

# **Educating Young People about Sex: Addressing Issues of Gender, Sexuality and Diversity**

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## **Abstracts**

### **Kids ask the darndest questions. The Question Box: What young people really want to know**

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What is it that young people really want to know; and what does this tell us about what's "on top" for them, and about the construction of young people's sexuality in the 20teens? The Question Box activity allows sexuality education programme participants to ask questions anonymously as part of their sexuality education, delivered by Family Planning. This paper focuses on a review of questions asked by secondary school attending young people, from 26 classes across New Zealand, in Term Four of 2012. Questions fell into two broad categories: what is considered normal, and what is ok; and how can their experiences be made better. Questions about specific sexual activities and pleasure, anatomy and physiology, STIs and contraception, conception and pregnancy, sexual orientation and diversity, and relationships issues all featured. They demonstrate NZ young people's concerns and the influences on the development of identities and expression and performance of gender and sexuality.

### **Symbolic orders of shaming-practices in sex education in school**

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My ethnographic dissertation shows, that teachers use shaming practices in sex-education for means of education. These shaming practices imply diverse symbolic orders that vary from the restriction of youth-sexuality to the removal of taboos in sex-education. If shame and shaming influence the dynamic of sex-educatio

-practices in school have a “low-visibility”. A sequence of a transcript from a sex-education lesson of an 8th grade in Berlin will be discussed, looking at how shaming practices are used by the teacher to construct a heteronormative social order. Quinn (2010) shows, that shaming practices are seen as inappropriate means of education in western societies while being intentionally used in eastern societies. Sequences from the interview with the teacher will be drawn, showing, that the teacher does not reflect upon using shaming practices nor the normativity of his teachings. Since the social order the teacher constructs implies the devaluation of femininity, the study argues that shaming practices with low-visibility are a constitutive part of gender inequality and homophobia in western societies. Consequences for the professionalization of teachers education will be introduced.

## **The Give'n'Get project: young people's understandings of sexual consent**

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How sexual consent should be discussed with young people is the subject of current policy debates and contestations in the UK. While the current Westminster government Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy recognises the importance of addressing consent, with no statutory relationships and sex education there are few contexts in which these conversations with young people routinely take place. This presentation will introduce recent research carried out on behalf of the Office of the Children's Commissioner, involving a survey of almost 500 young people aged 13-20 and interviews and focus groups with a further 110. Video vignettes featuring scenarios explored how, and under what circumstances, young people recognised non-consensual sex. Overall, young people identified a range of circumstances which constituted rape, and framed their understandings of sexual consent in terms of mutuality. Yet when asked to apply these understandings to real life scenarios, particularly to identify where consent had been sought and given, abstract framings of 'permission' were muddled by myths about victim-blame. Notions about gender, particularly masculinity and 'man points', emerged as a significant influence on the landscapes in which young people are sexually active. Connections were also traced across non-consensual sexual practices (e.g. sexting) and young peoples' engagement with pornography. We conclude with the implications of our findings for relationships and sex education.

# **A critique of 'at risk' LGBT youth and related anti-bullying approaches to homophobia and transphobia in schools**

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Drawing on recent research with young people aged 11-20, and the professionals who work with them (utilising online surveys, discussion groups and individual interviews), this paper will critique the common focus on 'bullying' within discussions about young lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people's experiences of schooling and adolescence more generally. Three research projects explored, respectively: barriers and facilitators to schools and youth work settings addressing issues about (homo)sexuality and gender identity in one English region; the impact of homophobic and transphobic bullying in Europe; and the experiences and needs of trans young people in one English town. In doing so, I took a broad view of the social contexts in which young people learn about, make sense of, and practice sexual and gender identities, as well as experience and manage any prejudice they might face. The paper will document key themes emerging from the data, regarding: differing understandings of 'phobias' and bullying; experiences of bullying, prejudice, and discrimination; professional responses and the provision of support services. Drawing on the collective findings from this research, and supporting evidence, the paper will highlight the limiting constraints of anti-bullying discourses, arguing that they divert attention away from families, teachers, schools, and wider social contexts, and have implications for how prejudice is responded to. As I argue, 'bullying' tends to result in individualised 'punishment' for the 'perpetrator' and 'support' for the 'victim', which minimises the potential for broader (sex) education and/or youth work practice, and contributes to constructions of LGBT youth as inherently (and equally) 'at risk', 'vulnerable' and/or 'victimised'. In conclusion, the paper will demonstrate what sociological perspectives can contribute to the often psychology-focussed literature on identity-based bullying. Implications for future (inclusive) sex education will be explicated.

## **Sexuality and education: The production of teaching materials on reproductive rights of youth in Brazil**

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Here we present reflections about our doctoral research in education, developed at the Universidade Estadual Paulista (Brasil), funded by the FAPESP and uses the methodological and theoretical framework of historical and sociocultural studies of Bakhtin. In our research of qualitative nature, we analyze the audiovisual didactic materials on the subject of reproductive rights of young people, produced by non-governmental Brazilian organisations (NGOs). Such materials are developed from educational projects focused on sexuality, with the support from international foundations and have been adopted by many school systems in Brazil. We confront the theoretical and political content of pedagogies of sexuality presented in such materials through the description and analysis of the following

aspects: 1) whole of constituent statements of imaging and written narratives of videos, 2) the technical supports and the resources used to produce images and 3) the opinions of the authors or responsables of the video's production, collected through interviews, who assisted in the refinement of the analysis. Such materials can be viewed as discourses that produce, control and regulate sexuality, forming models and ideas around what represent to be young in our culture and contributing to the construction of identities and subjectivities. Therefore to check what are the practices they recommend and what are they criticize, what is said and what is not and what is the idea of youth and sexuality that they translate. All of them are questions that guide the research and are being confront from visual culture studies. As preliminary results, we understand that autonomy, equality and diversity are the ethical foundations that structure the democratic development of reproductive rights of youth. However, these rights will only be achieved if young people have access to an education that encourage reflective processes and involve critical knowledge related to their sexuality.

## **Relations, values and sex education: Changes and challenges in school curricula and the Swedish political context 2014**

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The government and the Swedish National Agency for Education have initiated research and also educational initiatives on gender equality, anti-discrimination laws, diversity in relation to sex education. In cooperation with the Swedish National Agency for Education we have developed syllabuses and organized short term courses at Malmö University, Sweden, around "Honour-related violence and oppression" and "Sexuality education, relations and values" for mainly headmasters, teachers, students, nurses and counselors working in schools . In light of these experiences we see a great need for developing a knowledge area in social studies on relations and sex education with norm critical perspectives and honour-related problems for compulsory school as well as for higher education. On basis of course evaluations we have found that the most valued content is education around norm critical perspectives and identities. This is most important in the Swedish diverse classrooms of today. We have initiated a research project with the aim of addressing relations, values and sex education in different schools subjects, such as social studies. Useful theoretical perspectives focus on body, gender, diversity, power, equality, othering and culturalization, as well as inclusion, exclusion, co-existence and marginalization. One important outcome, as we see it, is to develop a research based knowledge area grounded in an ethical awareness and sensitiveness in social studies. In addition to developing this knowledge area, the project strives to highlight good experiences/best practices from teachers and schools that have worked with these issues. Preliminary results from evaluation sheets and questionnaires will be analyzed and discussed in this paper. Bodil Liljefors Persson Irene Andersson

## **Addressing sexual diversity in primary schools**

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In the recent years, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community have been exposed to harassment, bullying and discrimination in the school context. Studies on sexual diversity in schools have shown that since primary schools pupils are aware of homophobic assaults, as homophobic language and homophobic bullying. Also, there is a new challenge for the LGBT community in the school context, the homoparental and LGBT families, where parents are both of the same-sex or include a LGBT parent. The aim of this study is to explore trainee teachers' awareness and perceptions of sexual diversity, including diverse family forms, gender stereotypes and sexual identity, in the school. A questionnaire, containing 22 items in total, was developed to answer the overarching questions that underlined the study. In this presentation, I discuss the pilot study that took place in 2013. The questionnaire was administrated to seventy-seven trainee teachers in the department of education from six universities across the United Kingdom. Four categories, grounded on heteronormativity backgrounds, were explored in the questionnaire: (1) homophobia and bullying, (2) homoparental families, (3) gender stereotypes and (4) teaching sexual diversity in the classroom. This study challenges these four categories with the concepts of diversity, inclusion and identity in the school context.

## **Analysis of the Slovak discourses of sex education inspired by Michel Foucault 2**

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In this paper we analyze the discourses on sex education in Slovakia with the help of critical Foucauldian analysis. The results show the following. The aims, rules and topics of sex education exist on paper, but have yet to be implemented in Slovakia. Although the curriculum creates the illusion of openness in this field, the silence on sex education in schools provides space for the alternative, "more valuable" quiet discourses of religious education. Under these conditions, it is silence that is proving to be an advantageous strategy for the majority of those who should be voicing their opinions. Instead, they listen and control. By contrast, those who do speak out, children and young people, do not in fact, speak to them, but mainly among themselves. Those who are silent and listen are not prepared for the younger generations confessions on sexuality, which are mostly taken from the liberal area of media, especially the internet. The silent frequently lack, at the very least, the basic ability to react and debate in this changed situation. Those who are involved in the discussion on sexuality in Slovakia are those who should listen and supervise. Panic reaction to publicly presented alternative partnership models additionally increases confusion in the sexual education of children and young people.

## **Usualising lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) identities in education 10 years on from Section 28; where are we now, why are we not moving more quickly towards equity of LGB and heterosexual identities in UK schools, and how can we do so?**

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In the UK sex and relationship education (SRE) is only compulsory as regards biological aspects within the science curriculum. This is problematic for all young people who are not being given holistic SRE relevant to their lives; and it is particularly problematic for LGB young people who in addition do not see themselves reflected at all when SRE is reduced to heterosexual biology. Further, LGB young people have to understand themselves within a wider heteronormative world, where they must 'transition' from presumed heterosexuality and 'come out' as LGB. SRE content and delivery itself needs a significant overhaul and to be compulsory in its own right. Additionally, there is scope for a cross curricular, whole school approach to SRE and specifically to LGB dialogue; whereby LGB identities are usualised through everyday practices and explicit discussion. 10 years on from the repeal of Section 28 one would expect all schools to be treating LGB and heterosexual identities equally and stamping out LGB discrimination – this is not the case; homophobia remains rife and LGB identities are largely invisible within schools. There is however a pool of fantastic work being undertaken in some schools challenging heteronormativity and homophobia through specific LGB focussed lessons, staff training, and through embedding LGB identities across the curriculum. There are also some teacher training courses incorporating LGB inclusivity work into their programs. Worryingly though, despite the excellent results, this work remains voluntary, taken up by few schools and Universities and delivered by small charitable organisations. Further, when reported in the media, it is often met with a homophobic backlash. This paper examines some of this LGB inclusivity work, addressing its importance for all young people, its relevance to SRE, why it isn't happening in every teacher training program and every school in the UK and how we might change that.

## **Addressing sexuality and gender issues in civics subject in Slovakia**

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The article is concerning the introduction of sex and gender issues in civics classes and cross-curricular topics in Slovakia in the last twenty years. We will point to the problems with the approval of textbooks for sexual education by the Slovak Education Ministry as well as to the problems with the name of the subject "sexual education". The article will also address the influence of religious groups on sexual education at schools, the creation of textbooks and the central education curriculum in Slovakia. We will also talk about the preparation of students in the field of sexual education and gender issues at Comenius University's Faculty of Education in Bratislava.

## **Gender and Sexuality in Brazil: a system of control**

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This work is part of a PhD project in education, where the focus is on the triad: History of Education, Cultural History and Gender. We will discuss these issues based on authors Scott, Beauvoir, Louro, Chartier, Certeau, among others. We will present data from our research on a nineteenth-century American missionary who effectively participated in Brazilian education and through her Protestant discourse, reinforced sexual differences. Sexuality has become mandatory in the National Curriculum Parameters of Brazil and should be treated as a cross-cutting theme. However, starting from a patriarchal and religious colonization, the discourses of difference in Western sexuality, laden with values, stigmas and prejudices of every age and every society, sought to appropriate words and phrases that could control it. For centuries, we sought to define where and when, under what circumstances and with whom one could talk about the sinful secrets of sex, desire, attraction. Besides the religious institutions, according to Foucault, from the eighteenth century, schools multiplied, perfected themselves and appeared as a power device. Its function was to discipline men and women, in order to produce bodies aligned to the hegemonic pattern of sexuality. The sexuality of children was a major target of concern, after all, the child was the future citizen. Made up of secrets in every corner where there was a risk of their manifestation, surveillance devices were installed, traps to force confessions were set, inexhaustible and corrective discourses were imposed; parents were alerted, and educators had to remain vigilant in face of this recurrent danger, their conduct was prescribed and the pedagogy was recoded, and a whole medical-sexual regime was deployed within the family space. The consequences of this effort to reinforce such a discourse about sex are experienced even today in our Brazilian society, dominated by the discourse of sexual and gender difference.

## **'It's not all bad news' – Addressing gender and sexual diversity in Australian Secondary Schools.**

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Over the past 15 years much of the work addressing gender and sexuality in Australian schools has been in the area of homophobia. National and longitudinal studies (Hillier et al. 1998, 2004, 2011), have shown an enormous impact on the visibility of sexual diversity in Australian schools, and on the development of resources and policies to support young people and schools to be affirming and proactive. National and state based resources have been developed for teaching in an inclusive and affirming way. Teacher professional learning has been implemented and the most widely used resources by teachers of sexuality education are those inclusive of gender and sexual diversity. However, secondary schools in Australia remain unsafe places for LGBTQ young people. The number reporting abuse has actually increased to 80% from 69% in 1998 and 74% in

2004. The latest research in Australia is suggesting that if schools have anti-homophobia education policies that are known to the students and deal specifically with homophobia along with other issues, LGBTQ are less likely to be abused or think about and engage in self-harm (Hillier et al., 2010). Gender and sexuality are often underlying themes evident in any violent incident in schools. Much of it remaining hidden because teachers and schools are reluctant to recognise, acknowledge and deal with it. Much school based sexuality education fails to teach about it because of a lack of teacher confidence, knowledge and concerns about parental and professional backlash. Nevertheless, some schools defy these concerns and implement programs and approaches that are inclusive and affirming of gender and sexuality, and challenge negative discourses. Drawing on Australian data from students and teachers involved in intervention studies, this paper will report on some of the successfully elements in challenging negative discourses through teaching about gender, sexuality and violence.

### **'Nine years of sexuality education in half an hour' (teacher grade 7-9): 'Sex on the Map' - an animated educational film about sexuality for teenagers.**

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Objective: To make an animated film with an inclusive perspective, 'Sex on the Map', to be used in sexuality education. Aim: To support teachers' sexuality education for 14-16 year old teenagers.

Background: The film is made in cooperation between Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU) and Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company (UR).

Methods: The film provides factual information in an open and positive way. Integrated in the film are also stories about young people: What really happened between Abdu and Melody in rehearsal studio two weeks ago? And will Kim and Hanna dare to get closer? The core content is: sexual organs, vaginal corona, sexual acts, masturbation, condom use, and mutuality. The film has a rights perspective, and LGBT-issues and gender aspects are integrated in the film. 'Sex on the Map' wants to broaden the view on what sex is and not focus just on penetrative sex. Young people have been involved in the production. The content is based on young people's questions to RFSU and UR. The film can be watched at our web sites. The film is distributed through school media centres all over Sweden. It is available in eleven languages. Along with the film RFSU has published a booklet for young teenagers 'Sex – your own way' with the same approach. Result: The film was first shown on public service TV in January 2011. It got 500 000 viewers. Since the release of the film approximately 150 000-200 000 pupils have seen it within the sexuality education in school. It's highly appreciated by teachers and students. The response from students has been very good, as an 'informative, instructive film with humour'. The media response has been positive as well. Negative responses have occurred from right wing extremists and conservative Christian media.



## **(Non)existence of sex education in Polish pedagogical and public discourses**

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Recently the issue of sex education has been widely and loudly discussed within the Polish media. In April 2013 the document “Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe” was presented at a conference organised by WHO and UNDP in Warsaw and draw everyone’s attention to the sex education of young children. Conservative parties started protesting against the implementation of WHO standards. Non-governmental organisations argued the importance of these standards based on their education and research. This paper aims to discuss the impact of public and educational discourses on child and youth sexualities in education practices in Poland. Furthermore it intends to examine governmental legislations on sexual education, school curricula and its implementation into formal education. It first provides a brief overview of the history of discourses regarding sex education over the past decades in Poland. This will underline the evolution of problem focused discourses (such as unintended pregnancy and STI) and procreation discourses. In addition it presents comparison of goals of formal school practices related to sexualities and non-formal education (offered by NGO’s). Moreover it aims to examine sex education practices present in polish schools today, answer questions about participation of students in those classes, teachers background and discussed issues. To fulfil the overall picture it will present some examples of alternative practices of non-formal sex education. In summary the diagnosis and critical analysis of state polish sex education brings the question of possible ways of change which will surely benefit from examples of other countries experiences presented at the conference.

## **Teaching LGBT issues at Czech high schools**

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In our paper, we will introduce a project called “Duhová výchova” (Rainbow Education). This project is a collaboration of NGO PROUD and student group Charlie of the Charles University. Within the project we are offering several different seminars for high schools. Though the seminars are discussing LGBTQ issues they are framed in wider understanding of normativity and normality, prejudice and stereotypes. To the topics of seminars belong: “different” families, transgender, or history of LGBTQ people and activism, diversity of sexual identities, practices and expressions around the world and historically. In our presentation at the conference we will, firstly, introduce the core concept of all seminars, including their purpose, structure and methods used. Here we will discuss benefits of reflexive approach compared to frontal education. Secondly, we will discuss the topic of our seminars – the various LGBTQ issues. We will focus on how we address the various topics, how we approach students with it and how the topics can be embedded in the school curricula. Though, we are currently in the middle of the project, as third part of

our paper, we would like to present some preliminary results that we have acquired from the evaluation questionnaires. The methodology of our evaluation will be briefly introduced as well. key words: LGBT, homosexuality, gender, education, stereotypes, reflexivity, high school seminars

## **What's pleasure go to do with it? Discourses of pleasure in the discursive constitution of sexual, ethnic and classed subjectivities in a school environment.**

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Since Michelle Fine's study (1988) about the lack of the discourse of desire and pleasure in sex education in the US, many scholars have explored discourses about sexuality in sex education (e.g. Allen 2004, Fine and McClelland 2006, Jackson and Weatherall 2010, Corteen 2006, Alldred and David 2007, Gilbert 2004, Rasmussen 2010). While in her earlier works (2004, 2005), Louisa Allen was advocating the inclusion of a discourse of pleasure in sex education, in her paper "Pleasure's perils? Critically reflecting on pleasure's inclusion in sexuality education" (2012) she critically interrogates such discourses, problematising the equation of pleasure with sexual agency, and arguing that the neoliberal discourse of the 'pleasure imperative' reinscribes (hetero)normative versions of femininities and masculinities and heteronormative understandings of sexual activity. She also argues that claiming that the only point of having non-reproductive sex is pleasure ignores the complexities of sexual activity and restricts young people from exercising sexual agency. Relying on Allen's arguments about the pleasure discourse in sex education and stretching her framework towards ethnicity and class, I examine the discourses of pleasure in my fieldwork material from a school ethnography, which I conducted in an ethnically mixed working-class secondary school in Budapest, Hungary, between 2009 and 2011, in the course of my doctoral research. In this paper I explore my sex education classroom observations and recordings, and interviews with students, teachers and the school health worker responsible for sex education, applying discourse analysis on extracts from my fieldnotes and the interview and recording transcripts. I argue that the neo-liberal pleasure discourse or the lack thereof plays a significant role in sexual subjectivity constitution, and in turn in ethnic and class subjectivity constitution, much of which happens through sexuality discourses. I aim to find out about how this intersectional constitution process happens in my adolescent and adult respondents' discourses in a particular school environment, with its specific power relations.