgillivray, 2004; Raab, 1994). However, critical approaches also evolve with policy trends, legislation, leadership guidance, or adaptation to local communities (Beckmann et al.).

Policy implementation processes can involve whole-school change including physical or structural changes, staff training, revision of rules and procedures or new relational dynamics (Noddings, 2003). Therefore, students and the community can share management of some policy processes. Advocacy groups may assist training interventions, with change unevenly yet increasingly embraced and monitored by different schooling stakeholders (Button et al., 1997; Macgillivray, 2004). Standards and implementation approaches may be negotiated with community representatives or committees (to ensure non-dominant groups are consulted), or clarified in law reforms. Funding may come through community groups, directly through leadership or indirectly (for example, through grants obtained by advocacy groups used to develop alternative materials or training). Advocates may provide ‘cost-benefit analysis’, convincing policymakers ‘that programs will yield positive benefit-to-cost assessments’ (Macgillivray, p. 350). The desired policy impact is socio-cultural change (Beckmann et al., 2009). Outcomes for marginalised groups are ideally improved within schools and society. Critical sexuality education discourses have varying *central* focal groups (the working class, women, indigenous students, students with a disability or gay students), but all promote alternative principles and redress marginalised sexualities. The ‘sexuality problem’ policy and education meets is the perceived sexual repression of focal groups (and related inequities). Mainstream accounts and dominant authorities on sexuality are supplemented with alternative sources, or challenged using the focal group’s perspective. Marginalised ‘sexual differences’ may be understood as innate or socially determined, yet form an integral part of identity politics, and exist in perpetual relation to a traditional ‘norm’. Sexuality models re-think the body. Rather than a source for procreation or spiritual trials, the body is political; its desires, pleasures, activities and relations exist within a power dynamic. Having sex for different reasons and in different ways can affect social conditions. The repressive qualities of sexual power (sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, ableism, cultural suprematism) and possibilities for sexual liberation are highlighted. Student-centred, action-based pedagogies are favoured, with teachers and communities collaborating with students (Jones, 2009a). Methods may include critical analysis of ‘real-world’ texts, using alternative materials, stories from marginalised groups,

classroom equity reforms, tribal ceremonies and activism (making posters, websites or speeches). Critical discourses include State Socialist/Sexual-Politics, Sexual Revolutionary Socialist/Radical Freudian, Radical Feminist, Anti-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment/Equity, Inclusive/Safe and Supportive, Gay Liberationist and Post-colonial.

### **GLBTIQs as Marginalised Minority: Possible, Political, Protected**

Constructions of GLBTIQ students within critical discourses can be subsidiary or central to their liberation goals. State Socialist, Sexual Revolutionary and Postcolonial Discourses consider GLBTIQ students in a secondary fashion (if at all). State Socialist frames tolerate homosexuality as a 'perversion' of repressed heterosexual non-monogamy that will diminish through class-based liberation (Reich, 1971), viewing GLBTIQs (and 'everyone') as politically repressed heterosexuals. Sexual Revolutionary frames envision GLBTIQs within the broader pan-sexuality to be enjoyed as a political act in liberated societies, viewing GLBTIQs (and 'everyone') as political pansexuals. While the latter is more affirming, both visions elide sexual differences, such that positions are not offered to GLBTIQ students *particularly*, but to everyone. Postcolonial Discourses may include specific positions – the 'Nadle' of the Navaho tribe or the Indigenous two-spirit – but these are dependent on, and secondary to, broader cultural positions. Gay Liberationist Discourse conceives GLBTIQ students as the core marginalised group in its model of liberation including same-sex attracted, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and sometimes transgender and intersex youth. These spaces acknowledge experiences of homophobia, transphobia and inequities; assert the subject's sexual identification, desire and characteristics; and can provide visibility in school materials. Radical Feminist Discourse can provide similar spaces for lesbian, female bisexual and transgender students, but also frame desire as political and assert subjection to sexism within patriarchal contexts (with trans identities seen as stemming from patriarchal roles). These spaces assert 'differences' between GLBTIQ students who inhabit them and students generally. GLBTIQ students may have similar centrality with manifestations of other critical discourses: as subject to discrimination in Anti-Discrimination; as subject to structural, academic or social exclusion in Inclusive Education; as subject to bullying and emotional rejection in Safe and Supportive Spaces. While legal protections, social supports and other campaigns may be asserted to prevent such subjection, Cloud's (2005) critique of Gay Liberationist constructs emphasising victimhood (while minimising resilience and identification complexities) can thus also apply to Radical Feminist, Anti-Discrimination, Inclusive Education and Safe and Supportive Spaces. Monk (2011) argues that casting GLBTIQ students as victims of homophobic bullying, tragic gays or abused children minimises their sexual nature (and the challenge it represents to education's heteronormativity) and emphasises one-on-one incidents to be treated through disciplining particular bullies (rather than broader reforms).

Seckinelgin (2009) argues that critical activism allows participation ‘in the politics of recognition’ (p. 116). Youth are enabled to articulate an identity for use in public debate and to feel part of a united community. Yet Seckinelgin warns recognition also closes off differences outside the asserted group identity’s demand for consistent ‘exhibitionism’ (Seckinelgin, p. 116). Also, if articulated outside a liberal democratic frame, Wilson cautions human rights claims have less purchase:

... rights claims in the streets of Soho became much more legible when the activist group Stonewall translated it into ‘equality’ and ‘justice’ in the halls of Parliament (Wilson, 2009, p. 82).

Bell and Binnie (2000) further posit that when ‘sexual dissidents make use of rights-based political strategies’ they must conform to acceptable positions that are ‘privatised, de-radicalised, and confined’ (p. 3). Thus despite the emancipatory goal of critical discourses, their constructions of GLBTIQ students are not automatically ‘affirming spaces’ in and of themselves. Further, their usefulness in any education policy should not be presumed ‘a given’, but understood in relation to their contextual functions and impacts.

### 2.4.4 *Post-modern*

The post-modern orientation emerged in the 1980s, and involves analysis of concepts of truth, authority and reality (Jones, 2009a). It stems from the critique of French intellectuals around grand narratives<sup>3</sup> during the 1960s and 1970s, which swiftly spread to academics internationally (Jones, 2013b). This orientation can manifest at discrete points in policy processes; sometimes erratically evident in policy sections, implementation or materials. However, it strongly manifests in discursive moves towards ethics education, the teaching of deconstructive analysis and Queer theory (Jones, 2013b). In the post-modern orientation, schools are seen as socio-culturally situated sites, wherein smaller communities form from intersections within larger society and engage in meaning-making (Nudzor, 2009). Education is thus understood as a space where culture and identity can be opened up for creative re-organisation. A key belief about education across post-modern discourses is that it can demystify ‘hegemonic truths’ (deep-seated cultural assumptions) and problematise knowledge. The aim is to develop in students an oppositional relation to the dominant order of the ‘real’, allowing them to recognise their own partiality (Jones, 2013b). In acknowledging their partial nature, the denaturalised student sees themselves as constituted by a set of incoherent subject positions produced by cultural discourses, making visible ‘the arbitrariness of all seemingly natural meanings and cultural organizations’ (Jones, 2009a). Policy-making processes are ideally localised to particular school contexts, aligning with

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<sup>3</sup> Overarching stories about history or reality based on universalist notions of truth, which overlook alternative perspectives.

post-modern understandings of society as comprising different 'life-worlds'. Policy is also understood as occurring at multiple sites and fluidly changing over time (Nudzor). The 'performative state' hence optimises input and output like a networked computer, 'open' to contributions from multiple participants and operating in flexible networks of language. Thus, post-modern policies can be designed for amenability to evolutionary co-creation by networks, groups and individual interpreters.

Policy implementation processes involve multiple functionaries, sometimes within less-centralised power structures, or flexible and diffuse policy networks in a multiplicity of sites (Jones, 2013b). Pollicised power is thus not purely top-down – it is dynamic, relational and conditional, with funding and resources contributed from many sources. Guidelines are towards improving practice and furthering academic inquiry (not in the liberal sense of achievement, but around theoretical complexities or contextual applicability). There is also concern with bettering and deepening lived experience, yet identity politics are not adhered to in the critical sense; developments are considered potentially beneficial for people beyond 'marginalised group' tropes (Hekman, 2008). Policy revision and evaluation processes are ongoing and involve multiple stakeholders and variable standards. Policy impacts are accepted as erratic and unpredictable (Nudzor, 2009, p. 504). Ideally, the theorisation of a particular phenomenon is furthered, diverse needs increasingly met and limiting cultural assumptions challenged. Post-modern sexuality education discourses within policies focus on deconstructive principles, acknowledging multiple perspectives or inconsistency. The 'sexuality problem' educated against is the perceived trap of hegemonic cultural truths. Not only are particular authorities questioned, but the very notion of 'authority' is challenged. Various sex, gender and sexuality frameworks and positions are examined. Students can deconstruct and co-construct 'sexual truths' and 'sexuality', but must be self-reflexive. Classroom pedagogy is seen as ideally characterised by students and teachers exploring multiple theoretical/cultural perspectives on sexuality and conceptual play; sexual knowledge is seen as constructed and relational. Teachers sometimes play 'devil's advocate', deconstructing rather than supporting students to erase notions of essential static sexual identity, encouraging creative reorganisation (Jones, 2013b). Other methods are conceptual games, class theorising, vocabulary invention, cultural activities and dress coding. Discourses include Post-structuralist, Post-identity Feminist, Multicultural Education, Diversity Education and Queer theory.

### **GLBTIQs/all People as Sexually Diverse: Indefinite, Intersecting, Interesting**

The constructions of GLBTIQ students within post-modern orientation are more complex and complicating. Some post-modern discourses can call the very notion of sexual identities and genders into crisis (particularly hegemonic 'truths' about maleness, femaleness, masculinity, femininity and heterosexuality). Processes that can de-stabilise the bipolarised alignments of sex, gender and identity traditionally

used to negate GLBTIQ students or render them invisible include the deconstruction and naming processes of Post-structuralist Discourse, analysis of sex-based identity constructions in Post-identity Feminism and identity queering of Queer theory. However, these processes also challenge the very bases of ‘same-sex attraction’, ‘homosexuality’, ‘bisexuality’ and some ‘transgenderism’ which can require stable notions of male and female sex in their internal logic. Queer can particularly be used to critique the use of ‘sexual orientation’ and ‘gender identity’ as installing a distinctive gender and sexuality matrix (Butler, 1990). This can leave behind indefinite spaces for GLBTIQ students to step into. However, it can also offer opportunities for GLBTIQ students to rename and co-create new, interesting and useful subject positions for themselves or embrace more empowering and affirming constructions in the alternative discourses they are exposed to (McLaren, 1992). For example, they may come to versions of femaleness, ‘queer’ or ‘genderqueer’ that fit their particular bodies/sexualities/gender expressions (or fluidity), or other sexual concepts of their own making. Deconstructive approaches can also show how more *and* less stable or recognisable constructions of identity have varying levels of usefulness in different arenas.

Other post-modern discourses may instead provide a more varied terrain of GLBTIQ student constructions. Diversity Education can offer both specific constructions for GLBTIQ students (like intersex or lesbian identity) and the general space for ‘diversity’ of sexual subjectivity, both externally and internally, within which ‘everyone’ is conceived. All of these spaces are affirmed as positively valued, as are the varieties of family structures, relationships and sexual and reproductive possibilities they relate to. There is also room for individual variations and inconsistencies. Multicultural Education Discourse, for example, can offer the ‘cultural group’ framing of GLBTIQs (as belonging to some kind of cultural community), and variable and intersecting constructions of GLBTIQs *within* different cultures that students may navigate (which may or may not be affirming). However, as with some of the more deconstructive models and some socialist liberal models, the broader groupings (of ‘diversity’ or GLBTIQs as a ‘cultural group’) within the post-modern orientation may overlook physical and social differences that more specific identities assert for practical or political gains (such as intersex-specific activism, which may focus on medical concerns). Thus, the ‘social construction’ positions available in these discourses lack some of the limitations and over-simplification of other models. Yet their usefulness likewise can be ideological and must be considered in context.

### Conclusion

The discourses conceived the GLBTIQ student ‘problem’ in many different ways; ranging from degenerate threats to be ignored or stopped, through to part of a broader diversity in the student body to be celebrated and understood. Institutional and school-based policies, school structures, rules, event

(continued)

access, sex education lessons and approaches to bullying and morality are all discursive sites where such constructions may be imbued. The posters a school displays (or does not), the books in its library (or banned from it) and even the inclusive toilet facility access it provides (or fails to) can all be implicated. There is certainly no flawless, universal sexuality education discourse agreed on in the literature. Some were more dominant in the literature and in practice; Sexual Risk and Biological Science have been dominant in Britain and Wales (Blair & Monk, 2009); Abstinence Education and Multicultural Education in America (Elia, 2005) for example. However, the temptation of applying such international findings to Australian education policy was resisted. Instead the policies' treatment of *all discourses* was considered, in order to protect the results from the inevitable researcher bias associated with similar studies. However, I do not pretend neutrality in my discussion of the results; policy merits and demerits are necessarily ideological. The various constructions of GLBTIQ students were never unproblematic; but some are worse than others – for example the 'conversion' of GLBTIQ students in Christian/Ex-Gay Redemption Discourse is ineffective and harmful (APA Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, 2009).

Yet the extent of the usefulness of the different framings within policy contexts was difficult to predict, based on the literature alone. While post-modern constructions could potentially be used to engage with diverse sexualities in academically valid and interesting ways, such discourses may be too 'complex' for some students (and difficult to pollicise), or may not satisfy the need for stable identification in the manner of liberal and critical constructions. Without knowing the perspectives and 'wants' of GLBTIQ students around their own sexual subjectivities and school contexts, their position on the debates over whether policy constructions of GLBTIQ students should emphasise visibility or invisibility, victimhood or resilience is unclear. Therefore, in determining **'the orders of sexuality education discourses positioning GLBTIQ student subjectivity in Australian secondary schooling policies and their processes'** (question 1), investigation can frame these orders as mainly conservative, liberal, critical or post-modern (or some amalgamation) in orientation. They can be understood to reflect some national, state and sector specific arrangements of the 28 sexuality education discourses visible in the broader discursive field, allowing comparisons to international contexts. Further, in exploring *how* GLBTIQ student subjects were **'constructed and positioned'** in Australian education policies (question 2), inquiry should consider specific positions made available for GLBTIQ subjects in the orders of discourse asserted in policy texts, processes and contexts. Finally, in assessing the **usefulness of the policies** (question 3), GLBTIQ student experiences and perspectives are needed. The next chapter provides the research design for the study.

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