

**PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS
OF PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES TO CONCEPTS
OF DIVERSE SEXUALITIES**

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Abstract

Social justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people is a contested topic in Australia. Teachers are in a complex position when responding to diverse sexualities in primary schools in Queensland. Influences such as the heteronormative schooling context, including curriculum stipulations, pedagogical practices, educational policy and wider social and political trends regarding equality for LGBTI people impact on their position in society and on what teachers do in schools. Teachers are frequently faced with scenarios in which students demonstrate awareness of diverse sexualities, yet limited policy support or resources are available to guide them.

International, Australian and localised perspectives on social justice for LGBTI people provide the context and background to this topic of teachers in Queensland and their place in society in regards to diverse sexualities. Globally, a movement towards legalising same-sex marriage is growing. Australia is experiencing an ongoing debate regarding the legalising of same-sex marriage and has had reform in national policy to support advancement in equality for LGBTI people. In Queensland, the legislation and education policies are less reflective of the social justice advancement of LGBTI people than the national movement.

Research in Australia regarding diverse sexualities within an education context has largely focussed on secondary schools (years 12-18), curriculum development and LGBTI young people in education. Minimal research in the primary (years 5 – 12) years of schooling, a minimal focus on pedagogy and a lack of attention to Queensland provides a gap which this research is able to address. The research focuses on teachers' conceptualisations of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context in Queensland.

This study adopts a social constructionist theoretical framework and phenomenographic methodology to identifying teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to concepts of diverse sexualities in primary schools in Queensland, Australia. The ongoing state of Western culturally constructed knowledge about sexuality is the result of a complex history of understandings and theories about sexuality. Unfolding the socially constructed ideology of sexuality

provides a theoretical backdrop to the current body of research on sexuality in education, including teacher pedagogy. Current Western beliefs and practices about sexuality influence the beliefs and practices of schools, teachers, and students. An understanding of sexuality theories and links with educational pedagogical theories makes way for a theoretical framework for exploring teachers' conceptions of diverse sexualities in the primary school.

The findings reveal that teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities are: being nonchalant, avoiding, being uncertain, maintaining home and school boundaries, protecting and embracing. The range of teachers' conceptions is influenced by personal beliefs, school and institutional culture and Western cultural values and practices. The findings also reveal teachers are faced with a range of scenarios as part of their everyday experiences in which students raise awareness of diverse sexualities.

Social justice for LGBTI people should be a part of the educational landscape in Australia. LGBTI young people experience bullying, lower outcomes, lower retention rates, higher drug use and higher suicide rates in Australian schools. Teachers are a very significant component of schooling experiences for students and therefore the teachers' accounts of their experiences regarding their responses to conceptions of diverse sexualities are valuable.

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List of Abbreviations

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy
SSAY	Same Sex Attracted Youth
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WWII	World War II

Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

QUT Verified Signature

Signature: _____

Date: _____27/10/2014_____

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Chapter 1: Statement of the problem

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- Reece: That's so gay! (referring to his blunt pencil which he throws on the floor.)*
- Teacher: Does this pencil look like it has a sex? Can you tell if it is female or male? Because last time I checked, in order to be gay you had to have a sex.*
- Reece: I dunno.*
- Teacher: Well, I'm telling you this pencil does not have a sex and cannot possibly have a sexual orientation. And if it did, and you were to call it gay in a derogatory manner, it would be inappropriate. Got it?!*
- Reece: (Raised eyebrows and grin on face.)*
-

I am the teacher in this scenario. The scenario is a real experience from when I was a Year Six (students aged approximately 10.5 to 11.5 years) teacher in Queensland, Australia. The students would often say, 'that's so gay', a comment I found offensive not only for me personally but for the inequality the term promotes and perpetuates for all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) people. What if one of my students was to identify as homosexual? The most frustrating and upsetting element of scenarios of this ilk is that the students used the term so frequently they had no sense of its inappropriateness. As a teacher, I did not know how to address the issue. This scenario is not a standalone experience as I have had other experiences where students communicated knowledge about diverse sexualities (other than heterosexual). I began to wonder: How are other teachers 'dealing' with these situations? Other teachers must have similar experiences. What are they doing? How are they responding when students communicate ideas about LGBTI people? Teachers' responses are important as their actions have a significant impact on how students experience and view the world (Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007). From these experiences, my research questions evolved: How do individuals and groups shape their place in society? What do teachers conceive as their pedagogical

role when faced with a social justice issue such as diverse sexualities? How do the pedagogical practices of teachers impact on LGBTI students?

More specifically, the research focus is teacher conceptions of their pedagogical responses to students with diverse sexuality perspectives. Global, national, and local implications provide the background to this topic of teachers in Queensland and their place in society in regards to diverse sexualities. I begin with a broad international perspective then move to an Australian perspective and finally, will focus on a Queensland perspective (the context of the study) that explores social and cultural views. Research in Australia regarding ‘education’ and ‘sexuality’ has thus far been focused on curriculum development (see for example, Milton, 2004; Robinson & Davies, 2008), LGBTI people in education (see for example, Ashman, 2004; Hillier & Harrison, 2004) and the home versus school sex education debate (see for example, Hillier & Mitchell, 2008; Robinson, 2012; Walker & Milton, 2006). My research will focus on teachers’ accounts of their pedagogy and how they conceive their responses to concepts of diverse sexualities. The boundaries of the research include a focus within the primary school (students aged between 5 and 12 years) and within the eastern-seaboard state of Queensland, Australia.

The philosophical purpose of my study is to contribute to the investigation of the ways that individuals and groups continually shape their place in society. The focus is on teachers and their conceptions of their everyday experiences in schools. The thesis argues that teachers are a very significant component of schooling experiences for students and therefore the teachers’ accounts of their experiences regarding their responses to conceptions of diverse sexualities are valuable. The significance of this research addresses diverse sexuality inequalities within the primary school context.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Global perspectives of equality for LGBTI people

Section 1.1 will situate the current study within the broader social and educational context. First, I consider global issues related to LGBTI people as a way to highlight a trend towards equality for LGBTI people. Next, I explore current Australian political and social responses to these global equality issues, with a

particular focus on Queensland as the state in which this study is situated. Third, I outline the impact of these issues on teachers and students in Queensland schools, and highlight the need for research that focuses on teachers' pedagogical responses.

The implications of this topic stem from global, national and local perspectives on equality for LGBTI people. 'Perspectives' refers to an understanding of diverse sexualities, not just heterosexuality or homosexuality or a majority perspective on sexuality. The contemporary agenda for Western ideologies about sexuality focuses on equality (Altman, 2008). Global events occurring throughout the seventeenth century into contemporary times have impacted on social practices regarding sexuality (Jagose, 1996). A movement towards equality is evident in the increasing movement to legalise same-sex marriage or civil partnerships in countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Canada. Australia is part of this trend in thinking towards equality for LGBTI people with changes in government policies such as recognition of same-sex de-facto relationships and an open social debate about same-sex marriage. A cultural movement towards equality for LGBTI people is impacting on general government policy and changes in educational policies in Australia towards equality for LGBTI people (Jones, 2011). Teachers and students in schools in the State of Queensland, Australia, are exposed to and are a part of thinking regarding equality for LGBTI people.

Social equality for LGBTI people is increasing as Western cultural views and values are constantly changing towards normalising homosexuality. Yet, equality for LGBTI people is not evident around the globe, as countries and places in which LGBTI people are discriminated against are still evident. Discrimination based on sexual orientation has prompted nations such as the United States of America to support and promote changes towards equality for LGBTI people (International Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans and Intersex Association, 2009).

The equality movement regarding diverse sexualities is evident in the progression of countries around the world such as Argentina, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Canada, South Africa, Norway, Sweden, Portugal and Iceland who are acknowledging same-sex relationships by legalising same-sex marriage or civil partnership (International Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans and Intersex Association, 2009). Global organisations such as The United Nation's Human Rights Council contribute towards the movement for equality for LGBTI people. The United

Nation's Human Rights Council expressed concerns about discrimination towards LGBTI people in early 2011. The Council declared LGBTI discrimination a human rights issue and twenty-three countries, including Australia and other countries such as the United States of America, were in support of the council's proposal to conduct a global study on discriminatory laws and practices (Council for Global Equity, 2010).

The United States of America is moving towards equality for LGBTI people. American President Barack Obama announced his government's achievements in regards to LGBTI equal rights in the United States of America on June 29, 2011. He highlighted support for the fight for equal rights for people to live and love as they see fit and he acknowledged the progress to be made in the struggle against LGBTI people who feel discriminated against, including students in schools. His government's achievements include passing an inclusive hate crimes law, an order for hospitals to treat same-sex partners equal to opposite-sex partners, lifting of an Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) travel ban, development of the first national strategy to fight Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), the end of the United States Military's 'Don't ask don't tell' policy, and New York's legislation for same-sex marriage. Obama also highlighted the importance of changes in the "hearts and minds of people" (Global Equality Today, 2011). I have used the United States of America as an example of changes to national policies to showcase how parts of the world are moving towards equality for LGBTI people and the United States of America has global economic and cultural influences. In a similar vein to the United States of America, Australia has also made major policy changes contributing to the trend in LGBTI equality.

1.1.2 Australian perspectives

Australia is moving towards equality for LGBTI people. As a result of an investigation by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 2007, legislative reform amended 85 Australian Commonwealth laws in 2008 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010). The reforms reflect equal rights for non-heterosexual couples and their children in terms of social security, taxation, Medicare, veteran's affairs, workers' compensation, aged care, immigration, citizenship, superannuation, family law and child support. Even though these changes in Australian Commonwealth law acknowledge equal rights of LGBTI

Australians, legislations are inconsistent across states and territories, with different levels of implementation regarding sexuality equality. All states and territories have differing legislation. For example, "NSW is now the third state or territory to allow same-sex adoption, after the ACT and Western Australia" (New South Wales Parliament, 2009; The Sydney Morning Herald, 2010). In other states and territories adoption for LGBTI people is not legal. Major changes in federal law and significant changes in legislation from states and territories in Australia indicate movement towards equality for LGBTI people. Changes in legal rights are not the only indication of a movement towards equality for LGBTI people.

Equality for LGBTI people in Australia is evident in some legislation reform within individual states and territories, but other displays of equality for LGBTI people are evident. Australians have gay pride marches all over the country including Mardi Gras (attracting tens of thousands) in Sydney, New South Wales. There are lobby groups to advocate LGBTI equality and organisations to support LGBTI people and their families e.g. PFLAG – Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbian and Gays. The government provides pecuniary support for some of these organisations and groups, festivals and marches and research in various fields such as health and education. In Australia, a public debate about same-sex marriage highlights the movement towards equality for LGBTI people. The context of a public debate illustrates that Australians are willing to discuss LGBTI equality issues openly whereas previously such support was taboo. The state of Queensland has been both progressive and regressive depending on elected government over recent years. Political support, both for and against rights for LGBTI people, is apparent.

1.1.3 Queensland perspectives

The current study is situated in Queensland, Australia and the global and national trend regarding equality for LGBTI people impacts on teachers and students in Queensland schools. Queensland has a unique political environment with a unique legislative history. Schools, teachers and students in Queensland are impacted by political and legislative movements.

The State of Queensland has its own state legislation regarding equality for LGBTI people. The *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) did not include 'sexuality'. Then, in 2002 the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) was changed by the state

government to include ‘sexuality’, including heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality as attributes for which a person cannot be discriminated (*Discrimination Law Amendment Act 2002* (Qld)). Equality within Queensland legislation signalled a move towards equality for LGBTI people by acknowledging discrimination based on sexual orientation. There is legislative support for LGBTI equality in terms of discrimination but equality towards same-sex couples has been a tumultuous journey.

Under the former Queensland Premier, Anna Bligh, who publically announced her support for same-sex marriage in 2011 with the intent to support a motion proposed for the National Labour Conference in December, 2011 (McKenna & Barrett, 2011), legislative change was introduced for same-sex civil unions. The incoming Premier, Campbell Newman, degenerated the changes by allowing a registration of same-sex partnership with no state-sanctioned declaration ceremony (Hurst, 2012). The Australian Marriage Equality Incorporation provides an online search tool that identifies Members of Parliament who are supportive or opposed to marriage equality. Some political support in Queensland for equality for LGBTI people was evident with changes in anti-discrimination legislation and support for legalising same-sex marriage or civil partnerships by some Members of Parliament (Australian Marriage Equality, 2013).

Queensland schools

Schooling practices in Queensland are influenced by political trends and socio-cultural practices. At its most basic, the schooling system can be described as “a disciplining State apparatus that perpetuates Christian, white, middle-class, heteronormative ‘regimes of truth’ that underpin what is widely considered the quintessential good Australian citizen” (Robinson & Davies, 2008, p. 237). The term heteronormative, coined by Warner (1991), assumes heterosexuality as the normal and all assuming sexuality. These practices are deeply embedded in schooling systems as a result of culturally constructed ideologies regarding sexualities and pedagogies.

Teachers in Queensland schools

Teachers are in a complex position when responding to diverse sexualities in primary schools in Queensland. Influences such as the heteronormative schooling context, including curriculum stipulations, pedagogical practices, educational policy

and wider social and political trends regarding equality for LGBTI people impact on their position in society. These influences impact on what teachers do in schools.

Teachers encounter a range of situations in which diverse sexualities arise. Teachers are faced with managing LGBTI issues such as homophobic bullying and youth who experience inequality within Australia's education system (Michaelson, 2008; Mikulsky, 2005; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2000). Heteronormative teacher perspectives may contribute to inequitable educational experiences for LGBTI students and possibly parents and or carers (Bower & Klecka, 2009; Mikulsky, 2005). Teachers also face the reality that students who identify as homosexual, gender diverse or trans within the framework of heteronormative perspectives of schools exist and these students may experience low self-esteem, lower academic outcomes, truancy and suicide (Ashman, 2004; Gilchrist, Howarth, & Sullivan, 2003; Robinson, Bansel, Denson, Ovenden & Davies, 2014). Schools have a responsibility to protect students who identify or may be developing LGBTI identities and to act in the interest of all students to promote social equality (Epstein, Hewitt, Leonard, Mauthner, & Watkins, 2003). Students come from diverse family backgrounds and structures, different cultures and socio-economic circumstances and all have the right to equitable education (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008), including in primary schools.

Heteronormativity in the primary school

Heteronormative ideologies impact on teachers' agency to discuss and reflect on diverse sexuality issues that may arise. A plethora of research studies confirms heteronormativity as a problem in schools, thus teachers are implicated in this issue. Heteronormativity regulates gender practices (Renold, 2006) and supports "stereotypical gendered differences" (Blaise, 2009, p. 457). Heteronormativity legitimises homophobia and homophobic bullying (Bridge, 2007; Renold, 2002) and supports schools to read human rights in heteronormative ways (Dwyer, 2008). Heteronormativity endorses existing inequities while limiting opportunities to make connections between difference and diversity, power relations, structural inequalities and discrimination (Surtees, 2008). Students' misinformation around sexualities, increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse, and potential lack of sexual health and wellbeing is a result of heteronormative ideologies (Robinson, 2008). Heteronormativity also reinforces and condones homophobic and heterosexist values

and practices, whilst maintaining heterosexual privilege (Robinson & Davies, 2008). Students are denied an education of sexuality that needs to be more “in sync with the changing lives of children and their diversity of family experiences” (Robinson & Davies, 2008, p. 237). This research will provide insight into a diversity of student and teacher knowledges or attitudes regarding sexualities through teachers’ accounts of their experiences. For example, a student might challenge a teacher’s heteronormative perspective by suggesting a preference for a same-sex partner. An insight into teachers’ conceptions of their pedagogical response to a situation such as this example may reveal new insights and/or support previous research in the field of social equality in relation to diverse sexualities.

Teachers may be influenced by heteronormativity as bound by schooling and social practices. However, teachers may be challenging heteronormative practices as a result of influences from social and political trends. Teachers are also exposed to wider social and political trends moving towards equality for LGBTI people such as political and social debates on same-sex marriage and awareness of changes in laws and legislation such as the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld). Teachers’ pedagogical practices are influenced by heteronormativity and changes in social ideals such as equality for LGBTI people. Teachers’ pedagogical responses can either promote or demote equality for LGBTI people. If students are raising ideas about diverse sexualities and teachers’ accounts of their pedagogical responses reveal uncertainty about appropriate responses, then further research may be needed to identify how schools, including teachers and students, can be supported.

Students in Queensland schools

Research into equality for LGBTI people in schools in Australia has been situated in a heteronormative context in which the LGBTI student (high school, secondary school or age 12 upwards) has been the focus of investigation. Therefore research in LGBTI equality has focussed on the LGBTI student in schools, for example, the LGBTI student who is being bullied (Gilchrist, 2003) or the perceived LGBTI student who is being bullied (Meyer & Stader, 2009). DePalma (2011) explains that behaviours of children who present gender-variances can be assumed to be gay by other students and adults. Research also highlights that students know

about diverse sexualities in the primary school context, however there has been little research on how this knowledge is shared or enacted or how teachers might respond (Herdt & McClintock, 2000; Hillier et al., 2010; Michaelson, 2008; Renold, 2002). Research about diverse sexualities in the primary school context is timely and relevant.

Students with diverse sexuality perspectives in the primary school context

For the purposes of this research ‘students with diverse sexuality perspectives’ refers to students’ knowledge about sexualities and not necessarily their experiences or sexual identity. ‘Students’ perspectives on sexuality’ is not a term that denies reference to sexual identity, sexual acts nor sexual desires. But, it is a term used here to be inclusive of students’ knowledge of sexualities. Student perspectives on sexuality may be defined, but are not limited to, physical sexuality, for example, the physical sexual act (Robinson, 2008). The definition of students’ perspectives on sexualities also includes socially constructed notions of sexuality, for example, performing one’s sexuality by satisfying gender categories regulated by socially constructed attributes, (Butler, 1990; DePalma, 2011; Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007). Students’ sexual orientation is “multivariable” (Vrangalova & Savin-Williams, 2010, p. 92) and can be defined by a number of criteria such as attraction (feelings / desires), behaviour or identity (Riley, 2010).

Students in primary schools know about sexualities

Students’ understandings about gender and sexuality show not only how notions of sexuality are understood but that an explicit understanding of heteronormativity is evident in the early childhood classroom (Blaise, 2009). In an early childhood classroom, Blaise (2009) observed a girl singing a popular hit song with lyrics about what a girl should want and need. The researcher prompted a class discussion amongst the students aged five and six years to talk about what this might mean to them. One girl suggested that girls want lots and lots of boyfriends and the only way to do this is to be pretty, and one boy suggested the only way girls can do this is to be sexy. This evidence of the construction of heterosexuality in students’ everyday schooling experiences (Robinson & Davies, 2008) opposes the presumption that children are asexual, ‘too young’ and ‘too innocent’ to understand sexuality (Robinson, 2008).

Research indicates students are identifying with diverse sexualities within the primary school age and this has implications for teachers and their pedagogical responses. In an ethnographic study in the United Kingdom by Renold in 2002, fifty-nine Year Six students were interviewed on six occasions over the course of a year. Drawing on ‘children’s standpoint’ theory by Alanen (Renold, 2002), the conclusions were that during the final year of primary school “children define, create and consolidate hegemonic masculinities and femininities, heterosexual identities and heterosexual hierarchies” (Renold, 2002, p. 417). Another study, which compares international research, includes both heterosexual and homosexual adults who declared that they “all experienced sexual attraction at or near the age of 10” (Herdt & McClintock, 2000, p. 588). Michaelson (2008) also draws on international research and urges educators to “realise that children can, and do, identify as LGBTI as young as upper primary school” (p.81). A national report on LGBTI youth in Australia conducted by The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society at La Trobe University states: “More than a third of young people realized their sexual difference before puberty” (Hillier et al., 2010, p. 17). The research that reveals students within the primary school age bracket are identifying with diverse sexualities is not the focus of my research, however this literature indicates that research into teachers’ pedagogical responses to such scenarios is important.

The original scenario presented, a personal experience, is one example of the pedagogical dilemmas with which teachers might be faced in their daily experiences within the primary school context. Teachers’ deliberations over ‘what to do’ in these kinds of situations are influenced by global, national and local community ideologies and practices regarding diverse sexualities. The situation I found myself in, perhaps like other teachers, is contextualised by national and state curriculum developments in sex education and potential local community expectations regarding parent and teacher roles and responsibilities (Section 1.2).

1.2 Context

1.2.1 Research on ‘sex education’ in Australia and Queensland: curriculum and policy

In this section (Section 1.2.1) I explore the curriculum development and changes in ‘sex education’ in Australia and Queensland. Research to date regarding

‘sex education’ has been focussed on developments in curriculum as opposed to policy development or teacher practice. National trends in support of equality for LGBTI people in general government policies have influenced inclusion of diverse sexualities in national education policies but not necessarily influenced national curriculum. Queensland policies have been influenced by national policies and are inclusive of equality for LGBTI people. However, neither National nor Queensland curricula are inclusive of diverse sexualities. Because content regarding sex education is not compulsory, issues of equality for LGBTI people are not governed in schools via curriculum implementation. Issues of equality for LGBTI people are mandated through Queensland Education policy; however, with a lack of curriculum content, teachers are their own agents when dealing with issues of equity and diverse sexualities. The danger is, given the sensitive nature of this topic, many teachers may neither engage with nor address these issues, or may not ask for support. This study about teacher conceptions is timely, as curriculum development in Australia has moved to a place in which ‘sex education,’ including diverse sexualities, is now visible in some educational documents, for example, the *Declaration on National Goals for Schooling* (MCEECDYA, 2008).

The term sex education is used throughout this thesis as an overarching concept including hetero/homo sexualities as inclusive of sexuality education. Sexuality education refers specifically to personal/relationship development, social development (education of diverse sexualities such as gay and lesbian sexualities) and health and physical development (Walker & Milton, 2006). The development and changes in the curriculum and policy documents regarding sex education in Queensland are reflective of wider Queensland government policy such as changes to the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) in 2002. Sex education in the Queensland curriculum does not become evident until 1992 when relationships education (heterosexual relationships) was included. The Health and Physical Education curriculum in the late 1990s in Queensland included heterosexual and reproductive content (Goldman, 2010). The Australian schooling sector is in the process of introducing a national curriculum. The 2012 draft of the national health curriculum includes the key idea of “relationships and sexuality” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012, p. 4) within the strand of “personal, social and community health” (p. 3). The relationships and sexuality section is

elaborated with “exploring sexual and gender identities” (p. 6) however, the document does not include concepts of diverse sexualities, sexual orientation or gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual people. The response from Queensland to the draft consultation in regards to the ‘sexuality’ component is that “some feedback stated that the curriculum fails to scope out...sexuality” (Queensland Studies Authority, 2013, p. 7) The National LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex) Health Alliance recommends the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) consider “consistent and respectful inclusion of LGBTI students and families in the Curriculum” (Talbot, 2012, p.1). LGBTI is the acronym used to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and intersex identities. There has been no inclusion of diverse sexualities in Queensland curriculum documents. However, there has been inclusion of diverse sexualities in Education Queensland policy.

In 2005, Education Queensland produced an *Inclusive Education Statement* which includes the term ‘sexuality’ however there was no indication or further definition to include diverse sexualities (Slee, 2005, p. 3). This statement reports that teachers “must be given the opportunity to update and refine their knowledge of issues of...sexuality in order to respond to diversity and to effectively deliver productive pedagogies” (Slee, 2005, p. 3). Within this document it is stated that all Education Queensland staff have responsibilities within these procedures to implement the *Inclusive Education Statement* (Slee, 2005). Under the responsibilities section, all Education Queensland staff are to embed principles that inclusive education is part of all Education Queensland school practices, for all students through their schooling (Slee, 2005). Further information regarding the responsibilities of leadership within the state education department itself to provide appropriate resources, monitoring of implementation, further strategies to support implementation of the policy, and support for teachers in terms of professional development opportunities to implement the policy is available in this document (The State of Queensland, 2006). In 2012, the Queensland Government updated the *Policy and Procedure Register* to include a preamble on the *Inclusive Education Statement*. The preamble includes some key definitions which define diversity to encompass sexual orientation and “Inclusive curriculum acknowledge[s]...sexuality” (Queensland Government, 2012). These definitions support the reading of the *Inclusive Education Statement* in a different way; specifically including the words

sexual orientation. More recently, in 2013 the Queensland Government introduced a new policy, *Supporting Same Sex Attracted, Intersex or Transgender Students at School*. The two page document suggests:

It is important to develop an understanding of the individual needs and circumstances of students who identify as same sex attracted, intersex or transgender and ensure that they are treated with respect, information pertaining to these students is managed in accordance with confidentiality policies and they are provided with opportunities to contribute to decisions about practical solutions for any relevant aspects in the school environment (Queensland Government, 2013, p. 1).

The document continues with suggestions that schools have responsibilities regarding discrimination, duty of care, student well-being and a list of considerations the school must consider such as student use of toilets. The document includes some resources but does not encompass training for school administrators or teachers, advice about curriculum inclusions or reference to social equity issues. The resources included are limited. The policy has since been removed from Education Queensland's policy registry. Curriculum documents in Queensland have not supported implementation of sex education in schools even though there is evidence of sex education expectations within a key Education Queensland policy document, the *Inclusive Education Statement* (Queensland Government, 2002).

Although not compulsory, Education Queensland produced a teaching strategies document for implementation with students aged 11-12 years called *Year 7: Emerging relationships and feelings of attraction module* (Queensland Government, 2009). This teaching plan was posted on the Department of Education and Training website and aimed to address young people's awareness of their own sexual identity development (Queensland Government, 2009). The document has since been removed from Education Queensland's website.

From a national educational perspective, Australia has its own history, social contexts and education policy regarding sex education. In terms of a national

commitment to sex education policy, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) developed a *Declaration on National Goals for Schooling*. MCEECDYA's membership comprises State, Territory, Australian Government and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of education, early childhood development, and youth affairs. The aim of the framework is to guide and assist schools with a set of principles to implement practical student wellbeing policies to create learning environments void of behaviours such as bullying. The first Declaration, *The Hobart Declaration of 1989* (MCEECDYA, 1989) and the second, *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling of 1999* (MCEECDYA, 1999), were not inclusive of sex education. The most recent Declaration, *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians of 2008* (MCEECDYA, 2008) specifically identifies sexual orientation as an attribute for which students should not be discriminated. In the 2008 declaration, sexual orientation is included with the goal: "Australian schooling promotes equality and excellence" (MCEECDYA, 2008, p. 7). The sub point of the goal states: "provide all students with access to high-quality schooling that is free from discrimination based on gender, language, sexual orientation..." (MCEECDYA, 2008). In the 1999 declaration, a section titled 'socially just' included equality issues of sex, culture, and socio-economic background (MCEECDYA, 1999). Between 1999 and 2008, social justice and equality in education, according to the MCEECDYA, has moved from sex, culture and economics to be inclusive of sexuality and other issues such as: "gender, language, pregnancy, ethnicity, religion, health or disability or geographic location" (MCEECDYA, 2008, p. 7). Research in the Australian context around the provision of sex education in schools is limited. This dearth of research in Australia is highlighted in comparison with more extensive research from other Western countries, as is explored in the literature review.

Experienced Australian researchers in the field of LGBTI youth equality, Hillier and Mitchell (2008), highlight issues regarding the absence of sex education in curriculum throughout Australia and also the lack of influence or monitoring of government policies such as the *Declaration on National Goals for Schooling* (MCEECDYA, 2009) or Queensland's *Inclusive Education Statement* (2005). Hillier and Mitchell (2008) suggest: "Sex education is not mandated in any state or territory of Australia" (p. 5) and therefore they argue LGBTI students are missing out on

important sex education information. Australian governments have included sexuality issues and social equality issues for people and students with diverse sexual orientations within federal and state/territory policies due to the trend towards equality for LGBTI people. Because sex education is not specifically mandated in curriculum, school based decisions are made according to broad curriculum frameworks regardless of overarching policies. As a result, schools in Australia are not free from discrimination based on sexual orientation (Bridge, 2007; Grossman, Haney, Edwards, Alesasi, Ardon, Howell, 2009; Hunter, 2006; Meyer & Stader, 2009; Sengstock, 2004).

Running parallel to developments in policy and curriculum in ‘sex education’ in Australia is the debate regarding who is responsible for sex education: parents or schools? (Robinson, 2012). This debate within schools and the wider community has been occurring since the 1970s. In the 1950s and 1960s sex education was non-existent in schools; it was thought of as a private matter. Sex education has become more of a school responsibility over recent decades due to an interrogation of Western childhood development theories, such as the work of Jean Piaget. His ideas regarding human development have influenced educational philosophies for decades and have had a significant impact on concepts around the appropriate age for children to engage in sex education (Robinson & Davies, 2008). According to teachers and parents, informed by a comparative study between Leeds, United Kingdom and Sydney, Australia, more contemporary views on the responsibility of the school or family for sex education are “progressing towards securing pragmatic partnerships between schools, agencies and parents” (Walker & Milton, 2006, p. 423).

The debate over the responsibility for educating students about sex and sexuality and what should or shouldn’t be included is one element in the history of the development of sex education in Australia. Other wider social and political trends both nationally and internationally have influenced education curriculum and policy development such as religious, cultural and political perspectives. More recently trends toward equality for LGBTI people from other countries and wider Australian government laws and policies have influenced education policy to be inclusive of diverse sexualities in school practices. These changes impact on teachers and students in schools in Queensland, Australia.

1.2.2 Defining key boundaries and key terms

This study is limited to teachers in the primary school context in Queensland, Australia, and how they respond pedagogically to student questions and comments about diverse sexualities. Previous research in the area of sex education has been very minimal in Queensland. It is also the state in which I live and work. Queensland provides a context in which curriculum is not inclusive of sex education (with the concept of diverse sexualities included) yet there is education policy that is inclusive of diverse sexualities. The conceptions of sex education held by teachers within Catholic education (Willmetts & Lidstone, 2009) have been explored but teacher pedagogy in regards to sex education has not. Practical and financial boundaries limit the research to Queensland.

This section defines key concepts such as pedagogy and heteronormativity within the context of the research. Pedagogy, for the purposes of this discussion, refers to what teachers do when taking on the role of teacher, the decisions made, the actions taken and the ways in which they respond formally and/or informally. The focus of the research is teachers' accounts of their conceptions of their pedagogical responses, not observations of their pedagogy. Booth and Marton (1997, p. 114) define 'conceptions' as being synonymous with terms such as "ways of understanding, ways of comprehending...conceptualisations...ways of experiencing... it depicts how the world appears to people." Knowing how and why teachers respond in a certain way, from the perspective of the teachers' conceptions of themselves, provides valuable insight into what teachers say they do in their day-to-day working lives. The discussion of how teachers are influenced by both heteronormative schooling contexts and state, national and international trends in equality for LGBTI people provide the background for the research focus. The focus of this research is to reveal teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context.

Research exploring sex education in Australia has been mostly situated in the secondary school and not the primary school context. This may be due to social norms, religious taboos and concepts of childhood innocence. Children and youth of today are commonly acknowledged as being more knowledgeable than previous generations about diverse sexualities. Robinson (2008) describes how children gain knowledge about sexuality not only through schooling but also through the media

and diverse family/friend relationships and this knowledge extends to diverse sexualities. Students' perspectives on sexualities are influenced by popular culture in the media and as student access to multi-media increases so does their exposure. Evidence of non-heterosexuality in mainstream media in Australia is increasing. For example, in a popular Australian soap opera, *Neighbours*, two characters of the same-sex kissed; same-sex parents appeared in an episode of *Play School* (Australian children's television show) and Madonna and Britney (pop singer icons) kissed on stage during a concert that was televised worldwide (Ferfolja, 2007; Robinson, 2008). Non-heterosexuality is relevant in young people's daily lives as the wider social Western world is acknowledging sexual diversity (Ferfolja, 2007). Media in the Western world is growing a LGBTI market in which diverse sexualities are represented (Padva, 2008). Film and popular music has increasingly provided a medium for exploration of diverse sexualities, which students are reading, viewing and hearing. Students bring these knowledges of diverse sexualities to the primary school context and the way in which a teacher responds is influential on students' attitudes as they develop understandings of the world around them.

Research regarding the review of sex education in Queensland has been published by Goldman in 2010, 2011 and more recently in 2012. Goldman has published research in sex education and child development since the early 1980s, mostly framed within heteronormative ideologies. Goldman (2010) reviewed the Queensland Curriculum to reveal no inclusion of diverse sexualities in any reference to sex education. Goldman makes no reference to Education Queensland's *Inclusive Education Statement* (2005) in which sexuality diversity is included. The focus of Goldman's research is on sex education within Education Queensland and the Queensland Study Authority's curriculum documents and does not include reference to policy documents. In a paper published in *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning* in 2011, Goldman reiterates the need for sex education in schools and she presents research of three external providers on the delivery of their programs. Although she argues for the inclusion of sex education in primary schools, she asserts external providers are more experienced, well trained and ultimately more suited to deliver such curriculum. The progress of Goldman's work in 2012 is evident in her critical analysis of UNESCO's *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* (2009) and comparison to the Australian curriculum. She

declares “the sampled Australian curriculum is woefully inadequate for the task of teaching puberty, sexuality and reproductive health and safety education” (Goldman, 2012, p. 1).

Research conducted to explore teachers’ conceptions of sexuality in the Queensland Catholic education system by Willmetts and Lidstone (2009) also focused on curriculum. The research did not focus on an overview of the curriculum as such; rather the focus was on primary teachers’ conceptions of sex education in the curriculum. The point of difference between Willmetts and Lidstone’s research and my research is their focus on the teachers’ conceptions of sex education *vis-a-vis* my focus on teachers’ conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context.

1.3 Purposes

The overarching philosophical purpose of this research is to explore how individuals and groups shape their place in society within a social constructionist framework. Through questioning individual teachers in Queensland, it is possible to shed light on the ways in which teachers in this study perceive their roles in regards to diverse sexualities. Through transcript analysis, the collective conceptions of teachers’ pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context will be revealed. This study will develop categories of description which describe the teachers’ conceptions of their pedagogical experiences of the phenomenon of diverse sexualities.

The outcomes of this research provide evidence to support professional learning in current teacher pedagogy (pre-service and/or in-service) and possible curriculum and policy development in the area of sex education. Comments about diverse sexualities can and do come up in primary schools and teachers are expected to respond, and “the manner in which they respond affects students” (Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007 p. 202). Current teacher perspectives from research internationally and from Australia highlight a need for teacher education in sex education, pre-service and in-service training (Goldman, 2012), and further teacher support with resources (Bower & Klecka, 2009; Hermann-Wilmarth, 2007; Walker & Milton, 2006). A current picture of teacher knowledge regarding sex education may influence future teacher education. Having an understanding of teachers’ pedagogical experiences in

response to diverse sexualities in the primary school may prompt further investigation for professional learning activities or development of educational policy.

1.3.1 Research Question

The overarching research question asks: What are the ways that individuals and groups shape their place in society? In this case, the main research question is what are teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context? Teachers decide on how to respond to diverse sexualities which is a phenomenon they face in schools. This research aims to explore the following research sub questions:

- (1) What are teachers' experiences with scenarios in which diverse sexualities are introduced by primary school students?
- (2) How confident are teachers to respond to scenarios in primary school that refer to diverse sexualities?

The focus of this research is on the teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to concepts of diverse sexualities. The phenomenon of 'concepts of diverse sexualities' is somewhat ambiguous hence the first sub question. What is it exactly that I'm asking teachers to describe their pedagogical responses to? At this point, the term diverse sexualities has been used or concepts of diverse sexualities however, the lived experiences of teachers will reveal the types of scenarios that will define 'concepts of diverse sexualities'. There is little evidence to suggest exactly what teachers may or may not come across in regards to diverse sexualities in their interactions with primary school age students in Queensland. Part of this research will reveal the types of experiences teachers are facing in regards to responding to concepts of diverse sexualities. Appendix B provides the detail of the information given to participants prior to the interview.

1.4 Significance of the research project

The aim of this research project is to identify teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school. The study explores the research question: what are teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context? There are four

significant aspects to this research project; one, teachers' conceptions; two, the everyday experiences of primary school teachers in relation to diverse sexualities; three, implications for educational institutions, teacher training institutions and the impact on LGBTI people/students and four, theoretical developments in social constructionist theory and phenomenography.

Understanding teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses is significant because teachers' experiences are valuable. What teachers 'do' on a daily basis, both implicitly and explicitly, is both influential and influenced. Teachers' actions are influential in terms of the impact on students; and how and what teachers are influenced by is significant, for example, politics, school culture, student backgrounds, teacher values and beliefs. Teachers are in a complex position in which they are in a position of power to influence formal and informal education regarding sexuality yet also in a powerless position due to influences beyond their control such as heteronormativity (Epstein, 2000; Robinson & Davies, 2008).

The everyday experiences of teachers are significant because society is constantly changing. Schools are governing bodies which reinforce wider community expectations (Apple, 2004; Bernstein, 2000) and therefore capturing the experiences of teachers in schools will be a useful sociological research endeavour. Australian research reports teachers contributing to homophobia in schools both actively through homophobic remarks and inactively by doing nothing in response to student homophobic acts (Michaelson, 2008; Murray, 2001).

The implications for educational institutions, teacher training institutions and LGBTI students are significant. LGBTI students are exposed to heteronormative schooling practices, including the pedagogical choices of teachers. Research shows current schooling systems in Australia are lacking equality education for LGBTI students (Ashman, 2004; Michaelson, 2008). Knowing how teachers respond to diverse sexualities may provide insight for teacher training institutions and educational institutions to consider training for pre/in service teachers.

This research is framed by **social constructionist theory** using a **phenomenographic methodology**. Theoretical developments of the alignment between social constructionist theory and phenomenography are explored in Chapters 3 and 4 where a way of investigating the theorising of sexuality is developed. Phenomenographic methodology is developed by using cogenerative

dialogue, further explained in Chapter 4. Phenomenography provides a methodological framework with which the experiences of teachers via interview are gathered. Research within this field is unique in methodology (phenomenography – individual interviews) and context (the mainstream primary school).

The aim of this research is to contribute original knowledge to the current body of national and international research in sex education and diverse sexualities in education, from a social justice perspective. Teachers are influential via their pedagogy regarding student attitudes and learning outcomes. This research will add original knowledge of primary school teacher conceptions of pedagogy in response to concepts of diverse sexualities in Queensland, Australia. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic of sex education in the primary school, my research will provide an avenue to reveal teachers' conceptions in an otherwise taboo or normative conversation. It is possible the outcomes of this study will corroborate international research such as teacher interviews conducted by De Palma and Atkinson (2009) in the United Kingdom in which teachers shared “perceptions and histories that serve to support heteronormativity, but which also hold the potential to disrupt it” (p. 841).

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis consists of six chapters. Each is outlined in the following.

Chapter 1 introduced the thesis by outlining the background (Section 1.1) and context (Section 1.2) of the research. The background to this research is presented in global, national and state perspectives. The context is set by a description of current sex education research in Queensland and Australia and by defining key terms and boundaries. Section 1.3 described the purpose of the study and the research questions to be addressed and Section 1.4 articulated the significance of the study. Finally, Section 1.5 outlines the remainder of the document.

Chapter 2 follows with a review of current national and international research regarding diverse sexualities and education. Ideologies such as childhood innocence and heteronormativity are explored. Research on homophobic bullying is linked with a wounded agenda and contextualised within a broader social and cultural context.

In Chapter 3 a theoretical framework is developed. A working definition of sexuality, sexuality theories and links with pedagogy is developed (Figure 3.1). Theories of sexuality and pedagogy are re-theorised within a social constructionist framework (Figure 3.2).

The methodology of phenomenography is explained in Chapter 4. The history of phenomenographic research is presented as are the ontological and epistemological understandings.

Analysis and results are revealed in Chapter 5. Teachers' conceptions of diverse sexualities in the primary school are presented as categories. The categories of description describe the teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities. The dimensions of variation are revealed within and across each category and identify variation within the categories of description.

Chapter 6 presents the outcome space with a discussion of the significance of the study and conclusions. The chapter highlights the findings of the research which are presented in Figure 6.1. Theoretical and methodological limitations and significance are discussed. Research potential for the future is proposed.

The document includes a bibliography and appendices: Appendix A: ethics application; Appendix B: participant information and consent forms; Appendix C: sample interview questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Teachers' accounts of their pedagogical responses to concepts of diverse sexualities in the primary school context are the focus of my research. The literature review chapter will first examine Australian research in sex education (Section 2.1) to highlight the social and cultural influences of the development and changes to how sex/sexuality has been represented in schools. Section 2.2 discusses general trends and shifts in diverse sexualities educational research in the past 10 years. Because of ideologies such as 'childhood innocence' research has historically been in the secondary school context. As a result of historical social and cultural influences, the field of sexuality in education has been influenced by a 'wounded' agenda (Section 2.3). Issues such as homophobic bullying or duty of care responsibilities for schools regarding LGBTI perceived/identified students have been the focus of research. The focus of the wounded agenda has been on the LGBTI individual as having a problem or issue to be dealt with and several programs for secondary schools have been developed and trialled in order to address these issues. As a result of research that dispels myths regarding childhood innocence, there is contemporary research that addresses concepts such as sexuality in the primary school. Research is moving away from a wounded perspective in which the LGBTI individual is the problem, to a broader concept of heteronormativity as the problem to be addressed through education (Section 2.4). In Section 2.5, I provide a brief overview of current teacher perspectives on ideas of sexualities in education and an overview of pre-service teacher education research.

2.1 The development of diverse sexuality concepts in educational research

Educational research in Australia has a rich history in which knowledge and understanding around sex education has ebbed and flowed as cultural and social practices have evolved. The discussion here does not allow for an extensive review of history and therefore it begins in the mid-1900s when education systems became more formally established. Australian and state government laws and policies and curricula development have led to the establishment of some resources and an inquiry into current teacher perspectives on inclusive sex education.

During the 1950s and 1960s ‘sex education’ was generally seen as the responsibility of the family, and was neither a topic that was addressed within the education system nor discussed in terms of diversity. Families were seen as the primary source of private information and sex or sexuality was not discussed outside this arena. Families would choose the ‘appropriate time’ for a child to be educated in such matters. The topic of sex was taboo for children, especially within the schooling context. Robinson and Davies (2008) discuss the history of sexuality and childhood in Australia in relation to the social construction and repression of children’s sexual knowledge. This is particularly relevant for this study in terms of unpacking the history of sex education from a socially constructed point of view. Robinson and Davies (2008) describe the curriculum content in New South Wales (NSW) and the changes in sex education over recent times. The most relevant acknowledgement is the identification by Robinson and Davies (2008) of the omission of diverse sexualities and implicit heteronormative perspectives of the development of sex education curriculum. The progression of general social attitudes towards sex education is linked with government progress in law and general policy agreements.

The Australian Government, along with state and territory legislations and policies, has not been inclusive of sexual orientation concepts. Only since the 1980s have there have been inclusive changes. However, the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Com) is not inclusive of sexual orientation issues. Nevertheless, ten years later, the *Work Place Relations Act 1996* (Com) encouraged “co-operative work place relations” by “respecting and valuing the diversity of the work force by helping to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the bases of ... sexual preference” (p. 2). More recently, in 2008 the Australian government of the time introduced reforms that reflect equal rights for “same sex” couples and their children in terms of social security, taxation, Medicare, veterans’ affairs, workers’ compensation, aged care, immigration, citizenship, superannuation, family law and child support. In terms of education policy, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) developed a Declaration on the National Goals for Schooling which was called *The Hobart Declaration* (1989) (MCEECDYA, 1989). The second declaration, *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling* (1999) (MCEECDYA, 1999) comparable to the first was not inclusive of sexual orientation. The third declaration, *The Melbourne*

Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEECDYA, 2008) is inclusive of sex education and clearly identifies sexual orientation as an attribute upon which students should not be discriminated. States and territories now follow a similar pattern of recognition.

For the purpose of this research, Queensland government policy is explored further. The *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) does not include sexuality; however, the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) reprinted on 14 October 2010 includes sexuality as one of the attributes for which a person cannot be discriminated. The *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) was changed in 2002 to include sexuality. This progression of national and state policies aligns with changes in curriculum over time.

The history of sexuality education in Queensland from a curriculum content perspective is not dissimilar to that of other states and reflects overall government policy development. Goldman (2010), in a department review of Queensland curricula, claims the first relevant policy document to emerge in Queensland was in 1992. This document had a focus on relationships education but was situated within a biological context. In the late nineties it was revised to adopt a social justice slant. According to Goldman (2010), the latest curriculum documents in Queensland, influenced by the changes in the late nineties “give sexual and reproductive health education a more explicit, clarified and comprehensive profile within the HPE (Health and Physical Education) curriculum” (Goldman, 2010, p. 63). The article is written from a heteronormative perspective; however, one section mentions diverse sexualities by referring to the curriculum which explicitly refers to identity. Goldman states that it was “unfortunate” no mention was made of same-sex attraction in the Queensland curriculum document.

The Australian government is currently developing an Australian curriculum through the formation of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). Previously the states and territories have developed their own curriculum. MCEECDYA has requested ACARA to provide advice about curriculum development for other learning areas identified in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (see Section 2.1). It is unclear if ACARA will acknowledge the inclusion of diverse sexuality concepts in the new Australian curriculum.

2.2 ‘Childhood Innocence’ and general trends and shifts in diverse sexualities educational research

Notions of childhood innocence have influenced the development of government policies and curriculum development. Other themes in the literature, such as the acknowledgment of LGBTI people in education, student sexuality knowledge, addressing homophobic bullying, pre-service teacher education for sex education, duty of care for schools regarding LGBTI perceived/identified students, and trial sex education programs in schools all move towards acknowledgement of diverse sexualities in education. Over the past decade or two, research in education involving concepts regarding diverse sexualities reveals a parallel movement towards inclusion of diverse sexualities concepts in the primary school context.

2.2.1 Schooling and childhood innocence

As discussed in the introductory chapter, sex education has been a contested issue within the primary school context due to notions of childhood innocence. Sex education has been defined by developmentally appropriate curriculum and pedagogy and has guided the information that should or should not be taught. Often, children have been viewed as too innocent to be exposed to diverse sexualities (Robinson & Davies, 2008). However, children are aware of sex and sexualities from a very young age (Blaise, 2009).

Acknowledgement of children as sexualised is necessary to consider heteronormativity in the primary school context. Understanding that primary school students already know about heterosexuality in the primary school context allows the exploration of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity is bound by binary concepts of male and female gendered identities constructed at birth which support heterosexual stereotypes of boy and girl, man and woman. Perceptions of gender performance are linked with perceptions of sexual orientation and students who express gender variant preferences may be thought of as gay or lesbian (De Palma, 2011; Garcia & Slesaransky-Poe, 2010).

Robinson (2005) describes gender and sexuality as socially constructed in which the child acts as a knowing agent in the process of normalising heterosexuality. This may be as overt as homophobic bullying or a more covert

expression where a student may sing a song about boys and girls chasing one another to seek a kiss. Payne and Smith (2012) shift the definition of the often perceived 'problem' of diverse sexualities that are associated with an individual in the case of bullying to the problem being a much more deep seated definition involving understanding social capital (Bourdieu, 1990) and the concept of heteronormativity.

Children know about concepts of sexuality when they are in primary school and early childhood settings. Sexuality concepts may be presented overtly or covertly within formal or informal contexts by teachers, parents and children. Heteronormativity exists in these settings and research in this field has aimed to dispel myths that children are too young to know about or learn about sexuality as the reality is that sexuality concepts already exist for children (Epstein, 1997). Epstein has been a significant contributor to the field of sexualities in education, from research in early childhood to tertiary institutions. Her work spans the early 1990s to the present and is generally based in the United Kingdom. The focus of Epstein's work, sometimes in collaboration with others, has been on providing evidence that (hetero) sexuality exists in primary school and early childhood contexts. Epstein's earlier work, *Cultures of schooling/cultures of sexuality* (Epstein, 1997), had a strong focus on gender construction and the connection with hetero/sexuality. The motivation of the study was to dispel the myth that 'teaching' children about homosexuality is wrong because children are not mature enough to understand heterosexuality let alone "such concepts as homosexuality" (Epstein, 1997, p. 38). Other United Kingdom researchers support concepts such as acknowledging sexuality and heteronormativity in the primary school context including DePalma and Atkinson (2009). Similarly, Ferfolja and Robinson's (2004) research in Australia shows how sociocultural ideas influence primary school teacher educators' perceptions and subsequently the perceptions of their students. Renold's (2000) work argues that there is evidence of compulsory heterosexuality in United Kingdom primary schools. Epstein's work was pivotal in moving research regarding sexuality concepts from the secondary school into the primary school and early childhood arena.

It is difficult to justify moving research on sex education of diverse sexualities into the primary school arena when beliefs about childhood innocence still exist. However, research has shown that "children (in Australia) encounter knowledge

about sexuality in their everyday lives through media, interaction with peers and some through queer family members and friends” (Robinson, 2008, p. 121). This research, along with research on students in primary schools knowing about sexualities (Blaise, 2009) (as explained in Section 1.1.3, sub section: *Students in primary schools know about sexualities*, p. 20 of Chapter 1), has established a place for further research regarding diverse sexualities in the primary school arena. Much research in secondary schools in Australia has been motivated by a need to address homophobic bullying.

2.3 A wounded agenda

2.3.1 Homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying research is embedded within a wounded perspective. Research in Australia has perpetuated notions of “woundedness” (Harwood & Rasmussen, 2004, p. 317) with homosexuality as a state to ‘deal with’ or have ‘issues around’ including the concept of homophobic bullying. The focus of research in this area to date has been on addressing homophobia as a problem. The issue lies with the individual or perceived LGBTI victim and not necessarily with heteronormativity as a holistic issue to address (Ashman, 2004; Bridge, 2007; Kendall & Sidebotham, 2004; Michaelson, 2008; Mikulsky, 2005; Murray, 2001).

Several studies in Australia report issues of homophobia and homophobic bullying and the significant impact on students who hold or are associated with or perceived to have non-heteronormative perspectives. Gender based inequities are constructed through generalisations about sexuality based on gender representations. A student who may present as male and effeminate may be perceived to be gay, for example (DePalma, 2011). Michaelson (2008) conducted research highlighting homophobia as an issue for LGBTI students in Australia and the United States of America. Michaelson (2008) reports LGBTI students’ experiences at school include: hearing homophobic insults; experiencing teachers ignoring reports of homophobia; and a belief that teachers propagate discrimination and harassment. He also reports that LGBTI youth suicide rates are higher, drug abuse (including alcohol) is higher, retention rates are lower and academic outcomes are lower. Michaelson (2008) claims: “Despite the overwhelming evidence that LGBTI students are not afforded equal access to educational opportunities, schools are reluctant to implement

initiatives that include them in the learning communities” (p.78). He calls on schools to create a safe learning environment free from homophobia for LGBTI students. Michaelson’s (2008) review clearly highlights that LGBTI students’ experience disadvantage in Australia’s schooling system.

A connection is evident between student academic outcomes and school climate according to qualitative findings in an Australian research project conducted by Mikulsky (2005). The motivation for the project was to research the relationship between outcomes for LGBTI students, or what Mikulsky (2005) refers to as Same Sex Attracted Youth (SSAY), and school climate in secondary schools. The project stems from a literature base that highlights the discrimination of LGBTI students and the overt homophobia rife in secondary schools in Australia (Mikulsky, 2005).

Homophobia and the synonymous link with wounded LGBTI youth are evident in Australian research and in the educational field. Similar to the previously mentioned Australian writers on homophobia and SSAY in schools, Sengstock (2004, 2006) shares his views in two articles published in *Principal Matters* (2004, 2006). From a principal’s perspective, Sengstock expressed deep concern about the nature of homophobic bullying in schools and the psychological impact this was having on SSAY (LGBTI students). He called on schools and principals to address these issues from a human rights and duty of care perspective. Sengstock’s perspective is from working in secondary schools in which he sees support for LGBTI students as a vital issue to address.

Anti-homophobic education has been explored in secondary schools in Canada. Goldstein, Russell and Daley (2007) research anti-homophobic education (via a ‘positive school’ framework) in secondary schools and pre-service teacher education courses. They highlight the historical significance of government recognition of LGBTI students as being ‘at risk’ and also the acknowledgement that schools should be ‘safe places’ for LGBTI students. The researchers highlight the issue of addressing not just homophobia but heteronormativity, even though anti-homophobic education is necessary to address these issues of student safety: “By individualizing the harassment of queer youth, schools abdicate their responsibility for challenging power systems and culture that privilege heterosexuality over homosexuality” (Goldstein, Russell, & Daley, 2007, p. 185).

Canadian scholars have contributed significantly to research that explores harassment and bullying in schools with a focus on gender and sexuality. Meyer (2009) has conducted research on harassment and provided schools with strategies and resources to address gender and sexuality bullying in schools. Teachers were interviewed to express their perspectives. Many teachers drew on their own experiences of discrimination in various forms to highlight their passion to eliminate gender and or sexuality discrimination in their classroom and or school; however, issues were raised as obstacles for these teachers. Some of the issues raised were: a lack of support from administration; lack of consistency in reporting problems and responses to incidents; feeling isolated in addressing homophobia; and a lack of policy direction (Meyer, 2009). A literature review by Duke and McCarthy (2009) highlights the important work of professional development for teachers in the United States of America which promotes “challenging systems of privilege and oppression based on gender and sexuality” (p. 385). This includes issues of homophobic bullying.

Research about homophobic bullying in schools in Australia over the past decade or more demonstrates, although written from a wounded perspective, the movement towards recognising sexual diversity in schools (Ashman, 2004; Bridge, 2007; Kendall & Sidebotham, 2004; Michaelson, 2008; Mikulsky, 2005; Murray, 2001). Even though research highlighting heteronormativity exists within the primary school context, research has largely been focussed on the needs of the LGBTI individual in regards to issues such as homophobic bullying.

2.3.2 LGBTI individuals in educational research

Research to date has involved government and education policy and curriculum reviews which move towards inclusion of diverse sexualities. However, research has also focussed on LGBTI individuals and not necessarily issues of inclusion, challenging heteronormativity or addressing sex education equality. Issues of LGBTI teachers ‘coming out’ in educational settings (Epstein, 1994; Lipkin, 2004b) and experiences of LGBTI students have been a research focus. Secondary schools have been sites for investigation in which identified LGBTI students have participated in research with a focus on bullying and homophobia as key issues (Ashman, 2004; Harwood, 2004). The combination of ‘teacher’ and ‘pedagogy’ and ‘diverse sexuality’ has not been explored in Australia.

Teachers in schools have been ‘researched’ from the view or experiences of those who have identified as LGBTI (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2005). In Pallotta-Chiarolli’s study, two Australian LGBTI-identified teachers shared their thoughts of the importance of teacher education and their own difficulties grappling with teacher identity and sexual identity. One teacher described her experiences as a pre-service teacher and related this to possible implications for the classroom and the heterosexist context in which LGBTI students may also find themselves. Epstein (1994) presented the stories of several British teachers who mainly discuss the difficulties of ‘coming out’. In another study in the United States of America, a secondary school male teacher expressed deep moral confusion in deciding to ‘come out’ to his students (Gregory, 2004). There is no research in Australia that explores teacher conceptions (regardless of their own sexuality) of their pedagogy in the primary school in relation to diverse sexualities.

LGBTI secondary school students have been the subject of research conducted in Australia regarding sexual diversity. Research explores student feedback on several themes which often overlap, such as bullying, harassment, duty of care, overcoming homophobia, and health and wellbeing issues (Ashman, 2004; Gilchrist, et al., 2003; Harwood, 2004; Hillier, Leonard, Marshall, Mitchell, & Ward, 2010; Kendall & Sidebotham, 2004; Murray, 2001). LGBTI secondary students have been researched and represented mainly from a disadvantageous or deficit position of needing to be heard as a minority group or needing help or support. The primary school context has been a largely avoided arena for research on sex education inclusive of diverse sexualities due to notions of childhood innocence, social norms and religious taboos.

2.3.3 Duty of care responsibility for teachers and schools

A duty of care responsibility for teachers and schools has been presented in the research as a strong advocacy base for LGBTI social equality in education arenas. Research highlights the wounded position of individuals, perceived or LGBTI identified, experiencing difficulties within the schooling system.

A social equality movement for LGBTI students is not as evident in education in Australia as elsewhere such as the United Kingdom and Canada. The work of Pallotta-Chiarolli (2000) claims: “homophobia and heterosexism still rule in most

classrooms and playgrounds” (p. 34) although, “an increasing number of children and young people are being queerly raised even if they have straight parents, even if they are not queer themselves” (p. 34). Queerly raised means the child is raised knowing heterosexuality is not the only sexuality (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2000). Australian researchers have explored issues of social equality (Burnett, 2003; Dwyer, 2008; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2000); the experiences of and problems associated with being or being perceived to be a LGBTI student (Ashman, 2004; Michaelson, 2008) and inclusion of LGBTI concepts into the curriculum (Goldman, 2010; Milton, 2004). These studies have limited information about primary school teachers’ conceptions, excluding secondary school and pre-service teachers’ conceptions. The focus/approach in the literature that lobbies for human rights for LGBTI youth and a duty of care responsibility of schools is evident.

Some students experiencing homophobic abuse in schools in Australia have sought support from the legal system. Kendall and Sidebotham (2004) explore instances in which the law has worked in favour of abused LGBTI or perceived LGBTI students. For example, a victim of homophobic abuse in a Sydney high school won a case against the Department of School Education alleging duty of care had been breached. The result was that the Department agreed to investigate homophobic abuse and the teaching resources available to support schools (Kendall & Sidebotham, 2004). Further, Meyer and Stader (2009) report similar cases from Canada and the United States of America. These examples of bullying problems being addressed through legal systems highlight the responsibility of teachers, schools and education departments to provide a duty of care for all students. These cases demonstrate a reason for schooling systems to address individual issues of bullying or duty of care but also move to a positive arena in which wider issues of sexuality and heteronormativity need to be addressed. This has resulted in several anti-bullying trial programs across Australia.

2.3.4 School interventions to address duty of care issues

The dearth of large scale or longitudinal studies that address sex education or heteronormativity and resourcing in the Australian context have been noted (Hunter, 2006). However, several programs have been trialled in Australia. I outline the Australian programs as they demonstrate the lead up to the current state of practices that address diverse sexualities in Australian schools. Many schools engage private

program providers or external consultants to address sex education, an area in which schools have little guidance. These programs also highlight the wounded perspective in which diverse sexualities in schools are being presented.

One program is the *Pride and Prejudice* program, developed by Youth Outreach and Support Worker Daniel Witthaus (2001). The *Pride and Prejudice* program addresses sexual diversity and homophobia within secondary schools. The program has been trialled in Victoria (Witthaus, 2001) and Tasmania (Bridge, 2007). Positive reports from the trial suggest student homophobic attitudes lessened following the program and with support from grant funding from the Victorian government, the program gained interest. Using the same model, the Tasmanian Community Fund financed a trial of the program in three Tasmanian high schools in 2006. As Bridge (2007) reports, although positive outcomes from the trial were evident: “development and implementation of a range of other supportive anti-homophobic strategies in schools, particularly related to the curriculum” need to be considered (p. 36). Witthaus, with a tertiary qualification in psychology, has continued to advocate for the *Pride and Prejudice* project since funding ceased in 2003 (Witthaus, 2010). In 2010 he self-funded a national tour to take the program to rural communities throughout Australia. No formal reports on the national tour by Witthaus or the continuation of the *Pride and Prejudice* program in Tasmania were found.

The Crime Prevention Division, New South Wales Attorney General’s Department, supported development of a resource titled *Learn to Include Education Resource Series*. The resource is aimed at supporting Year 1 teachers with learning about diverse families (Burns, 2006). Walker and Milton (2006) suggest no clear teaching and learning approach for teachers about sex education in primary schools is available which is considered best-practice. Robinson and Ferfolja (2008) consider the development of teacher education and resourcing for sex education in pre-service teacher education programs an option.

Murray (2001) reports the experiences of his involvement and observations of the implementation of a program developed by Family Planning Queensland which aims to address homophobia in secondary schools called *Out With Homophobia*. The program is a workshop for teachers with grounding in student health and well-being

and was developed due to statistics on homophobic abuse in secondary schools at the time. Murray reported positive outcomes from the workshop. Further information regarding funding or training of facilitators for the workshops is not evident; however, the facilitator manual is free to download from Family Planning Queensland's website (Murray & Rose, 2012). Murray suggests "the enthusiasm and energy required to continue this work can only be maintained by establishing a supportive network of people who are equally committed and motivated to addressing homophobia" (Murray, 2001, p. 36).

The three programs mentioned so far, *Pride and Prejudice* (Witthaus, 2010), *Learn to Include* (Burns, 2006) and *Out with Homophobia* (Murray, 2001), were all established by funding from departments and organisations outside of education such as community funding, a youth outreach centre or Family Planning Queensland (Health) funding. The *Pride and Prejudice* and *Out with Homophobia* are examples of programs that address inclusion of diverse sexualities in schools from a deficit model. The individual LGBTI youth/person is represented as having problems or issues to solve and or is in need of help.

The states of Victoria and Western Australia have sex education policies and supporting resources that are inclusive of diverse sexualities. Victoria has developed the *Catching on Everywhere* (State of Victoria, 2008) document, which is a resource for schools developed in partnership by the state government health and education departments. The document includes a reference to further on-line resources developed by The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Explicit references to the inclusion of diverse sexualities is evident within the resources and the policy. Based in health content the document also refers to pedagogical resources. Similarly, the Western Australian government (education sector and health sector) has developed resources that support teachers with detailed as lesson plans with an explicit focus on inclusive sex education and pedagogical advice (Government of Western Australia, 2012). Victorian and Western Australian policies and resources are driven by health issues and equality education, for example, addressing bullying. These resources are also driven from a deficit perspective, which suggests diverse sexualities can only be addressed in schools if there is a 'health problem' or issue.

More recently, the Safe Schools Coalition Victoria, which was developed in 2010 by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society at La Trobe University and funded by Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria, has been developed into a national program. In 2014, the Victorian based program was developed and delivered across Australia over the following three years. The program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education. Only one primary school has 'joined' the coalition in Victoria (The Foundation for Young Australians, 2014).

This research to date, as described in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 has been motivated and represented from a largely wounded perspective. Recent acknowledgment of sexual orientation rights in government and educational policy and curriculum, the focus of the LGBTI individual in educational research, concepts of childhood innocence, homophobic bullying, pre-service teacher education and duty of care responsibilities of schools and education systems have largely been represented as (i) issues to deal with or (ii) a focus on the LGBTI individual as the problem.

Research is moving away from viewing the LGBTI individual as problematic towards a social equity movement where inclusion of diverse sexualities is represented more holistically in sex education policy and or curriculum and educational research. This is a shift to the collective problem of heteronormativity, which challenges concepts of woundedness. Challenging heteronormativity, children who know about sexual diversity and current teacher perspectives on sex education are discussed in Section 2.4.

2.4 Addressing heteronormativity

Advocacy for social theory to explore and challenge heteronormativity in Australia has existed since the 1990s. Warner (1991) suggests "the task of queer social theory ... must be to confront the default heteronormativity of modern culture" (p. 16). Youdell (2004) also suggests sociologists in the field of education had "begun to engage with post-structural theories to make sense of the school's impact on, and school experiences of, particular groups of students (including sexualities and schooling)" (p. 479). In more recent times Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2007) describe the role of researchers "to collapse the boundaries that separate sexual normality and abnormality" (p. 37). These reflections by Youdell (2004), Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2007) suggest that even though heteronormativity is a dominant

practice in schools, individuals in schools and researchers in the field of education advocate for a challenge to heteronormativity.

Heteronormativity exists and is being reinforced by a number of factors including Australian government law and social and educational policy perspectives. Hillier and Harrison (2004) suggest:

Globalizing discourses around gender and sexuality, which are supported by the church and the state, sanction heterosexuality and certain types of masculinity and femininity, while constituting nonheterosexuality and other ways of performing gender as unacceptable. This does not mean, however, that other discourses do not exist, nor that young people are powerless victims (p.81).

Same sex attracted students experience ongoing notions of heteronormativity (adversity) in secondary schools. Positive outcomes of research in which students overcome adversity are dampened by dominant practices of heteronormativity (Hillier & Harrison, 2004). Hillier and Harrison's research highlights the ideologies that exist in schools which are the reality of young peoples' lives:

- Psychological, for example, the belief that homosexuality is a mental disorder.
- Christianity, good and evil, for example, heterosexuality is God given.
- Heterosexuality is natural – anything else is unnatural, for example, homosexuality is considered abnormal.

These ideologies impact on students' ability to identify with a diverse sexuality within heteronormative schooling establishments. Australian and American statistics and literature draw attention to the complications of same-sex attraction and “argues for a school and community response that recognises and appreciates the positive contributions that diversity of sexual preference brings to any community” (Ashman, 2004, p. 48). The article by Ashman presents statistics on suicide rates and victimisation, including verbal abuse experienced by 90 percent of LGBTI people. Ashman discusses three case studies to highlight serious issues of substance abuse,

homelessness and health and wellbeing that are applicable and reflective of the many experiences of LGBTI students in secondary schools in Australia.

Evidence suggests students are challenging heteronormative schooling practices. For example, requests to take same sex partners to a school function have been made, even though such requests are often declined (Dwyer, 2008). Schools are spaces where heterosexuality has become so taken for granted that heteronormativity surpasses human rights and discrimination: “even though schools are explicitly regulated as sexless spaces, heterosexual ways of doing sexual desire are more acceptable than queer sexual desire” (Dwyer, 2008, p. 3). Dwyer focuses on “homophobic *hatred* as a discursive position” (Dwyer, 2010, p. 1) in popular media. Dwyer’s work highlights the currency of homophobia and heterosexism and or heteronormativity in secondary schools in Australia but also highlights the challenge to heteronormativity by a particular individual.

The documentation of the health and wellbeing of SSAY in Australia suggests some experiences of LGBTI students are improving. The latest report from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society at La Trobe University concludes:

The most encouraging of all our findings is the degree to which, over the twelve years, supports for young people have improved, despite increases in homophobic abuse. This is largely due to the efforts of the young people themselves in coming out and working for change, but also to the many advocates for their cause creating change, and to a progressive shift in social attitudes towards a more relaxed and appreciative view of sexual and gender diversity. (Hillier, et al., 2010, p. xii)

The 2010 report reflects the survey answers of some 3134 youth aged between 14 and 21 years. Although the work by Hillier et al. (2010) is motivated by improving the health and wellbeing of LGBTI youth (somewhat wounded), there is a strong advocacy for the representation of a positive image of LGBTI young people in their

contribution to Victorian policy. Hillier and Harrison (2004) suggest LGBTI young people find many ways to resist identifying with a negative representation of diverse sexualities. Students are beginning to challenge heteronormativity within the schooling context.

In a persuasive attempt to advocate a challenge to heteronormativity, Rasmussen (2004) articulates a desire to move research in the field of sexuality and education away from a wounded perspective. She raises the issue of the existence of woundedness in the majority of research to suggest “an ‘ethics of pleasure’ may be of value because it provides a crucial counter-narrative to people's investments in wounded identities and the concomitant tendency to narrativize the abjection of LGBTI identified teachers and students” (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 456). Rasmussen, along with Harwood, continues this line of critique in *Studying Schools with an ‘Ethics of Discomfort,’* and as the title implies, “Ethics of Discomfort” provides a platform for an analysis of research that reinforces “the tendency to conflate LGBTI adolescence with woundedness in educational discourses” (Harwood & Rasmussen, 2004, p. 306). The purpose of their work is to present educational strategies to support LGBTI youth in schools and challenge traditional discourses of woundedness associated with LGBTI youth futures. Harwood and Rasmussen propose a new angle for research in the future that moves away from woundedness and towards ‘pleasure’ (Harwood & Rasmussen, 2004; Rasmussen, 2012). Although this is a potentially forward move towards representing diverse sexualities in a ‘pleasure’ context opposed to a ‘wounded’ context, it is important to highlight the evidence of discrimination and inequality to move the research agenda forward.

2.5 Teachers’ conceptions

Teachers’ conceptions of their pedagogical responses to concepts of diverse sexualities in the primary school context have not been studied in depth in Australia. Some research that provides insights into how teachers and pre-service teachers currently feel about implementing sex education which augments similar research in international contexts is explored below.

One study by Martino and Cumming-Potvin (2011) in the state of Western Australian explores pedagogical approaches to addressing same- sex parenting and

non-normative sexuality in the primary classroom. Two case studies were conducted in which teachers were asked to introduce children's literature into their classrooms that included representation of families of diverse sexualities. One teacher reflected on her pedagogical response as being cautious of parents' views and the other teacher avoided addressing the concepts of same-sex families due to constructs of heteronormativity (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2011). The teachers' reflections demonstrate that some teachers' pedagogical responses to concepts of diverse sexualities in Western Australia are cautious.

Pre-service education for teachers in regards to diverse sexualities or sex education is limited. In 2010, Carman, Mitchell, Schlichthorst, & Smith report "51 percent of courses" (p.1) by Australian tertiary education providers for pre-service teacher education have "no inclusion" (p. 1) of training in sex education. Pre-service teacher training in sex education within tertiary education institutions is potentially not compulsory and limited depending on the university. Robinson, Ferfolja and Irwin (2002) reflected on their own experiences as teacher educators and highlighted general views of their past students. Some of the issues that arose were: lesbians and gay men as sexual predators; homosexual people recruit others to their sexuality; and homosexuals are inherently paedophilic (Robinson, Ferfolja, & Irwin, 2002). If pre-service teachers in Australia are presenting conceptions such as those revealed by Robinson, Ferfolja and Irwin (2002), they are not equipped to address issues of homophobia upon entering the schooling system as fully qualified teachers.

Teachers experience both internal and external barriers in addressing students' perspectives on sexuality/heteronormativity in schools in Australia. Gilchrist, Howarth and Sullivan (2003) explored the views of parents, teachers and students after a school-based scenario had been presented. The scenario involved a high school student who is gay and suicidal, and disclosed these sentiments to a teacher. The results were: teachers are in a difficult position due to limited time; teachers have feelings of being unable to cope; teachers do not know where to refer young people; and teachers highlight the difficulties of having to deal with parents, particularly regarding issues of confidentiality. Internal barriers that influence a teacher's ability to respond to such a scenario depend on their own personal experiences and external barriers include teacher knowledge about resources and support, school and Western cultural values.

Some teachers have difficulty addressing sex education (inclusive of diverse sexualities) in Australia (Milton, 2004). A number of teachers have beliefs that primary school students have rights to sex education (inclusive of diverse sexualities), justifying their views with the belief that not all parents communicate with their children about sexuality. Milton's (2004) study on teacher perspectives on sex education was conducted within one primary school and reports on qualitative data collected via focus groups and interviews with parents and teachers. Her study reveals how parents and teachers reported on the content of the sex education presented to students in Years 5 and 6 (aged 10-11 years). A parent commented that she thought it was great how teachers were able to "say this" (information about diverse sexualities) in front of students (Milton, 2004, p. 22). The teachers in the study reflected on the content of the curriculum as opposed to their pedagogy.

International research aligns with studies in Australia regarding teacher knowledge and skills to address concepts of sex education. Studies in South Africa (Richardson, 2008), Israel (Pizmony-Levy, Kama, Shilo, & Lavee, 2008), Canada (Schneider & Dimito, 2008) and England (Trotter, 2009) claim some teachers who ignore homophobia; feel there would be negative repercussions for themselves in some way, such as being fired; believe it is not important to address LGBTI issues; and are themselves homophobic. Many nation states have common research findings in terms of teachers' knowledge and understanding of addressing student perspectives on sexuality issues and their responsibilities to provide a safe and supportive environment for all students.

Further international research suggests some teachers see a need to include diverse sexualities in sex education, but teachers also express concern over resource and pedagogical issues. A qualitative study conducted by Franco Di Salvio (2006) in a small primary school in Canada reports the views of ten teachers. They advocate for diverse sexualities, including homosexuality, to be acknowledged. Although the majority of the teachers expressed a need to address homophobia and support same-sex students who may experience isolation, the teachers were generally hesitant and in need of training and resources to encourage implementation of strategies recommended by the Canadian government's education policy.

Research in Greece by Gerouki (2010) aimed to explore the views of Greek teachers regarding students with non-conforming behaviours (sexual or gender orientated). The term non-conforming behaviours is similar to the term I have used – diverse sexualities. The research concludes that homophobia and heteronormativity exist in the lives of these Greek teachers and they felt ill equipped to deal with issues of non-gender conforming behaviour or non-heterosexual conforming behaviour in the primary school (if the ‘issue’ was even acknowledged) (Gerouki, 2010). Comparison of Gerouki’s study with the results of this study are enlightening, given the similarity of the research and the selection of participants and primary context.

2.6 Conclusion

The history of government laws and social and educational policy in Australia is evident in current school practices that promote heteronormativity. The main focus of my study is heteronormativity and how it is represented in schools. Schooling has social and political implications and teachers give meaning to and are influenced by the power of this historical practice. Ferfolja (2007) gives a powerful description of the state of heteronormativity in some schooling systems:

Heteronormative and heterosexist discourses are pervasive, reinforced through both overt and covert practices of invisibility and silencing. Teacher practices and pedagogies, limited and poorly implemented staff professional development, censorship and vetting of information, heterosexist educational curriculum, and schooling cultures where anti-lesbian/gay pejoratives flourish, all contribute to the ongoing sexuality discrimination experienced by many, while normalizing and constituting heterosexuality as the dominant and only *legitimate* sexuality. (p. 147)

These beliefs are supported by a long standing cultural dominance that privileges conservative, Eurocentric, middle class, masculinised views of Australian culture which was revealed by Jones (2009) to be espoused in an analysis of *The National*

Framework for Values Education in Australia. Dwyer (2008) argues from a human rights perspective that “Even though school spaces are supposedly places in which sexual desire and romantic relationships are discouraged, it is heterosexual relationships that are considered more ‘natural’ than queer sexualities and desires” (Dwyer, 2008, p. 7). As a result, non-heteronormative perspectives in schools have only been addressed, if at all, from a wounded perspective.

A challenge to research around teacher knowledge in sex education is posed by Petrovic and Rosiek (2007). They call for research that acknowledges teachers’ perspectives that go beyond reflective thinking on sexuality in schools. Petrovic and Rosiek explain the importance of teachers not only critically reflecting on their own practice but to be reflexive, that is not only reflects on one’s own practice but critically reflects and shares these reflections with others for critical analysis. This proposal is driven by a need to gather conceptions of teacher knowledge that reveal their pedagogical responses to students’ heteronormative perspectives.

Some researchers claim a need to appeal to the wounded agenda in order to ‘justify’ the research (Hillier & Harrison, 2004). Although the health and well-being of LGBTI youth in schools regarding issues such as homophobia is important, a move away from reductionist concepts such as woundedness is needed. Current research appears to be steering away from homophobia and addressing the larger issue of heteronormativity and equality. A clear gap exists in current research in diverse sexualities in schooling regarding teacher conceptions (regardless of the teachers’ sexuality); research in the primary school context; and the link to pedagogy. Research to date has focussed on individuals or issues that require someone or a group to identify with sexuality. This research aims to address the gap in research about teachers’ conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities.

Chapter 3: Theories of sexuality and pedagogy: a social constructionist framework

A social constructionist ideology informs the exploration within this thesis of theories of sexuality and links to education. Social constructionism is the framework presented in Chapter 3 to provide a deep and situated theoretical underpinning for this research. The current state of culturally constructed knowledge about sexuality is the result of a complex history of understandings and theories about sexuality. Unfolding the socially constructed ideology of sexuality provides a theoretical backdrop to the current body of research on sexuality in education, including teacher pedagogy. Current beliefs and practices about sexuality influence the beliefs and practices of schools, teachers, and students as they live and work in the culturally constructed institution of schooling (Robinson & Davies, 2008). An understanding of sexuality theories and links with educational pedagogical theories makes way for a theoretical framework for exploring teachers' conceptions of diverse sexualities in the primary school.

Chapter 3 explores sexuality theories and educational theories and the sections include: a summary of socially constructed Western historical beliefs and practices about sexualities (Section 3.1); clarification of terminology such as sex, gender and sexuality (Section 3.2); a discussion of diverse sexualities in Section 3.3, a recount of the history of the theorisation of sexuality (Section 3.4); the sociological links between the history of sexuality and sexuality in educational contexts (Section 3.5); and theories of pedagogy (Section 3.6). The chapter concludes with a re-theorisation in Section 3.7 presented as a model (Figure 3.1) to demonstrate how the mix of sociological ideologies, sexuality theories and pedagogical theories has evolved. Finally, in Section 3.8, I present a model (Figure 3.2) in order to explain a social constructionist theoretical framework for this research. Before exploring the social constructions of sexuality and the links with pedagogy, I will define social constructionism and highlight the key theoretical features.

Social constructionism is a viewpoint in which one understands the world as being constructed, composed, by the social world in which one lives. Gergen (1985) suggests social constructionism is concerned with the way in which “people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live” (Gergen, 1985, p. 266). Gergen’s definition of social constructionism

rationalises the decision to collect teachers' conceptions for this research as their conceptions are descriptions of their lived experiences (Trigwell & Prosser, 1997).

Although there is no one specific person who was the founder of social constructionism, "The major social constructionist contribution from sociology is usually taken to be Berger and Luckmann's (1966) book *The Social Construction of Reality*" (Burr, 1995, p. 7). Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain the social world as "society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man (sic) is a social product" (Berger & Luckmann, 1996, p. 61).

Burr (1995) suggests there was not one particular movement that led to social constructionism nor is there one key element that defines or identifies social constructionism. She proposes there are a number of attributes which contribute to the foundation of social constructionism. These attributes include an understanding or position of one or more of the following:

- A critique of established knowledge
- An understanding that knowledge is historically and culturally specific
- "Knowledge is sustained by social processes...it is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated...what we regard as 'truth'...is a product not of objective observation of the world, but of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other" (Burr, 1995, p. 3)
- Knowledge informs action. For example, teacher's knowledge about children as 'innocent' prevents the teacher from discussing diverse sexualities – the teachers' patterns of social action resulting from this understanding of childhood innocence exclude children from 'adult' knowledge of diverse sexualities.

This research recognises that understandings about sexuality are historically and culturally specific which is a key attribute of social constructionism (Burr, 1995; Strong & Lock, 2010). Gergen and Gergen (2008, p. 4) agree, "What one takes to be true as opposed to false, objective as opposed to subjective, scientific as opposed to mythological, rational as opposed to irrational, moral as opposed to immoral is brought into being through historically and culturally situated social processes."

Hence, the inclusion of socially constructed understandings of sexuality is explored with reference to periods of time and these understandings about sexuality are culturally linked to Western cultural practices. Social constructionism guides the inclusion of a socio-cultural lens on exploring pedagogical links to understandings about sexuality. 3.1 A socially constructed definition of sexuality

Sexuality is an idea, a socially constructed ideology that is continuously evolving (Weeks, 2003). Social constructionism “is concerned with meaning and understanding as the central feature of human activities” (Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 6). The following section explains some of the meanings constructed by people of Western culture about sexuality. At its most general, the word sexuality refers to a person’s idealistic interests in another or other people involving a complex of internal and external intersections of identity including gender and culture (Meyer, 2010). Many definitions of sexuality attempt to label, categorise and ‘box up’ individual sexuality identities, yet sexuality thus far has proven to be too complex and variable to posit a single definition. The ever-changing definitions of sexuality lie with people and their experiences at any given point in time. With a social constructionist lens, making meaning of human activities is “inherently embedded in socio-cultural processes...specific to particular times and places” (Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 7). Those who are immersed in a culture are those who can give the fullest description of a definition of sexuality at any given time. In the introduction to his book *Making Sexual History*, Weeks (2000) makes the point that a definition of sexuality is not beyond individual control that “sexual history is not made somewhere out there, in Nature. It is made by us here, in our everyday lives. We all make sexual history” (Weeks, 2000, p. 11). Hence, Chapter 3 provides an exploration of changing social constructions of sexuality over time, an attempt to capture cultural beliefs, understanding and knowledge and practices of sexuality, to offer a definition of sexuality, for now.

3.1.1 From ancient Greece to Victorian times: sexuality beliefs and practices

Human beings have been sexual beings from whatever humans can conceptualise as ‘the beginning’. Over time, the concept of human sexuality has changed from defining sex as being a ‘natural’ state, much like humans need water, to a definition that considers human sexuality as much more complex and

constructed as opposed to innate (Weeks, 1981). The concept of sexuality is a relatively new ideology developed within sociological spheres of thinking perhaps during the seventeenth century (Foucault, 1978).

The times of ancient Greece are reported as times in which men would have erotic encounters with other men or boys without being labelled or viewed as another 'type' of sexuality. Similarly, women were able to behave sexually with other women and it was not viewed as problematic as long as she 'obliged' the man. Social power was determined by being sexually dominant, not by gender (Lipkin, 2004a).

In a significant piece of work, *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1978) describes a time in which bodies were freely displayed and open to all prior to the seventeenth century, including children. Foucault (1978) describes the idea of sexuality as a non-existent concept. Weeks (2000) notes the importance of Foucault's work suggesting he offered, for the first time, a theoretical understanding of sexuality for modern times (the seventeenth into the eighteenth century). Foucault (1978) imparts that during this time in the seventeenth century knowledge and understanding about sexuality was not repressed, hidden or taboo. Sexuality was considered to be part of life, 'natural'.

A change occurred in which cultural perspectives went from being 'natural' to being an idea which could be talked about, politicised, regulated and investigated. Foucault (1978) suggests that the Victorian bourgeoisie changed this notion of sexuality by silencing sexuality to the procreating couple, behind closed doors, away from the eyes of children and forbidden. Weeks (1981) supports the argument that the fundamental changes in 'sexuality' were born through the bourgeois times of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because socio-cultural elements of class, religion, gender and politics began to change the way in which sexuality was understood. Christianity and beliefs regarding sodomy as sinful eventually led to the criminalisation of homosexuality. Non-normative sexualities became sinful and were viewed as socially immoral. During the 1800s people with non-normative or diverse sexualities (other than heterosexual) were viewed as 'sick', in need of cure and regarded as social outcasts (Lipkin, 2004a). Public sexuality was condemned to the lower classes where prostitution flourished. Political calls for discussion, policy action and legislation regarding issues around sexuality such as disease control, population control (abortion) and prostitution were key drivers in the subversion of

sexualities (Altman, 2002; Weeks, 1981). Industrialisation, the rise of capitalism, the ideology of the moral endeavour of family inspired further redefinition of Christian traditions, political social order and class control. Marriage, towards the nineteenth century, became “a gateway to respectability and stability” (Weeks, 1981, p. 24). The Christian traditions added to the moral code on sexuality; physical expression of sexuality was needed for the purposes of reproduction in marriage only and at best, sex would bring man and woman closer together as an expression of married love. These events over a period of time changed the idea of sexuality into a way of being, identifying as a person, embedded in concepts of class, gender and ethnicity.

The late 1800s saw a rise in scientific labelling and characterisations of forms of sexualities emerged. Because sexuality was understood as a ‘thing’ in itself, it could then be studied. Once the ideology of sexuality was created, a language of sexuality developed and categories of concepts of sexuality developed. The concept of heterosexuality advanced the definition of ‘other’ sexualities. The word homosexuality was revealed in 1869 (Weeks, 1981) along with the identification of a range of diverse sexualities by the end of the century (Chiang, 2011). Jagose (1996) builds on the work of Foucault confirming the idea that homosexual, as a way of identifying or describing an individual, emerged around 1870. Historians and researchers began to look for patterns of sexual behaviour and the nature versus nurture debate began (Weeks, 1981).

Since the nineteenth century sexuality has been seen as the cause and ‘truth’ of our being, a private experience and moral decision (example: illegitimacy rates, celibacy, age of sexual activity, to marry or not). The nineteenth century produced ‘social morality crusaders’ (Weeks, 1981, p. 21) as an increase of pornography satisfied the ‘respectable’ sexual fulfilment of those repressed. The detachment of secular values from religious values began in the mid nineteenth century when Science began to ‘explain’ the world opposed to faith and religion (Altman, 2002). The social movements in women’s rights and the rights of sexual minorities reflect the movement of thinking away from the Church. The influence of the idea of individuals being responsible for their own actions led to the liberation of the individual and a move away from Victorian ideals: women began to take control of pregnancy, marriage, living alone, cohabitation before marriage and pre-marital sex.

More contemporary times see the choice for adults to privatise their sexual acts as an individual choice in which they are not to be judged (Weeks, 1981).

3.1.2 Sexuality in contemporary times

Key socio-political events over the past hundred years have impacted on cultures and have progressed contemporary ideologies about sexuality. A major intellectual influence in the 1970s and 80s, Foucault provided a platform for thinking about sexuality as a socially constructed fundamental reality of our-selves as human beings opposed to previous thinking in which sexuality was considered a biological given (Foucault, 1978). The defining of sexuality considers not only physical sexuality, for example, the physical sexual act (Robinson, 2008), but sexuality includes socially constructed notions of sexuality, for example, performing one's sexuality by satisfying gender categories regulated by socially constructed attributes (Butler, 1990; DePalma, 2011; Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007). Sexuality is "multivariable" (Vrangalova & Savin-Williams, 2010, p. 92) and can be defined by a number of criteria such as attraction (feelings / desires), behaviour or identity (Riley, 2010). It is not limited to hetero/homo sexual, heterosexist and homophobic practices, identities (Renold, 2002) and orientations (Janssen, 2008) or sexual desire through language and actions (Blaise, 2009). Altman (2002) contextualises sexuality as globally redefined through the influence of political, religious and traditional cultural beliefs and technologies. He outlines contemporary issues that fall under the broad context of sexuality, such as:

- commercialism and the separation of the body from other aspects of our being
- feminism and women's rights
- technological advancements such as: medical procedures allowing for alteration of the body; technology such as the internet promoting anonymity and virtual sexual encounters; medical advancements for contraception; mainstreaming of pornography; and access to multi-media
- classed access to technologies, information and resources such as contraception

- racial impacts on religious and cultural practices for example, arranged marriages
- governmental policies and laws for example, China's one child policy (now amended in many parts of China)
- globalisation and population control for example, abortion laws
- sexual health and the risk of HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome): the implications for women's and homosexuals' rights.

In 2008 Altman reflects on his writing about homosexuality from thirty-five years previously. He highlights the impact of HIV/AIDS on the way in which Western countries developed research, prevention programs and funding specifically for gay groups. Altman suggests the contemporary agenda for sexuality is a demand for equality within a framework of understanding that acknowledges “sexuality and gender are interrelated, complex, and fluid” (Altman, 2008, p. 25). Key global events have had impact on contemporary understanding and beliefs about sexuality and diverse sexualities (Jagose, 1996). Post World War II (WWII) compelled global human rights movements focused on equality for people regardless of religion, race, sexuality and other oppressed minorities (Weeks, 1981). Gay movements in France, the Netherlands and Switzerland preceded the Stonewall riots in New York in which activists were already attempting to liberate a sexual identity that could be fluid and experimental (Altman, 2008). The Stonewall riots in New York in 1969 were a significant indicator in history because the activism led to significant human rights, legal and social reform in countries such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom (Chan, 2009). During the 1980s the onset of AIDS may have impacted on the liberating movements in the 1970s because people were afraid of AIDS and this fear reinforced homophobia (Weeks, 2000). Sexuality as an educational priority became focused on safe sex (Lipkin, 2004). AIDS also promoted a new wave of activism into the 1990s in which ‘queer theory’ was born, although Altman suggests queer theory restated already gained claims of the gay liberation movement prior to the AIDS epidemic. He continues with an explanation of demands for equality such as same-sex marriage, inclusion in military service opportunities and the inclusion of sometimes tokenistic gay and lesbian characters in popular culture such as television shows. He criticises queer theory as not having an impact

on international practices regarding sex and gender due to “enormous stigma and ignorance that surround it” (Altman, 2008, p. 26) in countries such as Asia and Africa. Altman argues for a more modern form of global gay liberation. Instead of challenging the status-quo, challenging traditional cultural practices, Altman continues the search to “find new ways to reconcile traditional and modern patterns of behaviour and morality” (Altman, 2008, p. 26).

Western thinking about sexuality has experienced numerous revolutions. From the ‘beginning of time’ in which sexuality was considered a ‘natural human need’, much like the need to eat, to more contemporary beliefs, the way in which the West defines sexuality has transformed. From the seventeenth century when sexuality was defined as a concept in itself, an identity, a way of being, until more recent thinking of sexuality as a social justice issue based on equity for diversity, it has been a highly contested, very complex topic of knowledge. Sexuality and the links with sex and gender continue to be an evolving concept.

3.2 Sex, gender and sexuality

Sex, gender and sexuality are complex ideas, particularly the potential relationships between the concepts (DePalma, 2011). Sedgwick (2008) describes sex, gender and sexuality as “three terms whose usage relations and analytical relations are almost irremediably slippery” (Sedgwick, 2008, p. 27). People in the wider community, teachers and children alike, have certain perceptions and understandings about diverse sexualities that influence the decisions made in schools. This research addresses the perceptions of teachers by uniquely documenting and analysing accounts from primary teachers about their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities.

To clarify the use of the terms sex, gender and sexuality, some definitions are provided. In brief, sex refers to the biological reference of an individual. Gender refers to the social presentation as male or female. Sexuality refers to an individual’s choice of sexual partner (Butler, 1990; DePalma, 2011; Janssen, 2008; Vrangalova & Savin-Williams, 2010).

Essentialists believe ‘sex’ is ‘natural’ and ‘opposite’; babies are born either as a boy or girl in binary opposition to each other. Most parents would not consider that their child may be born intersex (Cohen-Kattenis & Pfafflin, 2003). Intersex is a term

adopted by the medical field in the twentieth century to define a person born with variance in chromosomes and genitalia which do not allow for the binary categorisation of male or female (Cohen- Kattenis & Pfafflin, 2003).

Intertwined in the thinking about a person's sex is the socially constructed idea of gender. Due to the idea that humans are born with a pre-determined sex and socially constructed expectations of gender, essentialists believe that children will develop into boys or girls and eventually men and women. Essentialists also believe that gender is 'natural' and 'opposite'. Connell (2002) clearly advocates that "gender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive area, and the set of practices (governed by this structure) that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes" (Connell, 2002, p. 10). The Western social climate endorses maleness and femaleness but not all children are born with such a clear cut physical attributes that align with cultural 'definitions' of gender. As a result of social expectations, some children are provided intervention: surgical, hormone drug and counselling. Children and young adults born intersex have to come to terms with reproductive and socialisation issues (Cohen-Kattenis & Pfafflin, 2003).

Given the scope of this research it is appropriate to expand on the socially constructed notion of gender and the relationship with sexuality. The complexity increases with the introduction of sexuality. Weeks (2003) summarises the current state of Western cultural ideas about sexuality and general social attitudes as an influence of moral and institutionalised (religious) practices. Marriage between a man and a woman is accepted as the 'normal' path to adulthood and sexual activity (based on gender definitions) and "Homosexuality, on the other hand, despite remarkable shifts in attitudes over recent generations, still carries...a heavy legacy of taboo" (Weeks, 2003, p. 20). Butler (2006) suggests the normalising of gender "as it is formed and re-formed in the spatial and temporal context of school and schooling" is problematic (p. 529). Gender categories are regulated by socially constructed practices (Butler, 1990; DePalma, 2011; Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007) and reinforced within the institution of schooling.

To add complexity to the gender discussion, Stryker (2004) explains the challenge for transgender people not only from the perspective of the individual but also in reflection of the sociological theorisation of gender in light of queer theory. She suggests transgender studies are similar to queer theory in the way of willingly

disrupting the “privileged family narratives that favour sexual identity labels (like gay, lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual) over the gender categories (like man and woman) that enable desire to take shape and find its aim” (Stryker, 2004, p. 212). By complicating the idea of a binary gender with trans concepts, understandings about ‘sex’ and ‘sexuality’ are also complicated, as the ‘rules’ no longer apply. For example, consider an individual who was born female sex, dressed as a boy during the teenage years, engages in hormone therapy into adulthood in order to transition to a male who chooses to have a male partner. With pre-operative support, this individual could become pregnant. Does this make this person homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual? These boundaries of identity on which the Western world insists become blurred and complicated.

The matrix of heteronormative gender binding and socially constructed ideologies about sex, gender and sexuality, are embedded so deeply in Western cultural practices it appears that being able to consider a new way of thinking about human identity is difficult. As the literature review shows, researchers believe the gender and sexuality categories are necessary. Weeks (2000) suggests that the categories are necessary fictitious ideas that help to organise and experience the social world. Stein (2004) suggests the challenge is to identify not only how gender and sexuality categories influence the way the world is viewed but to control the reproduction of gender and sexualities ideologies. Changing the way of thinking about gender, sex and sexuality becomes more unreachable as the challenges highlight the normative boundaries that make sense to people. Although the challenge of questioning the social understanding of gender and sex has been around for decades, the boundaries keep changing. “Trajectories of development are divergent in sequence and timing and no single set of identity labels fully resonates with contemporary emerging adults” (Morgan, 2013, p. 61). Gender cannot be defined without an understanding of the social expectations regarding the sex of a person. The same goes for sexuality; sexuality cannot be defined without reference and understanding of sex and gender (Jackson & Scott, 2010; Jagose & Kulick, 2004). New labels arise, new ways of slotting identity into a category are ‘invented’; they all contribute to the complexity of understanding and defining sex, gender and sexuality.

Sex, gender and sexuality are complex ideas influenced by cultural beliefs and practices. Teachers are influenced by wider social perceptions about sex, gender and sexuality and these perceptions impact on the pedagogical decisions teachers make in schools. This research aims to capture teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context. For the purposes of this research, 'diverse sexualities' is a term used to express some of these complexities.

3.3 Diverse sexualities

The term 'diverse sexualities' is used throughout this thesis; as it is an ambiguous term, its meaning and use in this study will be discussed.

The research by Kinsey (1948) in the mid twentieth century developed a scale in which sexualities could be placed on a continuum rather than being considered a binary of homosexual versus heterosexual. Drawing from Kinsey's work, Storms (1980) developed a sexual orientation matrix in the 1980s which included heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual and asexual which was expanded by Bogaert (2006). These definitions position the term 'diverse sexualities' as encompassing a range of sexual orientations and representations. The aim of using the term diverse sexualities is not to perpetuate an implicit meaning of difference or abnormality (Weeks, 2003) but to encompass a variety of non-heterosexual sexual orientations. Meyer (2011) suggests a range of sexual identities such as "bi-curious, fluid...homo-flexible, pan-sexual, polyamorous" (Meyer, 2011, p. 52) and many other 'labels' could fit under the banner of diverse sexualities. Although the intention is not to elicit a negative connotation with diverse sexualities, homophobia is metaphorically alive in current Western social practices (Meyer, 2009; Michaelson, 2008; Mikulsky, 2005). The following section explores the history of homophobia as it is situated in the history of sexuality and a developing definition of sexuality, including diverse sexualities.

3.3.1 The socially constructed concept of homophobia

Homophobia, as a socially constructed concept, developed in Western cultures in the late 1800s when heterosexual and homosexual became categorised as a type of person. Homosexuality has been constructed as deviant and sinful through

“psychological research, religious ideologies, and the political and financial privileging of heterosexual monogamous family structures by the state through marriage” (Meyer, 2010, p.52-53). As a result, diverse sexualities have become stigmatised and non-heterosexuals have been persecuted and vilified. Homophobia is the belief in heterosexuality as the prominent and superior sexuality, driven by a deep fear of homosexuals (Compton, 2010; Sears, 1999). The idea of hetero-superiority was and still is fuelled by Western cultural practices. In Australia, acts such as marriage provide a socially acceptable vision of adulthood and continue to deny equality for non-heterosexuals to have their union recognized and legitimized. The moral panic and fear regarding HIV/AIDS that erupted in the 1980s still lingers today. “Much has changed, even since the 1980s, but traditional homophobic norms and values remain deeply embedded” (Weeks, 2003, p. 34).

Butler (1999) suggests heteronormativity should not indicate gender performance (stereotypical male and female roles characterised by actions and appearances which are socially constructed) and there should be “no sexual regulation of gender” (p. 15) that impacts on understandings of homophobia. “Gender can be rendered ambiguous without disturbing or reorienting normative sexuality at all” (Butler, 1999, p.15). The concept of homophobia plays a significant role in normalising heterosexuality; homophobia often does not discriminate between gender roles and sexuality. Homophobia towards perceived non-heterosexuals, based on cultural stereotypes of gender performance, is used to progress heterosexist attitudes and beliefs (Lipkin, 2004a).

Internalised homophobia refers to one who identifies as homosexual yet feels a sense of homophobia. Feelings of shame and embarrassment may be internalised by non-heterosexuals as they navigate identity and social expectations about sexuality. “Internalised homophobia can cause depression and low self-esteem as well as other psychological and cognitive difficulties” (Lipkin, 2004a, p. 13). Homophobia internalised by the non-heterosexual is motivated by heterosexism, which is a by-product of the fear in Western society of diverse sexualities.

Definitions of sex, gender, sexuality are ongoing as social changes in Western society continue to ebb and flow. Concepts of diverse sexualities and homophobia contribute to cultural definitions of sexuality. Sexuality theories parallel changes in Western social and cultural ideologies about sexuality.

3.4 Changing theorisations of sexuality over time

Running parallel to the history of sexuality is the history of the way in which researchers have sought to understand sexuality. The history of the theorisation of sexuality has influenced cultural beliefs and socio-cultural practices regarding sexuality.

3.4.1 The theorisation of sexuality

The study of sexuality began from a medically scientific approach into a psychoanalytic theory and since followed numerous theories and philosophies: constructionism, gay and lesbian theory, post structuralism, post modernism and queer theory. There is much debate in current literature about what the study of sexuality needs as sexuality is explored into the future (Hillier & Harrison; 2004; Jackson & Scott, 2010; Phellas, 2012).

Sexology, a term used to describe the study of sexuality, “dates back to the late nineteenth century, located within the medical and emerging psychological paradigms of the times” (Jackson & Scott, 2010, p. 6). Sociological research only began to arise in the mid-1900s. A significant landmark changing the direction of the way in which the West researched sexuality was the work of Kinsey: *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* (1953) (Jackson & Scott, 2010, p. 6). Kinsey’s research developed a scale in which sexuality could be placed on a continuum as opposed to being considered a binary: homosexual versus heterosexual. While he challenged ideologies that considered sexuality as natural, “he was closer to a social constructionist perspective than his contemporaries – most of the work on sexuality undertaken in the 1950s and 1960s continued to endorse a biologicistic and/or psychologistic approach seeing it as an innate human proclivity” (Jackson & Scott, 2010, p. 6).

Prior to the 1960s, sexuality research was largely considered a natural force and psychoanalytic theory, introduced by Freud, reinforced this idea “albeit one constrained by social norms” (Jackson & Scott, 2010, p. 5). Jackson and Scott (2010) highlight the foundational work of Gagnon and Simon in the 1960s who built on the work of Kinsey and conducted research to challenge ideas about “biological determinism, arguing that human sexual conduct is a social product rather than the result of civilization’s repression of primordial drives” (Jackson & Scott, 2010, p.

13). The constructionist work of Gagnon and Simon presented sexuality as a socially constructed concept. Following was the work of Foucault who presented a history of sexuality (1978), philosophising about how the notion of sexuality, as a concept, began. Once sexuality was thought of as possibly constructed *vis-a-vis* ‘natural’, in the latter part of the last century, sociologists developed new ways of researching sexuality.

Research over the past few decades on sexuality has encompassed psychological and sociological perspectives. For the purposes of this sociological research, which is concerned with the multifarious ways that individuals and groups shape their place in society, it is pertinent to explore sociological theories of sexuality. The following discusses the sociological theorisation of sexuality. Sexuality theory has seen radical and robust transformations over the past forty or so years: from social constructionists to queer theory. The following provides a discussion on the development of the theorising of sexuality in more contemporary times.

Essentialism and constructionist theories

Since the idea of the homosexual as a way of identifying a group of people has existed, and the development of essentialist and constructionist views on sexuality, the ongoing debate as to whether homosexuality is acquired or inherent has yet to be resolved. The acquired or inherent debate impacts the discussion of ‘how’ socially constructed ideas about homosexuality impact on the individual homosexual person and their educational and life experiences. Essentialists view sexuality as a fixed state, the way in which you were born, unable to be changed. This kind of thinking ‘forces’ the binary between heterosexual or homosexual; a person must identify with one or the other because epistemologically, that is the way a person was born. Constructionists view sexuality as a more fluid state, able to be changed, influenced by time, place, culture, religion, and the social world. Constructionists’ views suggest, “Forms of behaviour, identity, institutional arrangements, regulation, beliefs, ideologies...vary enormously through time and across cultures and subcultures. Yet we apparently need to believe that as things are so they have always been, rooted in our essential natures (the ‘truth of our being’)” (Weeks, 2000, p. 60). Constructionist ideas are politically dangerous to those who appeal to the minority status, the underprivileged status of homosexual people, because it undermines the

argument of equality when people are perceived to be choosing a ‘wounded’ position. Essentialist and constructionist philosophy are manipulated to argue socio-political agendas in the twenty first century. The unresolved acquired or inherent situation regarding sexuality provides an opportunity for different individuals and groups to take a position for their own political, religious and or social purposes.

Groups and individuals who are for or against equal rights for diverse sexualities continue to grapple with essentialist and constructionist views. For example, homophobic groups may argue that sexuality can be changed and anti-homophobic groups may argue that people are born gay and thus have no choices about their sexuality (Jagose, 1996). Regardless of the way in which these beliefs are used for political gain, it is acknowledged that children begin developing notions of sexualities early in life albeit through biology or social upbringing (Meyer, 2010). Professional organisations such as The American Psychiatric Association and The American Psychological Association recognise these developments and support the dismantling of attempts for ‘reparative therapy’ by other organisations for people with diverse sexualities (Meyer, 2010). Sociologists have attempted for the past thirty or forty years to dismantle the angle from which people choose to be gay as a negative because they advocate the distinction between homosexual and heterosexual should be “socially meaningless” (Weeks, 2000, p.7). Essentialist and constructionist theories will continue to influence the nature versus nurture debate on the concept of sexuality.

Anti-homophobic and modern gay theory, queer theory

Building on the work of gay and lesbian activism in the 1970s and 1980s, queer theorists such as Sedgwick (1990), Butler (1990) and Warner (1991) developed a way of thinking to challenge hetero/homo binaries and concepts of homophobia. Queer theory continued the development of thinking in which sexuality rests within a social justice ideology. Given the more contemporary understanding of sexuality as a social justice issue, equality arguments for people with diverse sexualities have appropriated feminist theories which advocated for equality for women throughout the 1970s in particular.

Sedgwick (1990) in *Epistemology of the Closet* writes from a self-proclaimed feminist’s perspective with an aim to indulge in ‘anti-homophobic inquiry’ (p.15).

She suggested feminist analysis had less ‘danger’, had greater theoretical history and reference and had been more accepted as a way of thinking both amongst academics and the wider community. She claimed that although gay and lesbian studies had seen significant movement, none were as great as the feminist movement. Sedgwick advocated that perhaps there was room for greater understanding of sexuality and its relation to gender (Sedgwick, 1990). As ideologies of sexuality changed, a cultural shift in the idea that heterosexuality was ‘normal’ and homosexuality was the deviant ‘other’ form of sexuality developed. These changes developed a gay and lesbian perspective on sexuality theory which developed into queer theory.

A definition of queer theory is somewhat intangible and difficult to articulate however Meyer (2010) suggests, “queer is understood as a challenge to traditional understandings of gender and sexual identity by deconstructing the categories, binaries, and language to support them” (p. 20). The definition is difficult because, as Jagose (1996) suggests it:

is an identity category that has no interest in consolidating or even stabilising itself. It maintains its critique of identity-focused movements by understanding that even the formation of its own coalitional and negotiated constituencies may well result in exclusionary and reifying effects far in excess of those intended (p. 131).

Jagose (1996) hypothesises what queer theory might hold for the future:

Queer is not outside the magnetic field of identity. Like some post-modern architecture, it turns identity inside out, and displays its supports exoskeletally. If the dialogue between queer and more traditional identity formations is sometimes fraught-which it is-that is not because they have nothing in common. Rather, lesbian and gay faith in the authenticity or even political efficacy of identity categories

and the queer suspension of all such classifications energise each other. (p. 132).

Jagose explains that queer theory, by its nature, aims to destabilise sexual norms. Yet this aim will be forever changing as the normalisation of sexual norms change because whatever is 'normal' is being challenged, constantly. The nature of queer theory is 'ambivalent' and the future for theorising sexuality is 'unimaginable' (Jagose, 1996, p. 132).

Despite developments for equality through destabilising norms in theorising sexuality, such as queer theory, sociologists recognise perhaps a new approach is needed. Jackson and Scott (2010) explain the theorizing of sexuality as a move to progress a sociological approach to sexuality located within cultural and social ideologies. They explain sexuality as "the mundane actualities of social life" (Jackson & Scott, 2010, p. 2), not as essential to humanness or an innate individual 'truth'. Jackson and Scott (2010) suggest queer theory and post-structuralist approaches to research may be too abstract from the lives of everyday people and that approaches which capture the everyday 'mundane' would be more beneficial to capture the contemporary empirical world (Apple, 2013).

In conclusion, during the 1970s new radical thinking and research burgeoned due to various social and political movements. The shift progressed from creating a binary of difference between hetero and homo ideologies of sexuality to looking at the effects on individuals and Western social and cultural beliefs and practices. Politics, religion, class, and research in medicine and psychiatry shaped and impacted on the Western cultural understanding and beliefs about sexuality. Weeks (2007) summarises the current state of affairs succinctly:

The paradox that you can only get rid of oppressive dichotomies by affirming the subordinate form in order to challenge the hegemonic term is one that continues to haunt the radical agenda, and has led directly to an identity politics that is generally wedded to what differentiates us rather than what we have in common (p. 7).

3.5 The sociological history of sexuality and education

Section 3.5 explores socially constructed concepts of sexuality in education. Given the idea of sexuality as a concept was coined in the seventeenth century and a couple of hundred years passed as the concept of sexuality endured political and ethical turmoil, it is not surprising that sexuality, as an idea in educational institutions is a very recent concept to emerge in Western culture.

An example of thinking from earlier in the twentieth century may be clearly identified in Waller's classic book, *The Sociology of Teaching* (1932). For example, he pointed out the danger of allowing homosexuals to teach because homosexuality was seen as a disease which teachers could pass on to students. The research was considered a progressive sociological investigation "and yet, he had no empirical evidence on which to base his findings that homosexuality was a disease or contagious" (Tierney & Dilley, 1998, p. 51). A heteronormative perspective on the characteristics of an acceptable teacher was the only view of an acceptable teacher in the early twentieth century.

Whilst this example of teacher identity is based on sexuality, evidence of overt sex education did not exist in Australia prior to the 1950s and 1960s (Robinson & Davies, 2008). Until this time, sexuality was implicitly represented to students as heterosexual. Thirty years ago, educational institutions from primary schools through to universities rarely had detectable problems about LGBTI 'issues' (Tierney & Dilley, 1998), not like the more vocal and visible evidence of homophobic bullying, for example, of today (Ashman, 2004; Gilchrist, et al., 2003; Harwood, 2004; Kendall & Sidebotham, 2004; Murray, 2001; Hillier, et al., 2010). Tierney and Dilley (1998) suggest, in the past, "if homosexuality were ever discussed, it was usually only as an aberration, an issue to be expunged from education. More often than not, however homosexuality and homosexuals were never considered" (p. 49).

Research involving sexuality in education has followed a similar trend to the wider research agenda in sexuality. Researchers once came primarily from psychology or sociology; today lesbian and gay studies or "queer studies" has bloomed into multiple disciplines and areas of inquiry" (Tierney & Dilley, 1998, p. 49-50). Queer theory within an educational context aims to "decentre, destabilize, and deconstruct" (Pinar, 1998, p. 44) heteronormative educational practices. Pinar

describes the body of his work as seeking “to heighten the visibility of the issues, complicate and intensify critique and theory, while challenging homophobic and heterosexist nonsense-for the children's sake; for all children's sake, including queer children” (Pinar, 1998, p. 2). Given the construction of sexuality is a socially constructed ideology centred on heterosexual knowledges, queer theory provides a particular lens for viewing and questioning the normalising practices of current sociological views about diverse sexualities. However, from a more contemporary perspective on sexuality research in education, Jackson and Scott (2010) suggested that sociological research on sexuality should focus on the ordinary experiences of everyday lives. This idea is supported by Petrovic & Rosiek (2007) who suggest, “Poststructural theory requires supplementing to provide teacher knowledge researchers with epistemic access to the lived experiences and practices of the teachers that are imperative to their work” (p. 203). The history of the link between education and sexuality mirrors the movements in the theorisation of sexuality.

3.6 Socially constructed knowledge about sexuality influences the culture of schools and pedagogical practices of teachers

Socially constructed knowledge about sexuality and theories on sexuality potentially contribute to current teacher practices in schools. Teachers and schooling institutions are subjected to and influenced by multifarious ways by culture while at the same time individuals and institutions are catalysts in shaping the cultural present (Bernstein, 1996). The present is a blurred mesh between what has gone before and where the future is headed. First, a definition of pedagogy is explored. Then, an overview is presented of pedagogical practices and beliefs which have commonalities to the seminal literature (Chapter 2) in the field of study. These areas of scholarship include: childhood innocence and developmental pedagogical theories, duty of care responsibilities and holistic pedagogy, supportive pedagogies and pedagogy for sociological means, including queer pedagogy. The infusion of culture on educational institutions leads directly to this piece of research in which a discovery of current teacher conceptions about pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in a primary school context is revealed (Chapters 5 and 6).

3.6.1 Pedagogy: What is pedagogy?

Pedagogy is a term used to describe what teachers do and the theory that motivates their actions for education. Pedagogy is a theory of viewing education (Durkheim, 1956) or a process of education (Loutzenheiser, 2010). Hayes et al (2006) describes pedagogy as an assumed way of working for teachers as part of the system of schooling which promotes and maintains subsumed teaching and learning practice. Hayes et al (2006) also argue that “what teachers do in their classrooms matters” (p. 32) and these assumed pedagogies are “particularly deleterious and mysterious for students whose social, cultural and economic backgrounds are not strongly matched to the norms and practices of schooling” (Hayes et al, 2006, p. 33). Hamilton (2009) suggests pedagogy overlaps the school education with family and social life, not just as a means of instruction. To define the pedagogy of teachers is not an easy feat; it is complex, diverse and culturally laden (Kincheloe, 2004). However, brief overviews of the types of pedagogical theories that have commonalities to the theories of sexuality and the current literature on sexuality and education that may influence the contemporary teacher are presented.

Teachers draw on a range of pedagogical theories that guide their actions for educating students, including education regarding sexualities. For the purposes of this research, social constructionist based pedagogical theories are presented to show the alignment between the theorisation of sexuality and pedagogical theories. Many teachers within contemporary educational institutions are influenced by key educational theorists. As established in the re-theorisation of sexuality (Section 3.4), individuals as sexual subjects, are products of society and social experiences (Jackson and Scott, 2010), hence the evolving definition of sexualities. Therefore, if “knowledge is sustained by a social process and that knowledge and social action go together” (Young & Collin, 2004, p.376), it is pertinent to show the alignment between the social processes of understanding sexualities and the actions teachers undertake to respond to diverse sexualities (pedagogy).

The following demonstrates the links between the theorisation of sexuality and contemporary pedagogical theories:

- Psychoanalytic theories of sexuality link with pedagogical theories based on psychological development such as Vygotsky's developmental psychology.
- Essentialist theories of sexuality (sexualities are inherent) link with pedagogical theories of cognitive development (students develop cognitive understanding about sexuality at a certain stage or age) for example, Piaget's developmental theory and Steiner's theories about educating the 'whole' child within a developmental framework.
- Social constructionist theories of sexuality which reveal the social and cultural impact on human understanding about sexuality link with Bernstein's sociological theories on pedagogy. Friere was a key theorist to the critical pedagogies movement in which theories were developed to question social and cultural impacts on education for social justice purposes.
- Post-modern theories such as gay theory and queer theory link with the concept of a queer pedagogy.

It is impractical in the space of this thesis to explore in detail all theorists who have contributed to the wide range of options for educational practices of today. However, a general overview highlights some of the key influential theories relevant to this study. These theorists have been selected to reflect the links with sexuality theory. The next section will summarise the pedagogical theory, the link with sexuality theory and an example of the potential influence on the practices of current teachers. The intention here is not to assume teachers are influenced by these particular theories or to justify their actions via theoretical means. The intention is to demonstrate a general understanding of pedagogy, pedagogical theory, the link with sexuality theory and the range of potential influences on the teachers who are faced with concepts of diverse sexualities in the contemporary Queensland primary classroom.

Psychoanalytic theories of sexuality and Vygotsky's developmental psychology

Vygotsky founded developmental psychology (1930s) with the focus on cognitive development of students known as the zone of proximal development.

Vygotsky's theory promotes a theoretical approach in which teachers who adopt this approach introduce curriculum and skills that build on the student's prior knowledge, including social and cultural knowledge (Gunnarsdóttir, 2013). Evidence of Vygotsky's theory in current practice is visible in the way in which a teacher decides to monitor and respond appropriately to the reactions of students. For example, a teacher might monitor if a student attends to the material or is distracted. Student learning is attributed to the teacher's ability to respond to the reactions of the student/s. The teacher must be able to determine that "the most important points will be reached just as the force of attention rises, and that the least important parts of the presentation, those which do not suggest something new, occur as the wave of attention is falling" (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 125).

In this study, teachers who are influenced by Vygotsky's theories may decide what information to give students based on what the students may or may not already know. It may also influence teachers to work with parents on developing student learning (Vadeboncoeur, & Rahal, 2013). For example, if a student calls another student 'gay' and the teacher asks the name caller if they know what the word means and the student says 'no' and runs off, the teacher may think the student has limited knowledge of using particular terminology for derogatory means. Therefore the teacher may not attend to the name calling as the student has not yet demonstrated any prior knowledge of the implications of using the word 'gay'. If the student has no prior social or cultural knowledge about diverse sexualities, that is, the zone of proximal development pertaining to this topic is not visible for teachers, the teacher may not introduce further pedagogical instruction.

Essentialist theories of sexuality and pedagogical theories of cognitive development

Piaget's cognitive development theories (1951) and Steiner's developmental theories (Steiner Education Australia, 2014) may also potentially impact teacher pedagogy and school cultural practices. Piaget advanced (1920-1960s) a developmental cognitive development theory which entailed the idea that children learn certain information or concepts in different ways at particular ages or stages. Steiner developed Waldorf education which identified phases of development. Essentialist theories of sexuality (sexualities are inherent) align with Piaget's and

Steiner's theories of development, in that sexualities can be thought of as developmental also.

Piaget developed a series of periods of a child's development that show learning in different ways at different stages. The first of these stages is the sensory-motor period in which the child's learning is, in very basic terms, dependent on touch and manipulation of objects. The second is the egocentric period in which learning occurs through "play, imitation and conceptual representation" (Piaget, 1951, p. 303). Thirdly, the operational representative activity is acknowledged at "the age of seven or eight [when]...there is real reintegration of play and imitation in intelligence – imitation becomes reflective" (Piaget, 1951, p. 305). Piaget suggests "only towards the end of the egocentric period does the child become capable of distinguishing between points of view, and thus of learning both to recognise his own and to resist suggestion" (Piaget, 1951, p. 305). These three stages of development promote an educational theory of learning which is based on ages and stages of development.

Piaget's theories are evident in some contemporary school settings. His pedagogical theory potentially influences teachers' thinking about what children can learn at particular ages or stages. For example, in Queensland, it is a widely used practice to track reading development according to what is deemed as age appropriate reading skills. For this particular research, Piaget's theory may influence teachers' thinking about the age of students and their exposure to concepts of diverse sexualities. If the theory suggests students form their own view points around age seven, for example, then teachers may feel it is not appropriate to introduce discussion about diverse sexualities prior to this age. The teacher may feel that the student is too young and that the teacher would be 'pushing' ideas onto the student at an inappropriate age. There are many possible scenarios; developmental theories may influence teachers to believe that students are too young or too innocent to know or learn about diverse sexualities.

However, developmental theories such as Steiner's may influence teachers to support inclusion of knowledge and learning about diverse sexualities. Steiner founded Waldorf education which influenced current pedagogical practices in schools by identifying phases of development marked by individual points of difference. The phases are aimed at early years, primary years (ages 5-12) and secondary education (ages 12-18). The focus is on the individual development of the

child from a holistic perspective not just an academic perspective, for example, including artistic development of the child (Steiner Education Australia, 2014). The basic values of Waldorf education include: lifelong learning, creativity, teaching and learning in the ‘real’ world (Morrison, 2009). If students raise the issue of diverse sexualities in a Waldorf setting, the holistic educational values would guide the teacher to support further learning. The teachers in Waldorf schools have the “freedom to bring the curriculum to life through their individuality, human experience and teaching style” (Morrison, 2009). This kind of educational theory for pedagogy may influence teachers to consider their role as supporting students’ sexuality development as part of life-long learning (Kamen & Shepherd, 2013).

Social constructionist theories of sexuality and sociological educational theories

Bernstein was a leading sociologist whose work significantly contributed to the sociology of education from the 1960s to the current time (Sadovnik, 2001; Singh, Sadovnik, & Semel, 2010). According to Bernstein’s theories, time, place, class, racial background, gender and religious beliefs impact the way in which teachers pedagogically respond to all manner of concepts (Bernstein, 1996). Bernstein (1996, p. 17) defines pedagogic practice as “a fundamental social context through which cultural reproduction-production takes place”. Bernstein developed a continuum for describing teacher practice: a competence pedagogical model and a performance pedagogical model (Bernstein, 1996). The competence model reflects a teacher who may be more orientated to the intrinsic learning of the student and the performance model reflects a teacher who may be orientated to the external demands of the school and governing bodies (Bernstein, 2000). These theories explore ideas that reveal some pedagogical practices tend towards highly visible (performance) in which the pedagogical choices teachers make can be seen. On the other hand, pedagogical practices can tend towards invisible (competence) where teachers’ pedagogical choices are more implicit (Bernstein, 2000). The theory can be applied to an everyday schooling experience. For example, a teacher who is focused on external pressures (performance model) such as curriculum may not consider the needs of the individual student and therefore, the teacher may choose not to address a student who asks a question about gay men.

In other contexts of teaching and learning, Freire wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, originally published in the 1970s, advocating for socially-just educational practices for socially, economically and culturally oppressed students. Freire's work on how economic, social and political domination influence education systems demonstrates the educational impact on minorities and ultimately shaped new thinking about pedagogy for social justice (Freire, 1970). This work by Freire was foundational to critical pedagogy. The basis of his theories aimed to acknowledge and understand educational processes and the outcomes and impact on the poor and culturally marginalised (Freire, 1970). Parallels can be drawn from his thinking about oppressed minorities (financially and culturally) and their experiences of 'failing' school with the marginalisation of diverse sexualities and the impact on LGBTI students and their educational outcomes in Australian schools. For example a teacher with a Freirean way of working would encourage students to ask problem based questions during learning, to enact a response to curriculum that is critical (that considers power relations, including the power of the teacher-student relationship) (Freire, 1970). This philosophy of pedagogy developed by Freire may influence the contemporary teacher to help students think critically about the oppression of people with diverse sexualities or the misrepresentation of diverse sexualities within the heteronormative context of schooling (Adams, 2010).

The influence of the above mentioned theorists continues to have an impact on school and institutional practices and the everyday pedagogical decisions of teachers. Hayes and colleagues (2006) contend that the core work of teachers is "a taken-for-granted part of schooling. Its formation is not announced but assumed; it is maintained by unspoken agreements; it requires very little to sustain it and make it functional; and it can remain out of sight or slip easily from view" (Hayes et al, 2006, p. 33). These theories may be covered in pre-service teacher education however, not revisited by teachers in the professional arena once employed. Schools are institutions embedded in a political, social and cultural time and place with strong historical practices. Kincheloe (2004) discussed the role of teachers as being influenced by the institution of schooling itself such as teaching for standardised testing regimes. On the other hand Kincheloe (2004) also argued for the potential teachers have to disrupt and challenge the norm by employing a critical pedagogy. As Bernstein (1996) argues, pedagogic communication can only exist within a social,

cultural and historic context in which ideologies are created, maintained and challenged. A critical pedagogy for teaching about sexualities is fraught with complications as the potential barriers are long standing and deeply embedded in both social and institutional cultural practices. However, Kincheloe (2004) acknowledges a need for teacher education in critical theory and the employment of critical pedagogy as an agent for social change. He argues it is necessary to find a way in which teachers can work within the institution but to also question and think critically, reflexively about the way in which they work pedagogically.

Queer theory and queer pedagogy

Theories such as gay theory and queer theory link with the concept of a queer pedagogy. Queer pedagogy is difficult to define as it is a relatively new idea but is aligned with a critical pedagogy movement. The following reveals the origin of queer pedagogy and key developments in the concept.

The definition of queer pedagogy stems directly from developments in queer theory. Queer pedagogy was originally defined by Bryson and de Castell (1993) as a “radical form of educative praxis implemented deliberately to interfere with, to intervene in, the production of "normalcy" in schooled subjects” (Bryson & de Castell, 1993, p. 285). Queer theory essentially promotes the destabilising of sexual norms and a queer pedagogy implies the destabilising of sexual norms specifically within an educational context. Bryson and de Castell (1993) describe queer pedagogy as education “carried out by lesbian and gay educators, to curricula and environments designed for gay and lesbian students, to education for everyone about queers, or to something altogether different” (p. 298). They argue as queer theory flourishes in the academic arena, so too should queer theory flourish in the educational context, hence the introduction of the phrase ‘queer pedagogy’ (Bryson & de Castell, 1993). Their ideas came from teaching a tertiary course which prompted their thinking about a queer pedagogy at the tertiary level of education.

Britzman (1995) also reflects on her experiences as an academic working with queer theory and the idea of a queer pedagogy. Opposed to considering queer theory as a teaching method alone, Britzman proposes the idea of a queer pedagogy as a way of questioning normalcy. She argues a queer pedagogy can take place not only in the classroom and/or educational context but as a way of reflecting on one’s own

identity and place in society (Britzman, 1995; Luhmann, 1998). Britzman aligns queer pedagogy and the classroom context but extends the ideological concept of a queer pedagogy beyond the classroom.

Teachers in the contemporary classroom might consider a queer pedagogy as part of their repertoire. The question, “Are there spaces within the queering of pedagogy that allow educators and students to resist the call of the emancipator, and exceed the push to normalization?” asked by Loutzenheiser (2010, p. 139) suggests the tensions inherent in the adoption of a queer pedagogy. The example presented by Letts (1999) demonstrates how teachers can make heteronormative decisions; a grade four teacher assigned students into groups of girls and boys for a lesson on the human body which entailed examining body parts such as the arms, hands, leg and feet, neck, shoulders and hips. The teacher assumed boys and girls ‘feel and behave’ differently and that “any touching of bodies done by members of the opposite sex is necessarily an instance of sexual, or sexualized, touching. Both assumptions normalize heterosexuality” (Letts, 1999, p. 101). If a queer lens was placed over the teachers’ pedagogical decision perhaps the classroom set up might look different. The ‘queered’ teacher may deliberately mix groups for this type of activity in order to demonstrate normalcy of touch (in a non-sexualised way) regardless of gender. A queer pedagogy would challenge the norm; boys’ and girls’ bodies are sexualised, heterosexualised.

The pedagogical theories outlined in this section represent a theoretical and analytical background to explain the influences on teachers and the implications of their choices when educating students about diverse sexualities. The pedagogical theories have been aligned with sexuality theories to show the link between what teachers do and the context in which they are responding when diverse sexualities perspectives are presented. Teachers’ pedagogical decisions are not only influenced by pedagogical theory though, teachers’ work is contextualised within social processes.

3.6.2 Pedagogical practices are influenced by sociological ideologies

Pedagogical practices are influenced by cultural beliefs regarding social class, gender, governance, childhood/adulthood, media and technology and race. This

section outlines sociocultural influences that impact on educational institutions and the teachers within these institutions.

Social class

Social class and concepts of meritocracy influence teachers' pedagogical decisions. There is much debate over the impact of social class on students' life outcomes, including educational success. Some people believe social class determines certain outcomes, other people figure social class merely indicates certain paths and alternatively others believe individual success is based on merit and social class is seemingly irrelevant (Hattie, 2009; Young, 1994). If meritocracy is the fundamental belief of the teacher, meaning the teacher believes the individual is responsible for their own efforts to succeed in schooling (Young, 1994) then the LGBTI young person would be viewed by the teacher as being responsible for themselves and their own detriment or success in schooling. What is problematic about this belief in meritocracy is that if the student is being bullied, feels low self-esteem due to being 'different' or has difficulties at home for example, they would not have the same efficacy or capital to be as successful at school as 'others'. Taking this position, the teacher's pedagogical choices reinforce the onus for schooling success on the individual and structural or social influences such as heterosexism or systemic heteronormativity would not be acknowledged. The idea of equality within Australia's educational system cannot be based on meritocracy as not all individuals bring the same economic, social and cultural capital to the classroom. Finland has greater social, economic and cultural equality across their society and produce world leading education for students (Green, Preston & Janmaat, 2006). LGBTI students continue to experience poorer educational outcomes than their heterosexual peers (Ashman, 2004; Gilchrist, Howarth, & Sullivan, 2003; Meyer, 2009). The cultural practices in schools are a reflection of wider cultural structures including ideologies such as social class and meritocracy.

Gender

Gender equality and teacher understanding about gender performance and links with sexuality impact on pedagogical decisions. Schools are sites that produce unequal models of male and female (Butler, 1990; DePalma, 2011; Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007). First wave feminism debunked biological determinism that men are

stronger, smarter and the most capable of the sexes. Second and third waves of feminism revealed equality issues for women in the work force, educational experiences and economic outcomes, a realisation that the gender categories at work in Western cultural practices were complex and far from equal. The institution of schooling replicates wider cultural movements in terms of gender equality. If teachers view boys as being better at maths, playing sport or as being unemotional, the way in which teachers respond to students' gender performances could reinforce inequalities based on gender (Butler, 1990; DePalma, 2011). For example, the boy who doesn't like to play football with the other boys, has effeminate mannerisms, is quite emotional and thus has a male teacher who tells him to 'man up' when he is upset. The same teacher may respond differently if a girl in his class was upset; she might be told, 'It's OK to be upset'. These kinds of pedagogical responses to students reinforce gender inequality, the gender binary and ideologies about the link between gender and sexuality. The implications of unequal representations of gender within Australian education systems for teachers and students in schools parallel the complexity and inequality of the wider community.

Governance

Governance in schools is a way of normalising ideas about sexuality and reinforcing, reproducing heteronormativity and teachers' pedagogical decisions are influenced by these concepts. Schools in Australia are a part of an institution well equipped to normalise student behaviour reflective of wider society. Disciplinary societies, such as Western societies, use the power of governance to normalise individuals' behaviours which results in effective population management. Schools are key governing bodies which reinforce and promote a normalised individual fit for the wider community (Apple, 2004; Foucault, 1991).

Foucault describes institutions and the ways in which institutions, such as schools, operate as forms of power (Foucault, 1991). He was concerned with concepts of power and control (governance) and how the practices of educational institutions shape individual identity. Foucault acknowledges schools as 'disciplinary institutions' in which physical space and time are governed to change people's behaviour in order to lead a "docile, useful, and practical life" (Ball, 1990, p. 16). The role of the school, according to Foucault, would see the teacher as an object to be governed into a 'useful and practical' representation of the wider population.

The influence on teacher pedagogy would suggest teachers reinforce normalised expectations of society, and specifically in relation to this research, sexuality. For example teachers' beliefs may be that heterosexuality is normal, so normal is assumed for all students. The concept of wider cultural beliefs such as heteronormativity, may prevail in teachers' pedagogical decisions (Payne & Smith, 2012) reinforcing societal norms. On the other hand and against 'the norm', teachers may be influenced by the marriage equality movement in Western countries and other political and social movements towards equality and take a critical pedagogical stance against heteronormativity.

Childhood innocence, media and technology

Concepts of childhood innocence may reinforce sexuality knowledge as taboo within the primary school context. Media and technology widen teachers' and students' knowledge and access to knowledge about sexualities.

Following Postman (1994), adulthood and childhood are socially constructed ideologies. During the course of human history, for the most part, child and adult were not separate ideas; the idea of childhood developed as an invention of the urban industrialised society (McDonnell, 2001). In medieval times children and adults, dressed the same, performed the same duties, played the same games, shared dwellings; there were no secrets, separate areas or privileging of knowledge (McDonnell, 2001). Romanticism throughout the eighteenth century promoted the idea that children were born innocent and society corrupted them. Once this idea had been established, children were deemed as needing to be protected. Sex and sexuality became a defining element between child and adult (Postman, 1994). Adults knew about sex and sexuality and children did not and it was seen as not appropriate for children to know about sex and sexuality. Postman (1994) suggests the contemporary Western childhood is 'disappearing'. He claims many children are no longer hidden from ideas about sex and sexuality.

Some children have access to knowledge about sexuality; it is no longer accessible by adults only. These children gain knowledge about sexuality through a variety of multi-media avenues as well as diverse family relationships (Gittins, 1998; Robinson, 2008). Children have access to free television, including music clips and advertisements, commercial radio and magazines, rendering information about sex

and sexuality readily available in a variety of contexts. Teachers' understandings about childhood may influence their beliefs that students may not know or should not know about sexuality. Teachers may consider this adult knowledge and not respond to students' questions about sexuality or include sex education in their teaching repertoire. Pedagogical theories such as Piaget's developmental theories may impact on how teachers respond to students about sexuality with the view that children are 'not ready' developmentally to know about sexuality. Robinson and Jones Diaz (2006, p. 151) provide a good explanation of this phenomenon: "sexuality-especially gay and lesbian issues – is largely viewed as an 'adults only' concept...addressing these issues is often considered to be developmentally inappropriate." Even though, students may raise awareness of knowledge about sexuality because of their prior exposure to knowledge about sexuality via family or multi-media, teachers may view this as adult only knowledge and not for the primary school student (Gittins, 1998).

Race

Race and ethnicity have been and continue to be issues for social justice and equality in education. It can be argued that the effects of the division of people based on race and the effects of the separation of people based on sexuality and how teachers respond to these social divisions in the school context are parallel.

Even though the detrimental, hideous effects of race division (the deaths of millions of Jews in WWII) are known, racist ideologies still exist. In Australia, Doyle and Hill (2008) attribute poor Indigenous outcomes to the historical exclusion of Indigenous people from the Australian education system, both formally through past government policy and informally through the failure to deliver education services that meet the needs of Indigenous students. The effects of past and present government policies continue to fuel a significant topic of debate in education in Australia, that of the gap of achievement for Indigenous Australian students *vis-à-vis* non-Indigenous students. Research conducted by Luke, Cazden, Coopes, Klenowski, Ladwig, Lester, et al. (2013) describes the detrimental educational outcomes of Indigenous Australians as the result of ineffective educational institutions.

Comparisons can be drawn about the effects of division based on sexuality as opposed to race. Poorer educational outcomes for students who identify as LGBTI have been outlined in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3). Australian government policies have

impacted on equality for people who identify with diverse sexualities. National reports such as *Writing Themselves in 3* (Hillier et al, 2010) reiterate the difficulties LGBTI students experience in schools. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3), several authors reveal how the detrimental effects of past and current practices in schools have had negative impacts on LGBTI students (Ashman, 2004; Harwood, 2004; Haywood & Mac Ghail, 2007; Kendall & Sidebotham, 2004; Youdell, 2004). Parallels can be drawn with the social and systemic division of groups of people and the impact this division has had on educational outcomes. Loutzenheiser (2010) suggests unwritten pedagogical alliances exist between forms of oppression such as racism and heteronormativity.

Pedagogical practices are embedded in socio-cultural beliefs and practices. This section summarises key pedagogical theories which align with a re-theorisation of sexuality and the Western socio-cultural history and context of sexuality. “Social constructionism does more than say that something is socially constructed: it points to the historical and cultural location of that construction” (Young & Collin, 2004, p. 377). The pedagogical theories were chosen because of the links with sexuality theory as presented in Section 3.4 and the links to the potential influence of these theories to current teacher practice in light of the phenomenon under investigation; and teachers’ pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context. This section reveals that pedagogical theories may be context specific and that pedagogy is a very complicated, complex phenomenon and some teachers are in an unknown arena with limited pedagogical guidance when teaching about or for diverse sexualities. The position of a social constructionist framework aligns with this research because the historical and cultural location of sexuality and education (specifically pedagogy) is constructed and this locates the context in which the teachers’ accounts are collected and presented in Chapters 5 & 6.

The chapter concludes with a theorisation of the social construction of pedagogies for diverse sexualities presented as a model to demonstrate how the mix of sociological ideologies, sexuality theories and pedagogical theories has evolved (Figure 3.1).

3.7 Bringing theories together with a sociological siphon

As a representation of the theoretical explorations of sexuality and pedagogy embedded in a sociological context, a diagram has been developed. Figure 3.1 below shows the relationship between theories of sexuality and pedagogy siphoned through a whirlpool of sociological influences. The diagram ‘mixes’ these theories to visually represent a new way of working to reveal new knowledge about sexuality and pedagogy.

The apparatus of a siphon, in a very general sense, is used to converge or direct the flow of liquid into a single reservoir. By way of metaphor, the converging of liquid equates to the convergence of sexuality theories since before the 1900s, pedagogical theories and sociological influences. The reservoir, the contained mixture of liquids metaphorically resembles the contemporary socially constructed understandings about sexualities and the link between this knowledge within an educational context.

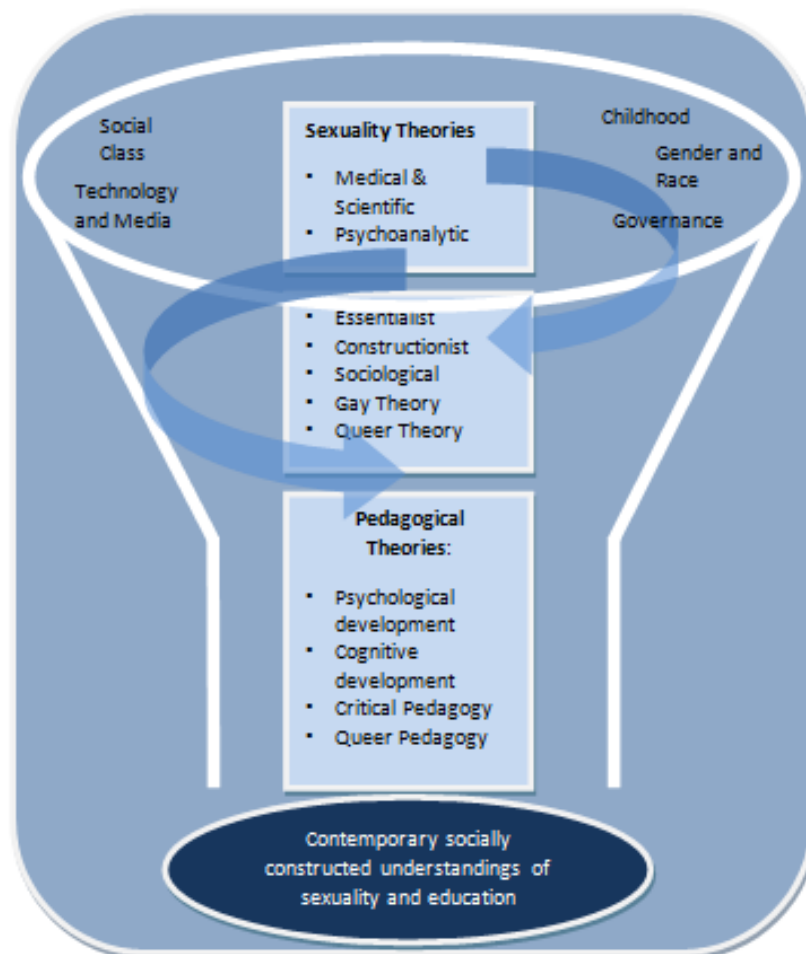


Figure 3.1 A socially constructed definition of sexuality, sexuality theories and links with pedagogy

This model represents how Western culture has produced different theorisations of sexuality, different theorisations of pedagogical practices in education and how the two come together in a whirlpool (to continue the metaphor) of socio-cultural influences. Finally, contemporary socially constructed understandings of sexuality are proposed, understandings which may or may not be evident in the teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical practices when responding to diverse sexualities in the primary school in this research.

As explained in earlier sections of this chapter, a definition of sexuality has been influenced by multiple changes in sociological phenomena. Social class, notions of childhood innocence and access to knowledge, governance, gender and race have had significant influence on the way in which Western society has defined sexuality. The impact of this developing definition of sexuality influenced by sociological ideologies foreshadows sexuality theories. When the sociological theories, the history of sexuality and the theorisation of sexuality are siphoned it is possible to understand the potential, but not assumed, impact on the pedagogical practices of teachers. It is also plausible to consider theoretical and methodological practices in research to date, critically analyse the epistemological and ontological benefits and look forward to a theoretical framework progressing from this research.

3.8 A social constructionist theoretical framework

A social constructionist framework forms the theoretical basis for this research. This research is interested in how the participants (teachers) construct the idea that students might share ideas about sexuality that do not include heterosexuality, how teachers respond pedagogically, what it means to them and why. Chapter 3 explored how Western society has come to understandings of sexuality, including diverse sexualities, the theories of sexuality and the alignment with social constructionist pedagogical frameworks. Phenomenography is the chosen methodology because the research interest is with teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities. The following model represents the theoretical framework for this research.

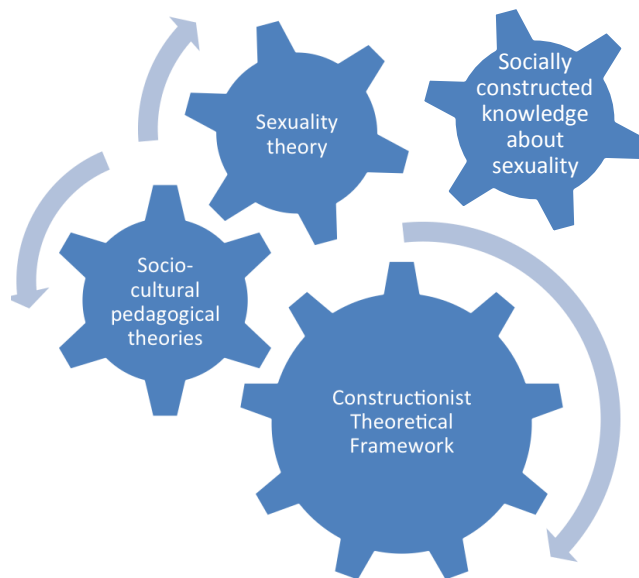


Figure 3.2 A social constructionist theoretical framework informed by sexuality theories, pedagogical theories and socio-cultural influences

As Figure 3.2 demonstrates, this research is situated within a social constructionist theoretical framework. The research aims to discover that different people create an understanding of a phenomenon in qualitatively different ways, a constructionist assumption (Crotty, 1998). Social constructionism is concerned with a “pragmatic conception of knowledge” (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 6). This research aims to reveal the practical, lived experiences of teachers. Each cog within figure 3.2 represents the context in which teachers in schools work and make pedagogical decisions regarding diverse sexualities. With a social constructionist framework, I have identified that teachers’ pedagogical decisions may be influenced by cultural understandings of sexuality (socially constructed knowledge about sexuality), socio-cultural pedagogical theories and practices and theories of sexuality. Each of these elements, represented as a cog, work together to move, metaphorically, the social constructionist framework. The social constructionist perspective provides the theory to justify collecting the taken for granted daily realities of teachers. The teachers’ conceptions are captured in this research from a social constructionist ideology in the interest of concern for the social justice issue of equality for diverse sexualities (Gergen & Gergen, 2008).

3.9 Conclusion of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 presented a developing definition of sexuality and the links with education. In Section 3.1 a developing definition of sexuality was presented. Concepts such as sex, gender and sexuality were defined and Section 3.2 signalled the complexity of a stagnant definition. Section 3.3 established the concept of diverse sexualities and verified the dark history of homophobia. Sexuality concepts were re-theorised in Section 3.4. In Section 3.5 a sociological lens established a context for exploring the theoretical link between sexuality and education. Section 3.6 depicted Western cultural knowledge about sexuality as one informant of the culture of schools and a potential influence on the pedagogical practices of teachers. Section 3.7 visually summarised the elements of Chapter 3. A contemporary social constructionist sexuality theory and approach was established in Section 3.8. I will argue that the social constructionist sexuality and pedagogical theories presented link with phenomenographic conceptualisations and that the research sits within a social constructionist paradigm in Chapter 4. Richardson (1999) argues a constructionist revision of phenomenography would add rigour to the conceptual and methodological framework of phenomenography. Chapter 4 establishes phenomenography as the research method.

Chapter 4: Research Design

The introduction chapter (Chapter 1) outlined the purpose, context and significance of this study by highlighting key issues in sex education such as current curriculum and pedagogical practice, a shift in responsibility of carriage from education in the home to education at school, current and historical government policy and education curriculum and heteronormativity as a problem in the primary school context. The literature review (Chapter 2) revealed a gap in current research relating to the identification of primary school teacher conceptions of their own pedagogic strategies to adopt when students communicate diverse sexuality perspectives. Chapter 3 proposes a social constructionist theoretical framework for this research. The foundations of social research require a deep understanding and explanation of epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods according to Crotty (1998). The implication of the gap in knowledge regarding teacher conceptions and the links with the social constructionist theoretical framework leads to the adoption of phenomenography as the preferred methodology.

The first section, 4.1 aligns the social constructionist framework with phenomenography. Section 4.2 discusses the research methodology of phenomenography including the development and history of phenomenography and the ontological and epistemological underpinning. Section 4.3 provides a rationale for phenomenography as methodology. Section 4.4 details the participants in the study including access to participants. Section 4.5 identifies the data collection processes to be developed and applied. The fourth section, 4.6 highlights procedures to be used and timelines for completion of each stage. Section 4.7 addresses how the data will be analysed, and the concluding section, 4.8, will discuss ethical considerations, research limitations and the significance of methodologically new ways of working 4.1 Social constructionism and phenomenography.

4.1 Phenomenography and social constructionism

Phenomenography has some alignment within a constructivist framework due to the focus on the individual construction of knowledge in the data collection phase of the methodology of phenomenography (Booth, 2008; Walsh, 2000). During the data collection phase the focus of the interview is about understanding the

individual's unique conception of their experience with the phenomenon. Booth and Marton (1997) explain this concept as non-dualism which means the subject and object (the teacher and phenomenon) only exist in relation to each other; they are not separate. Hence the method of interview for data collection purposes is most suitable (Marton, 1986). This process allows the researcher to collect the individual's conception of their experiences with a particular phenomenon. On the other hand, Kvale (1996) suggests the interview is an interaction between interviewee and interviewer and this is how knowledge is understood, a social constructionist ideology. This interaction, which he claims is constructionist, is where the knowledge is learned because the knowledge is created from the interaction of the interview, not the individual (Kvale, 1996). Aligning with Kvale's rationale, Silverman (2004) suggests the function of the interviewees' accounts takes on a constructionist framework. Phenomenography constitutes a non-dualistic ontology aligning with constructivist frameworks. However, the conceptual philosophy of phenomenography aligns with social constructionist perspectives.

Constructionist thinking is concerned with how culture shapes the world and how the world is seen (Crotty, 1998), which aligns with methodological processes during the analysis phase of phenomenography. Once the data is collected from individuals, the researcher engages in an iterative process to discover the categories of description and an outcome space emerges (Marton, 1981). The outcome space is an interpretation of the data which is describing the individual conceptions as a collective representation (Booth & Marton, 1997). Crotty suggests constructionism should be used where the focus includes "the collective generation of meaning" (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). Phenomenography is concerned not solely with the individual perspectives but with the relationship between the participants' descriptions of their conceptions and the relationship with the collective outcome and the phenomenon itself (Trigwell, 2000b). Richardson (1999) argues that the accounts of participants who are involved in research "are merely artefacts that are constituted in social interactions and have no independent existence; this position is known as constructionism" (Richardson, 1999, p. 67).

I'm asking teachers what their experiences are in relation to a phenomenon which already exists within a cultural and social setting. Hence, the link with a social

constructionist framework is most suitable. I am asking teachers to account for how they think and see their world (Crotty, 1998). Jackson and Scott (2010, p. 162) argue:

Sociologists need, however, to understand more about the ordinary day-to-day patterns of sexual relations through which most people live their lives. Not only to elucidate the taken-for-granted and habitual (heteronormative) but also to appreciate why some forms of sexual diversity are tolerated, even celebrated (hegemonic masculinities), and others are not, why sexuality continues to be implicated in structured patterns of inequality (homophobia) and why sexual coercion and abuse (homophobic bullying in schools) remain such persistent problems (Jackson & Scott, 2010, p. 162).

In light of the recounted history of sexuality and the exploration of the theorisation of sexuality in Chapter 3, this research acknowledges sexuality as a social justice issue, an issue of equality for diverse sexualities. The methodology for this research is phenomenography. The fundamental ontological and epistemological stance of phenomenography is that knowledge is essentially between the knower and the known, in this case, the teacher and the phenomenon of diverse sexualities in the primary school context. The phenomenographic position is located within a socio-cultural view of knowledge relational to individuals, in this case, teachers, working within a context bound by constructed ideologies about sexuality and pedagogical theories.

4.2 Phenomenography

Phenomenography is the selected research methodology to address an examination of conceptions. The overarching research focus for this study seeks to identify the ways that individuals and groups shape their place in society. In this case, the ways in which teachers, individually and collectively, pedagogically respond to concepts of diverse sexualities. The following section outlines the history and development of phenomenography including an explanation of its ontological and epistemological nature. Following is a description of the aim of

phenomenography and the research stages to be undertaken. This section highlights the connection between the research methodology and the research question. Concluding this section will be a brief overview of the data gathering procedures.

4.2.1 Development of Phenomenography

Phenomenography was developed during the 1970s by a research group in the Department of Education at the University of Goteborg in Sweden. With a common interest in “investigating aspects of student learning”, Ference Marton, Lennart Svensson, Lars Owe Dahlgren and Roger Säljö began to question the positivist paradigm prominent at that time (Dall'Alba & Hasselgren, 1996). Dall'Alba (1996, p. 7) describes this movement as leading them to “place greater emphasis on *what* rather than *how much* the students learned”. This was the beginning of a new research approach: phenomenography.

Since the 1970s, phenomenography has been defined in different ways but with its essential purpose remaining constant. In 1981, the term phenomenography was more formally introduced by Marton (Dall'Alba & Hasselgren, 1996, p. 104). He defined the aim of phenomenography as finding and systematizing “forms of thought in terms of which people interpret significant aspects of reality” (Marton, 1981, p. 177). Phenomenography was redefined by Marton in the late 90's as “a research specialization aimed at the mapping of qualitatively different ways in which different people experience, conceptualise, perceive, and understand various aspects of, and various phenomena in, the world around them” (Marton, 1988, p. 178-179). Marton redefines again in 2005, the aims of phenomenography as to “investigate the qualitatively different ways in which people understand a particular phenomenon or an aspect of the world around them” (Pong & Marton, 2005, p. 335). More recently and consistent with Marton's definitions over time, phenomenography has been defined as a “qualitative and descriptive research approach” with the aim being to “investigate empirically how people experience, understand and ascribe meaning to a specific situation or phenomenon in the surrounding world” (Dahlgren, Petocz, Dahlgren, & Reid, 2011, p. 21). Over time successive definitions have focussed on the essence of phenomenography, links between people and the world. In this research project, the link to be investigated is the way in which individuals (teachers) shape the world around them, in this case the experiences of teachers with their

world in primary school contexts and more specifically with their students when the latter communicate diverse sexuality perspectives.

4.2.2 History of Phenomenography

As a research approach, phenomenography has always been interested in people's experiences of the world. However, many have identified, including a key founder Marton himself, a perceived lack of a theoretical basis (Marton, 1996). "Early empirical studies on learning...were based more on some kind of general assumptions and observations...than on any elaborated theoretical stance" (Dall'Alba & Hasselgren, 1996, p. 103). Marton (1996) highlights points made by colleagues Uljens, Johansson, Dall'Alba, Saljo and Bowden, to move towards a more theoretical approach. Although, since its inception phenomenography has moved beyond its original methodological processes to a more complex theoretical research approach, the development of a social constructionist theoretical approach to examine sexuality provides a framework for phenomenography as the methodology for this study. The following will address key theoretical underpinnings of phenomenography with a discussion of the ontological and epistemological perspectives.

4.2.3 Ontology and Epistemology of Phenomenography

"Ontology is the study of being. It is concerned with 'what is', with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such" (Crotty, 1998, p. 28). The ontological position of phenomenography is "that the only reality there is, is the one that is experienced" (Uljens, 1996, p. 114). As mentioned earlier, during the 1970s a positivist paradigm dominated thinking. "Positivism incorporates the *shallow realist ontology*" in which:

Social reality is viewed as a complex of causal relations between events that are depicted as a patchwork of relationships between variables. The causes of human behaviour are regarded as being external to the individual (Blaikie, 2007, p. 178).

In other words positivism views reality as external to and independent from the individual. An interpretivistic view of ontology as the major underlying assumption of phenomenography implies a different view of reality (Ireland, Tambyah, Neofa, &

Harding, 2009). “Interpretivism: as a process for understanding this socially constructed reality is ‘dialogic’; it allows individuals to communicate their experiences within a shared framework of cultural meanings” (Blaikie, 2007, p. 135). Marton describes this ontological perspective of reality as nondualistic: “Experiences do comprise an internal relationship between the subject and the world, and that is their fundamental characteristic: An experience is of its essence nondualistic” (Booth & Marton, 1997, p. 122).

The nondualistic nature of phenomenography is a key theoretical element as mentioned by Limberg (2008). Bowden and Walsh (2000, p. 115) confirm and expand on the definition of nondualism:

Our world is a world which is always understood in one way or in another, it can not be defined without someone defining it. On the other hand, we can not be without our world. Still, we can focus on the object or on the subject aspect of the subject object relations that experiences are. When focusing on the former, we concluded that an object is the structured complex of all the different ways in which it can be experienced. When focusing on the latter, we concluded that we are always aware of everything, although the way in which we are aware of everything is situationally variable. Both conclusions may seem highly counter-intuitive. And still what they imply is that we should explore—without too many preconceived ideas— what the world we experience is like, on the one hand, and what our way of experiencing the world is like, on the other hand. And of course: these are not two things. They are one.

Thus, nondualism has been consolidated within the foundation of phenomenography by many including Pang (2003), Trigwell and Prosser (1997) and Uljens (1996). It is difficult to separate ontological and epistemological perspectives of phenomenography as the non-dualistic nature of the research approach applies to

both in leading to an understanding of the methodology and therefore appropriate methods. Uljens (1996) argues that the epistemological interpretation can only be represented as the ontological position of nondualism. He suggests the question of “whether reality is what it appears to be” (Uljens, 1996, p. 114) is not a problem at all because of the ontological grounding in reality not existing by itself but rather in partnership with the reality itself being experienced. Limberg (2008) acknowledges this theoretical development within the field of phenomenography but clearly defines the research approach as empirical. She alludes to ‘theoretical features’ such as the non-dualistic core of phenomenography and the categories of description used to describe ways of experiencing. The theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3 demonstrates that social constructionist sexuality and pedagogical theories link with phenomenographic conceptualisation and that the research sits within a social constructionist paradigm.

Phenomenography produces ‘categories of description’. Categories of description “constitute the main results of phenomenographic research” and “thus become the outcome space (Pang, 2003, p. 147).” The categories of description are the participants’ thoughts or conceptions brought together to characterize a part of their conceived world (Marton, 1981). The world is experienced in qualitatively different ways and described in terms of the categories of description (Trigwell & Prosser, 1997). Limberg (2008) highlights the relationship between the categories of description and the phenomenon as a second key theoretical element of phenomenography.

Another theoretical feature is the relationship between the ways of experiencing a phenomenon and the categories created to describe them. The former constitutes the research unit, while the categories of description form the outcome of phenomenographic research. Although ways of experiencing derive from individuals, categories of description refer to the collective level—the qualitatively different ways in which a phenomenon may appear to people (Limberg, 2008, p. 4).

The categories of description are represented as the outcome space in which the relationship between categories are analysed and discussed (Trigwell, 2000b). The structure of awareness is a framework to describe the structure of the categories and the relationship between the categories. The structural aspect of the outcome space refers to how the categories of description are represented. The referential aspect of the outcome space refers to the wider meaning given to the phenomenon (Booth & Ingerman, 2002; Booth & Marton, 1997; Marton, Dall'Alba, & Beaty, 1993). The structure of awareness is described by phenomenographers as:

Usually delimited in terms of internal and external horizons. The Internal Horizon represents the focus of the participants' attention, or that which is figural in awareness and simultaneously attended to. The External Horizon represents that which recedes to the ground, essentially the perceptual boundary associated with participants' ways of seeing (Hynd, Buckingham, Stoodley, McMahon, Roggenkamp, & Bruce, 2004).

The categories of description are a set of categories that describe how the world is experienced or conceived. These categories form the outcome space when a structure of awareness is applied to analyse the structural and referential aspects.

New knowledge is reached via gathering people's experiences of the world and discovering the qualitatively different ways in which people experience a phenomenon (Uljens, 1996). In phenomenography the second-order perspective, as described by Limberg (2008), is about focusing on:

people's experiences of the world, whether physical, biological, social, cultural, or whatever. Whereas the people whose experiences we are studying are oriented toward the world they are experiencing, we as researchers are oriented toward the various ways in which they experience some aspect of the world (p. 120).

The role of the researchers is to separate their own experiences and focus on the “ways in which others are talking of it, handling it, experiencing it, and understanding it (the phenomenon)” (Booth & Marton, 1997, p. 121). A second-order perspective provides the researcher with the ability to move beyond trying to describe things “as they are” from the researcher’s personal perspective, to a perspective in which the researcher can “characterize how they appear to [other] people” (Marton, 1988, p. 181). Marton (1988) along with others such as Booth (1992), Uljens (1996) (Dall’Alba & Hasselgren, 1996) and more recently Limberg (2008) and Gibbins, Bruce & Lidstone (2009) draw links with phenomenology for theoretical support. This research draws theoretical support from a social constructionist framework in which phenomenography is situated.

4.2.4 Phenomenology

Some researchers (as mentioned in the previous paragraph) suggest phenomenology was influential in developing a more theoretical underpinning to phenomenography. However, a social constructionist paradigm adds further theoretical grounding for phenomenography. Marton highlights three points (in no particular order) of discernment; (1) singular essence of experience versus variation in experience (at a collective level); (2) first order versus second-order; and (3) immediate experience, conceptual thought (or behaviour) equals conception (Marton, 1988, 1996). On a similar note regarding essence, Booth (1992) suggests the fundamental theory of phenomenology is to “go back to the things themselves” (p. 51) which prompted a content-based descriptive view of phenomenon which in turn prompted phenomenographers to see “cognition and experience as relational”. In other words this notion of essence without existing theory connects human and world described by phenomenographers as non-dualistic (Akerlind, 2005c; Bowden & Walsh, 2000; Marton, 1996; Säljö, 1997) which is counter to the dualistic nature of other research approaches such as phenomenology.

Similar issues regarding ‘essence’ are confirmed by Uljens (1996) however, he clearly states that phenomenography has not derived from phenomenology and “cannot be associated within the school of phenomenology. Instead phenomenography has developed as an empirical approach in educational research” (Uljens, 1996, p. 104). Attempts to draw theory from phenomenology for phenomenography exist, yet significant differences define the separate perspectives.

The key difference being phenomenology focuses on the essence of an experience however, phenomenography aims to characterise the variations of experience (Gibbings, Bruce, & Lidstone, 2009).

As a methodological approach phenomenography aims to discover the qualitatively different ways in which reality is viewed, a social constructionist ideology. The ontological and epistemological nature of phenomenography supports a non-dualistic position in which categories of description characterise conceptions of the world. The second-order perspective takes the research beyond observing experiences of others to discovering how other people observe and conceive the world. Further discussion on the links between the research approach and research question will be explored in combination with an exploration of the rationale for phenomenography and this research proposal.

4.3 Rationale for Phenomenography

Phenomenography is an appropriate methodology for the current study of teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context. Phenomenography is particularly useful in identifying teachers' conceptions as it focuses on qualitatively different ways in which people experience and understand a particular phenomenon (Marton, 1986).

Marton (1986) outlines three strands of phenomenographic study in which the third is most suited to the research proposed here. The first line of research regards "content-related studies of more general aspects of learning" and the second line of phenomenographic study is concerned with studies of learning in specific domains. "The third line of research corresponds more to a "pure" phenomenographic "knowledge interest" as it is focused on the description of "how people conceive of various aspects of their reality" (Marton, 1986, p. 38)... from the participants' everyday world (Marton, 1988, pp. 191-192)". In this case, the aspect of reality is teachers' lived experiences of their pedagogy. Because the data are a collective representation of teachers' lived experiences (Trigwell, 2000b), the research aligns with social constructionism (Crotty, 1998).

Different modes of phenomenography have been defined by Hasselgren and Beach (1997, p. 195) as:

- Experimental: collecting conceptions and grouping these into a limited number of ways.
- Discursive: investigating a context free research object under different conditions and representing this as expressions of conceptions.
- Naturalistic: collecting data from authentic situations and then analysing data phenomenographically.
- Hermeneutic: analysing texts or transcriptions not necessarily gathered for phenomenographic research and
- Phenomenological: focus of research is on the subject and the essence of the subject's conceptions.

The experimental phenomenography definition suggests fundamentally that phenomenography is interested in collecting conceptions and grouping these into a limited number of ways of understanding a phenomenon, known as the 'outcome space'. This definition suits the research framework of social constructionist ideology for this study.

The research question for this study seeks to identify the ways that groups (teachers) shape, through their conceptions, their place in society. In this case, the research focusses on the ways in which teachers conceive their pedagogical responses (conceptions) in an educational context within society with a attention on the particular phenomenon of diverse sexualities.

The research question can be broken into sections to explain further the suitability of phenomenography. The key words are identified from the research question for further discussion: 'teachers', 'conceptions' and 'pedagogical responses with a focus on diverse sexualities.

'Teachers' (the subject) implies a collective whose experiences or conceptions may be represented as the main outcome of phenomenographic research; the outcome space: a collection of the variation in descriptions of individual conceptions (Booth & Marton, 1997). While categories of description "constitute the main results of phenomenographic research" their relationship with one another "thus become the outcome space" (Pang, 2003, p. 147). The categories of description are the participants' thoughts brought together to characterize a part of their conceived world

(Marton, 1981). The world is experienced in qualitatively different ways and these are described in terms of the categories of description (Trigwell & Prosser, 1997).

‘Conceptions’ relate to phenomenography as ‘conceptions’ are how people describe their experiences and the aim of phenomenography is to gather peoples’ conceptions. Booth and Marton (1997, p. 114) define ‘conceptions’ as being synonymous with terms such as “ways of understanding, ways of comprehending...conceptualisations...ways of experiencing... it depicts how the world appears to people.” Svensson (1997) highlights the notion that phenomenographic research on teaching would focus on conceptions of teachers. Marton (1981) suggests that “whatever an individual feels that he [sic] knows contributes to his [sic] actions, beliefs, attitudes and modes of experiencing” (p. 181). The assumption is that the teachers’ knowledge is developed and emerges as a result of their experiences. At the same time, the way teachers react is a result of their knowledge and this in turn influences their conceptions. Given the nature of the phenomenon, teachers’ conceptions will be both professional but deeply personal. Phenomenography provides the opportunity to explore these conceptions as a collective representation of perhaps a largely silenced issue. ‘Pedagogy when students communicate concepts of diverse sexualities’ is the ‘object’ or ‘phenomenon’ in question. The teachers’ conception or lived experience of this ‘object’ is the aim of the research. Booth and Marton (1997) argue for pedagogy as the means to invoke learning and they discuss teacher awareness as a point of research to look at teachers teaching. The teachers’ pedagogy refers to the method in which the teacher selects in order to engage learning. In this study, the teachers’ awareness of their own pedagogy within a particular context of diverse sexualities at any time in their interaction with students and the phenomenon is the focus.

The ways of experiencing the phenomenon of teacher pedagogy responding to concepts of diverse sexualities will be collected from the individual teachers themselves and the categories of description will represent the collective. These data will be analysed to identify categories of description which will describe the qualitatively different ways in which each is experienced by teachers as a collective. This is the fundamental outcome of phenomenographic research situated in a social constructionist framework.

4.4 Participants

The participants in this research are primary school teachers in Queensland, Australia. Interviewing is the prime method of phenomenographic data collection (Marton, 1986). The process used for ‘selecting’ participants (teachers) for interview was initially through volunteering followed by snowball sampling where each existing participant was asked to refer the researcher (me) to other potential participants (participants were required to be primary school teachers in Queensland) (Noy, 2008). A range of respondents who were all primary school teachers in Queensland was invited to participate in the study so that variations of experiences were achieved. This snowball approach is illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

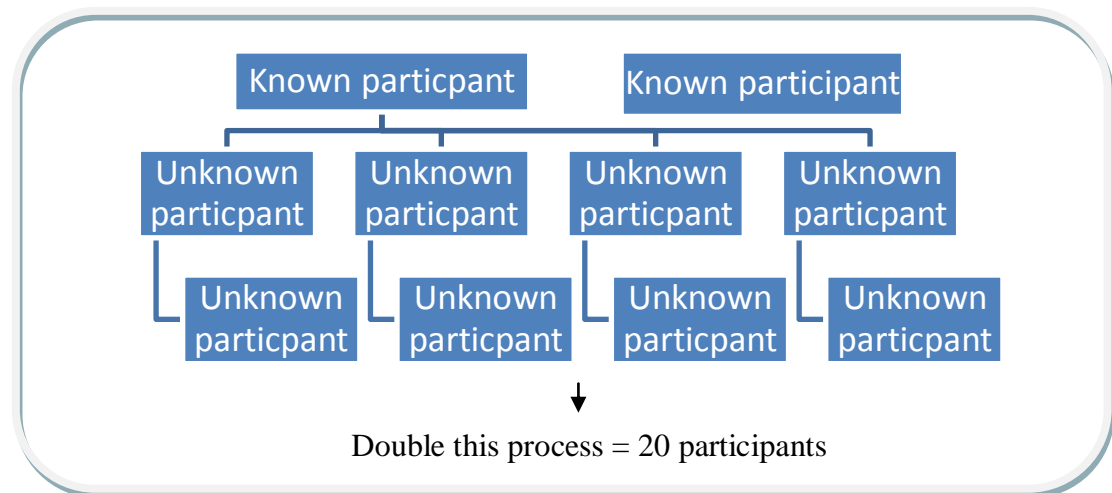


Figure 4.1: Participant selection

Inviting a range of respondents to volunteer as a method of identifying participants has both positive and negative implications. The initial group of participants was known to the researcher and thus inherent implications were noted. The participants may have previously been exposed to the researcher’s personal views and opinions and this may affect their responses. On the other hand, participants may feel more comfortable to express themselves openly if they have been referred by colleagues with shared experiences of the research issue. As the existing participants recommended other participants, then new participants became unknown to the researcher and vice versa thereby establishing a range of participants (Noy, 2008).

The final group of nineteen participants is diverse given that the process moved from known to unknown participants and thus reduced bias from the researcher. This

may lead to homogeneity, such as similar age group, of the sample group due to the recommendations (like people may recommend like people), although this is not necessarily so. Past phenomenographic research suggests a number of twenty participants should provide sufficient diversity within the group. If the participants are recommended and/or volunteer then they may be more likely to offer more information or express ideas and thoughts more freely. This alleviated field issues such as access to the participant in that the interview place and time were negotiated. The following table (4.1) represents the diversity within the group of participants.

Table 4.1

Summary of Participants

Participant	Jurisdiction	Male, Female or Intersex	Age	Known/Unknown
Interview A	State	F	40-50	K
Interview B	State	F	40-50	K
Interview C	State	F	30-40	K
Interview D	State	M	30-40	K
Interview E	State	F	30-40	K
Interview F	State	M	30-40	K
Interview G	State	M	40-50	U
Interview H	State	F	50+	U
Interview I	State	F	50+	U
Interview J	State	F	50+	U
Interview K	State	F	20-30	U
Interview L	State	F	30-40	K
Interview M	State	F	50+	U
Interview N	Catholic & Independent	F	40-50	U

Interview O	Catholic & State	F	30-40	U
Interview P	State	F	30-40	U
Interview Q	State	F	50+	K
Interview R	State	M	30-40	K
Interview S	Catholic	F	20-30	U
Totals	State: 16	Female: 15	Age:	Known: 9
	Catholic: 1	Male: 4	20-30: 2	Unknown: 10
	Independent: 0	Intersex: 0	30-40: 8	
	Multiple experiences: 2		40-50: 4	
			50+: 5	

4.5 Data collection: open-ended questions and interviewing

Open-ended questioning in an interview context has been widely used by phenomenographers (Akerlind, 2008; Marton, 1986; Trigwell & Prosser, 1997). Interview is the main form of data collection in phenomenographic research (Marton, 1986). Phenomenographic interviews aim to identify “underlying meanings and intentional attitudes” (Akerlind, 2005a, p. 65). Interviews provide the opportunity for participants to talk about their lived experiences (Trigwell & Prosser, 1997).

Data were collected by unstructured, open-ended one-to-one interviews using a digital voice recorder to record verbal interactions. Marton (1986) suggests using “questions that are as open-ended as possible in order to let the subjects choose the dimensions of the question they want to answer” (p. 42). The unstructured interview allows the interviewee to tell their story from their perspective as he or she feels is important (Denscombe, 2003). The intent is to understand personal experiences by collecting teachers’ conceptions of a particular phenomenon (Ehrich, 2003). Recording the interviews enables transcription of the talk for analysis (Marton, 1986). The detail of the transcription is guided by the amount of detail required to satisfy the purpose (Kvale, 2007). In the instance of phenomenographic research, the

purpose of the transcript is to capture the conceptual experiences of interviewees. Verbatim transcripts without further detail about manner or gestures and the like are acceptable to satisfy this purpose (Akerlind, 2005b; Booth, 1992; Green, Bowden, & Akerlind, 2005).

One-on-one interviews allow the researcher and participants to clarify meaning of both the research question and participant response. Marton (1986) argues that even though the initial interview question initiates the interview process, “different interviews may follow somewhat different courses” (p. 42). In order to investigate participants’ lived experiences the following open-ended interview questions guided the interview process: *Can you please tell me about a time when you’ve interacted with or observed a student who was communicating ideas about sexuality that do not include heterosexuality?*

Sub questions to follow included:

- Tell me about a time when you’ve encountered a student who has communicated ideas about diverse sexualities?
- Tell me about a time when you’ve encountered a student who has shared a non-heteronormative perspective (a perspective other than heterosexuality)?
- Please share with me your experiences of how you have responded to issues of diverse sexuality education, formally or informally?
- Please share with me why you responded in this way?

Further detail of the interview questions is attached as Appendix C.

Bowden and Green (2005, p. 18) suggest the initial question posed in the interview must be the same for all interviews in order to ensure consistency of what the phenomenon is. He then suggests following these steps for the remainder of the interview:

(1) Neutral questions aimed at getting the interviewee to say more.

Example: Can you tell me more about that?

(2) Specific questions that ask for more information about issues raised by the interviewee earlier in the interview.

Example: You have talked about X and also about Y, but what do X and Y mean?

(3) Specific questions that invite reflection by the interviewee about things they have said.

Example: You said A, and then you said B; how do those two perspectives relate to each other?

The aim is to investigate the participant's ideas and experiences without introducing researcher bias. One-to-one interviews are supportive of the overall design and methodology in that the researcher is able to gain a direct understanding of the participants' lived experiences.

The heteronormative contexts in which teachers work in daily may or may not be familiar to teachers. As suggested by Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2000) students are challenging teachers with non/heteronormative/homosexual perspectives and interviews with teachers are the best way to find out teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses.

4.6 Procedure and Timelines

The data were recorded and collected within an eight month timeframe. The following timetable (refer Table 4.1) outlines what was carried out and when the interviews took place and how the data was recorded. The rationale for this type of data collection was explained in a previous section (3.3) and the rationale for data analysis will follow in Section 4.6.

	Mar/ Apr2 012	May 2012	June 2012	July 2012	Aug 2012	Sept 2012	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012	Jan/ Jun 2013
Develop data collection tool										
Conduct pilot interviews										
Data Collection										
Transcription										
Data Analysis										

Table 4.1 Timeframe for Data Collection and Analysis

Queensland University of Technology ethics will be outlined in Section 4.7. All Queensland University of Technology ethical procedures and guidelines were followed. Negotiation via e-mail or phone took place with the participants to establish when and where the interviews were to take place. Once the participant volunteered, an information statement was sent outlining the purpose of the study and expectations regarding the interview e.g. time and notification of how interview transcripts will be stored. The interviews were carried out as one-on-one interviews at the discretion of the participant in regards to how, when and where. All interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder.

4.7 Data Analysis

Interview has been established as the data collection instrument and structure of awareness will provide an approach to analysis. The following is a discussion as to how the data from the interviews were processed. The approach used was interpretive awareness (Cope, 2004; Sandbergh, 1997; Sin, 2010) and this was extended through the inclusion of a cogenerative dialogue approach (Stith & Roth, 2006). Bracketing was monitored throughout the course of the research process by the research candidate's supervisors. Data from interviews was analysed into

categories of description and subsequently structured to reveal an outcome space (Alexander & Booth, 2008).

Once the interviews were conducted, transcription began. Analysis of the data (interview transcripts) is a complex process. The phenomenographic analysis involves a focus on the transcripts and how the relationship between the phenomenon and the interviewee is revealed via the transcript (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000). The first step was to select participant quotations (utterances) that relate to the investigation question (Marton, 1986). These ‘utterances’ were then “narrowed down to and interpreted in terms of selected quotes from all the interviews” (Marton, 1986, p. 42). The quotations were arranged and rearranged, put into categories and defined in terms of similar meanings. During the transcript analysis phase, a cogenerative approach was introduced.

Transcript analysis was validated by an inter-rata-reliability process in which cogenerative dialoguing was used. Cogenerative dialogue is a process used to talk about and discuss a phenomenon. Cogenerative dialogue has been used by teachers and researchers to “make sense of the relevant situation” (Stith & Roth, 2006, p. 4) and was used here as part of the data analysis process to improve validity and trustworthiness. Cogenerative dialogue is a technique used to discuss the findings of the research by the people involved in the research (Roth & Tobin, 2002). It is usually used by researchers with teachers, students and the community to discuss learning in educational contexts. The premise of cogenerative dialogue is to decrease hierarchies, power and control amongst those involved in research (Stith & Roth, 2006). It is used here by the researchers to gain meaning of data through a collaborative process in which all researchers are heard and constructive feedback is given (Roth & Tobin, 2002). Transcript analysis was an iterative process in which the lead researcher (PhD Candidate) immersed herself in the data with repeated readings of transcripts. Each interview was transcribed by the lead researcher to gain intimate recall of the data. The lead researcher began to identify similarities in meanings across the interviews. This process was deepened with repeated readings and checking meaning within the context of the statements and against the main research and interview question: Can you please tell me about a time when you’ve interacted with or observed a student who was communicating ideas about sexuality that do not include heterosexuality? Following this process in which the lead

researcher 'moved' the data into several categories, the research team gathered to validate this iterative process. All researchers looked at the transcriptions together and through cogenerative dialogue discussed the data and the meanings that were revealed.

The cogenerative dialogue provided a means for discussion and debate about the meaning within the transcripts opposed to a lone researcher considering the outcome space. The dialogue between the lead researcher and the research team (three supervisors of the candidate) added rigour to the data analysis process. The researchers (candidate and supervisory team) met three times for approximately 5 hours in total to discuss the data. These discussions amongst the researchers highlighted the methodological need to ensure the data selected for analysis actually answered the research question, while remaining data were disregarded. It became more apparent during this process the importance of determining the process as classifying data, not interpreting. Sin (2010) describes this as interpretive awareness.

Within our discussion it became clear that the researchers wanted to interpret, or add personal interpretations on what the data might mean. However, by working in the same room, the inter-rata-reliability process became more intense as the researchers were able to keep each other's thinking in check; the researchers asked each other questions such as, does this answer the research question? Is this classifying or interpreting? "The cogenerative dialogue relies on the interactions of individuals to achieve a sense of collective responsibility" (Roth & Tobin, 2006, p. 1). The debate and discussion amongst researchers who respect one another was an essential component to adding rigour to the data analysis process (Roth & Tobin, 2002).

Bracketing involves the concept that the researcher/s are able to remove their personal views and expectations whilst developing the categories of description from the data (Bowden & Walsh, 2000). As a novice researcher, Bowden and Walsh (2000) suggest monitoring these skills throughout the research process. By working together as a research team this process of bracketing was maximised.

Following the cogenerative process, 'categories of description' were formed on the basis of similarities (Marton, 1981). Each category was defined and exemplified in terms of direct quotations from the interviewees and each category must be distinct from the other categories. Direct quotations can be the only source of data for

analysis in order to describe how the subject relates to the phenomenon. Quotations must be used to provide evidence of each of the categories of description to minimise researcher influence (Green, et al., 2005). Categories of description will be revealed in Chapter 5: Analysis: Categories of description.

Once the categories of description were established the structural and relational aspects were analysed using the structure of awareness. The outcome space and final analysis will be revealed in Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion.

Booth and Marton (1997, p. 125) explicitly describe the outcome space as “the complex of categories of description capturing the different ways of experiencing the phenomenon...and the relationship between them.” The **referential** aspect of the outcome space refers to the wider meaning given to the phenomenon (Booth & Ingerman, 2002; Booth & Marton, 1997; Marton, Dall'Alba, & Beaty, 1993). Cope describes this as “the meaning inherent in the structure” (Cope, 2004, p.12).

The **structural** aspect of the outcome space refers to how the categories of description are represented (Booth & Marton, 1997). Cope (2004) further explains the structural aspect of the outcome space,

comprises the internal and external horizons. The detail of the structural aspect should include the dimensions of variation simultaneously present in the internal horizon, the ‘values’ of each dimension of variation, the existence and nature of relationships between dimensions of variation, and the nature of the boundary between the internal and external horizons (Cope, 2004, p. 12).

The **internal horizon** characterises the focus of the participants’ awareness. This focus of awareness represents the meaning of each category of description and the relationship between the categories.

The external horizon as an area of awareness forms the context in which the theme sits. The external horizon represents that which recedes to the ground, essentially the perceptual boundary associated with participants’ ways of seeing” (Hynd, Buckingham, Stoodley, McMahon, Roggenkamp, & Bruce, 2004).

This stage of analysis is conducted only after the categories of description are well established. If done simultaneous with identifying categories of description it is possible to distort the categories with the influence of their relationship in mind. Doing the analysis separately allows the researcher to keep the focus of the relationship between subject and phenomenon in the forefront of initial data analysis (Green, et al., 2005). The structure of awareness is a framework for analysing the categories of description. Structure of awareness, as a framework for data analysis, also ensures ‘goodness’ of research.

4.7.1 “Goodness” of Phenomenographic research

Phenomenography is a well-established research approach (Bruce, 2006; Sjoström & Dahlgren, 2002) encompassing a trustworthy research paradigm though not without robust debate, especially regarding phenomenographic ontology and epistemology (Akerlind, 2008; Cope, 2004). The theoretical research paradigm developed in Chapter 3 provides a theoretical framework for phenomenography as a suitable methodological approach for this research. The ‘goodness’ of research can be judged according to the research paradigm suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 251); one cannot “judge constructivist evaluations by positivistic criteria” for example. More traditional language such as ‘validity and reliability’ from a more positivist paradigm have been suggested as appropriate to judge ‘goodness’ of phenomenographic research according to Sin (2010, p. 308). Other words such as trustworthy, transferability versus generalisability (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1989), credibility versus validity, dependability versus reliability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Prosser, 2000) and confirmability versus objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) exist in material aimed at addressing ‘goodness’ of qualitative research. However, a range of language and devices have been used by phenomenographers to address ‘goodness’ in phenomenographic research. For the purposes of describing elements of ‘good’ phenomenographic research the term trustworthy will be used unless referring to others’ work.

Trustworthiness is a term used to describe the parallel criteria developed by Guba and Lincoln (1994) to discuss the goodness of qualitative research. The following outlines the discussion in the phenomenographic community regarding goodness of research.

In terms of trustworthiness, the sample group in this instance is open to scrutiny in terms of the flexibility and openness of the 'selection' process. The key here is the openness in reporting the process as it evolves and reporting a sample group description.

Trustworthiness can be evident from multiple aspects of the phenomenographic approach including the research design, delivery of results and conclusions. The research process should be described extensively from the phenomenon itself, the revealing of interview questions and procedures undertaken but of equal importance the analyses and conclusions. Three aspects suggested by Booth (1992) to consider when discussing trustworthiness are:

Content-related...the researcher has to have a deep but open familiarity with the topics taken up in the interviews. Methodological...the design of the study should support phenomenographic epistemology and ontology including data collection and analysis. "Communicative"... the results and conclusions should be able to be interpreted by both the people involved internally in the project (e.g. the teachers) and by the external research community (Booth, 1992, pp. 65-66).

Each of these aspects can be addressed individually in relation to the trustworthiness of this research:

- Content-related: the researcher's familiarity with the topic to be taken up in the interview is demonstrated in chapters 1 & 2 where it has been demonstrated that the researcher has discussed the topic in relation to the background, context and purpose and also the current literature pertaining to the topic.
- Methodological: the researcher has detailed the design of the study, the epistemological and ontological perspectives, the data collection and analysis (chapter 3).
- Communicative: it is the intent of the researcher to transcribe the transcriptions and present the outcome space so that it is able to be

interpreted by both the primary education community and the research community.

Trustworthiness in phenomenographic research is concerned with the explicitness and detail of the entire research process articulation. This articulation of the research process cannot be replicated.

Early phenomenographers described the trustworthiness of their work as impossible to consider as replicable (Booth, 1992; Marton, 1988). If a botanist discovers a particular species of plant on an island, is it necessary for a different botanist to discover the species to verify its existence? (Marton, 1986). If a different botanist went to the same island, then is it reasonable to expect that they would also discover the species? Maybe so, but this is not the point necessarily. Even though the discovery of the species may indeed be ‘replicated’ the path travelled by the botanist, their prior knowledge, “observations and sightings, the diaries and notebooks” (Booth, 1992, p. 67) would not be the same. The very nature of phenomenography suggests that the data and the researcher have a unique relationship in which knowledge can only exist between them at that point in time. With non-dualist ontology and epistemology expecting a different researcher to find the same ‘knowledge’ is impossible (Cope, 2004; Sandbergh, 1997).

The concept of ‘interpretive awareness’ has been suggested by several phenomenographers as a way of addressing trustworthiness (Cope, 2004; Sandbergh, 1997; Sin, 2010). Interpretive awareness is similar to the concept of reflexivity (Sin, 2010) in that the researcher’s focus is on the process of discovery not on the outcomes or any preconceived ideas. Bowden and Walsh (2000) reflect that the categories are subject to the skill of the researcher and the skill involved in “bracketing out one’s expectations” (p. 133) or becoming aware of one’s expectations. As a novice researcher, these skills were monitored throughout the course of the research process (Bowden & Walsh, 2000). Ashworth and Lucas (2000) note bracketing is not consistently successful as some views are more easily set aside and he urges the researcher to ask how one can be open to the participants’ experience. “The researcher withholds theories and prejudices when he/she interprets the individuals' conceptions being investigated” (Sandbergh, 1997, p. 209).

Trustworthiness can be confirmed via the tracking of data presented as the outcome space to the original source, the transcriptions. Trustworthiness in a

phenomenographic study is concerned with the empirical data (transcriptions) and the categories of description. The researcher must stay true to the transcriptions and demonstrate the relationship between the transcriptions and the categories by providing excerpts from the transcriptions when presenting the categories. The reader then, is able to decide if the research is trustworthy (Collier-Reed, Ingerman, & Berglund, 2009; Cope, 2004; Sjoström & Dahlgren, 2002).

Using a structure of awareness has been suggested as a process to add to the trustworthiness of phenomenographic research particularly in relation to presenting the outcome space. Some describe using the structure as fundamental in establishing trustworthiness (Hynd, et al., 2004). Cope (2004) argues vehemently that a structure of awareness be applied in every step of the methodology in order to ensure trustworthy research. The structure of awareness can be applied to data analysis to ensure a focus on the meaning of the data collected and support presentation of data that is both specific and whole (Collier-Reed, et al., 2009).

“The most significant characteristics of the approach are the aiming at categories of description, the open explorative form of data collection and the interpretative character of the analysis of data” (Svensson, 1997, p. 161). The overall design of the study, the rationale for selecting the design, the rationale and process for selecting the participants and data collection instruments to be used all align and interrelate.

4.8 Ethical considerations and research limitations and significance

The purpose here is to discuss ethical issues associated with the research; potential problems in conducting the research; and discussion of limitations of the proposed research. Ethics was approved internally through Queensland University of Technology.

4.8.1 Ethical issues

The relationship between researchers and research participants is the ground on which human research is conducted. The Principles of Ethical Conduct (2002) define values such as respect for human beings, research merit and integrity, justice, and beneficence. These values are essential in helping shape the relationship between researcher and participant as one of trust, mutual responsibility and ethical equality

(National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2002). This was of utmost importance in this research as one-on-one interviews were the key source of data collection.

According to Queensland University of Technology's Human Ethics Application Process, after considering the NSECHR (National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2002) and low or high risk attributes of the study, this research was submitted via the low risk application process. The greatest risk to participants was possibly feeling uncomfortable about the subject matter of diverse sexualities. The issue to be addressed was not only teachers' awareness of heteronormativity and their experiences with students who may challenge heteronormative practices but possibly their reticence to communicate their experiences. Teachers may not be aware of the heteronormative context in which they are a part or the impact of their actions in terms of their contribution to social equality for LGBTI youth (Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007).

4.8.2 Phenomenological Research Limitations

Section 4.7.2 outlines the potential limitations that were considered prior to conducting the research and the impacts of the limitations as a reflection. Potential problems for both planning and conducting the research were considered in order to best plan for the research to be undertaken. One of the main concerns in relation to this research approach was the risk to participants regarding the subject matter of diverse sexualities and the potential for an uncomfortable interviewing experience as a result. Other potential problems were logistical, for example, negotiating times and places, preparation of equipment and protection of participants. Sampling was a concern in terms of accessing participants due to the voluntary nature of the participant selection process. Researcher bias had potential to be an issue due to my own experiences as a teacher and also as a student / individual with non-heteronormative perspectives. I was aware that I needed to follow the interview requirements as outlined above and refrain from using leading prompts during phenomenographic interviews which may have led to self-fulfilling prophecies. These potential concerns are discussed in terms of how they impacted on the research.

Ethics

The subject matter of diverse sexualities was potentially a risk for participants given the sensitive nature of the topic. In order to counteract this potential risk, participants were provided with an option to withdraw at any time including after the interview was conducted (Appendix B). The participants were also provided with counselling options through Queensland University of Technology. No participants withdrew or reacted negatively to the questions. Other considerations included; protection of anonymity of informants e.g. assigning alphabet letters or aliases in report, type of information provided to participants to inform them of the purpose of the study (Appendix B), disclosures, and contradictory information

Logistics

The following points were considered regarding potential logistical problems:

- Resources and field issues; equipment, finance, time, appropriate interview space (quiet place, put equipment in least obtrusive place; discuss with participant willingness to be taped), recruitment of participants, reminders, staged data collection so participants feel comfortable.
- Interviews; prepare equipment, check functioning of equipment prior, use ice-breakers, keep opinions to self, keep interviewee on track, answer all questions, schedule time to cover all questions.

Upon reflection, times and places were negotiated on an individual level and the only resource required was a hand held audio recorder. Participants agreed to meet on private property such as homes, libraries and community spaces. I ensured preparation of the recording device which was selected to manage audio for one to one interviews.

Data collection: questioning and interviewing

Open-ended questioning was used for one-on-one interviews with participants. Data collection took place over eight months and transcription was conducted solely by me over the following three months. Data analysis involved selecting participant quotations and developing categories of description. Once categories were established the structural and relational aspects were analysed using the structure of awareness.

In order to investigate teachers' lived experiences the initial open-ended interview question asked was: Can you please tell me about a time when you've interacted with or observed a student who was communicating ideas about sexuality that do not include heterosexuality? Open-ended interviewing has been widely used by phenomenographers (Akerlind, 2008; Marton, 1986; Trigwell & Prosser, 1997). Participants then described the phenomenon itself as 'sexuality' not inclusive of heterosexuality, therefore diverse sexualities. Questions followed to encourage teachers to explain experiences and conceptions in detail with justifications. Deep questioning allowed the researcher to gain a direct understanding of the participants' lived experiences, in this case teachers' pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities.

Realistic limitations involved expectations of sampling as there were constraints on time, and access to participants was reliant on other's recommendations and the good nature of participants to volunteer. The nature of phenomenographic data analysis also requires time. A greater number of participants requires greater time for analysis. Upon reflection, accessing known participants was unproblematic: colleagues who are primary school teachers were happy to contribute time and experiences as well as refer other potential participants. Unknown participants communicated through telephone or email to liaise a time and place for interviews. Friends and family who were not primary school teachers and not participants in the research also referred researcher details to unknown primary school teachers as potential participants. The final breakdown of participants is as follows: nine known participants, ten unknown participants, fifteen of these were state employed primary school teachers, three were Catholic Education employed and one of the participants had been employed by both but working in the private sector at the time of the interview. The participants ranged in experience from beginning teacher to retired and four of the participants were male and fifteen were female. The original target was twenty participants however, nineteen teachers were interviewed.

Researcher bias: bracketing

Bracketing is a process used in phenomenographic research whereby the researcher attempts to make meaning from the transcripts removing themselves and their beliefs and expectations. This is a difficult process as researchers bring their own life experiences to the data set. Ashworth and Lucas (2000) note bracketing is

not consistently successful as some views are more easily set aside and he urges the researcher to ask how one can be open to the participants' experience. "The researcher withholds theories and prejudices when he/she interprets the individuals' conceptions being investigated" (Sandbergh, 1997, p. 209). This process of withholding theories and prejudices was difficult at times, especially during the interview process in which participants may have shared different or extreme views. However, the research team, consisting of myself and three supervisors minimised the potential to bring bias to the data by working as a team to ensure the data both answered the research questions and the data analysis process was a classifying process opposed to an interpretive one.

4.8.3 Theoretical and methodological implications and significance

Significant development in phenomenographic methodology was progressed during this research and the theoretical implications are explained. Phenomenographic data analysis is generally conducted by a sole researcher due to the ontological and epistemological philosophy of phenomenography. The non-dualistic nature of the philosophy of phenomenography lends itself to an individual processing of data analysis; analysis is conducted solely between the researcher and the data. Section 6.3 discusses new ways of working to ensure validity and reliability. Cogenerative dialogue was employed as a methodological process during data analysis; cogenerative dialogue is a new way of working within a phenomenographic methodology. The analysis process was enriched through cogenerative dialogue in which validation and inter-rata-reliability was achieved.

Here, I extend Marton's (1986) metaphor about the botanist on an island who discovers a new plant species. Marton argues that just because a different botanist explores the same area doesn't necessarily mean the second botanist will find the same new species. The metaphor could be extended to explain the process undertaken for this research: a team of researchers working together to explore a new field can combine individual knowledge and expertise to ensure the field is well examined to maximise new discoveries. The role of the researcher is to separate personal experiences and focus on the "ways in which others are talking of it, handling it, experiencing it, and understanding it (the phenomenon)" (Booth & Marton, 1997, p. 121). The process involved the research team handling and discussing the transcriptions, with the lead researcher directing this engagement

according to the research questions. The innovative use of cogenerative dialoguing in this study has shown how this relationship can be extended so that a research team can make richer and more nuanced understandings of the outcome space. With non-dualist ontology and epistemology, expecting a different researcher to find the same ‘knowledge’ is impossible (Cope, 2004; Sandbergh, 1997), however when different researchers work with the same data set at the same time, and generate dialogue about the internal and external horizons, they are able to find ‘knowledge’ together.

The interpretative awareness and cogenerative dialogue approaches supported a rigorous data analysis process. This new way of working, using the cogenerative dialogue approach, supports the philosophical ontological and epistemological essence of phenomenography, yet at the same time, posits a new method to bracket out an individual researcher’s own beliefs and values. Using cogenerative dialogue as a methodological process within a phenomenographic philosophy is a new contribution to the field of phenomenography.

4.9 Summary of Chapter 4

Chapter 4 argues for phenomenography as the research methodology which aligns with the social constructionist framework detailed in Chapter 3. Phenomenography as the research methodology was explored in the context of the history of phenomenography and the development of ontological and epistemological concepts. The rationale for phenomenography methodology was explained in relation to participants, data collection, procedures and timelines. Data analysis was introduced and will be further detailed in Chapter 5. Ethical considerations and the research limitations that were considered prior to the research have also been included in Chapter 4. Phenomenography as the research methodology aligns with the social constructionist framework to provide a philosophical, practical platform to study teachers’ conceptions of their own pedagogy when students express diverse sexuality perspectives in the primary school classroom.

Chapter 5: Analysis: Categories of description

The results of this phenomenographic study on teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context are presented in this chapter. This study has captured the conceptions of teachers' experiences which are presented as a structure of awareness of the phenomenon and are revealed through six categories of description. Dimensions of variation identify variation within the conceptions of the phenomena; three dimensions delineate connections and differences between the categories which are described in this chapter.

The first section revises the definitions of the structure of awareness and dimension of variation. Sections 5.1 – 5.6 provide an explanation of each category, including direct quotations from transcripts and a discussion of the dimensions of variation within each category. A summary is provided in section 5.7.

The structure of awareness

The structure of awareness is revealed as categories via transcripts formed on the bases of similarities (Marton, 1981). Each category is defined and exemplified in terms of direct quotations from the transcriptions. Direct quotations can be the only source of data for analysis in order to describe how the participant relates to the phenomenon. Some of the quotes are quite lengthy however, preservation of the socially constructed context of the interview for the reader is important in order to gain meaning from the transcripts. As was discovered during the cogenerative dialogue phase during the analysis, the context of the quotes was important to gain meaning. The structural and relational aspects of the categories of description were analysed once the categories were established, defining the structure of awareness.

The categories of description: teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context

- Category 1: Being nonchalant about diverse sexualities.
- Category 2: Avoiding sexual diversity.
- Category 3: Being uncertain about responding to concepts of diverse sexualities.

- Category 4: Maintaining home and school boundaries: defining roles and responsibilities regarding diverse sexualities.
- Category 5: Protecting all students from issues of sexual diversity
- Category 6: Embracing sexual diversity in the primary school context.

Structural and referential features

The **structural aspect** of each category is revealed in relation to the internal and external horizon. The referential feature identifies the meaning of the category. The **internal horizon** describes the foreground of the category, the distinct features of the category that separate it from the other categories. The **external horizon** as an area of awareness forms the context in which the theme sits.

The dimensions of variation

The dimensions of variation are revealed within and across each category and identify variation within the categories of description (Tambyah, 2012). The three dimensions of variation which reveal an variation across the categories are (1) teacher personal beliefs, (2) school/institutional culture and (3) wider social and Western cultural influences.

5.1 Category of Description 1: Teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses as being nonchalant about concepts of diverse sexualities

Category 1 describes teachers' conceptions as being nonchalant about concepts of diverse sexualities in the primary school. Table 5.1 provides a summary of the structural and referential aspects. The dimensions of variation describe the expanding awareness of the teachers' conceptions of their experiences.

Table 5.1

Pedagogical responses as being nonchalant about sexual diversity

Phenomenographic feature	Evidence
<p>Referential aspect Teachers' pedagogical conceptions involve being nonchalant about recognising and responding to diverse sexualities. Diverse sexualities are not thought of as an important concept that requires attention in the primary school context.</p>	<p>"Kids make that comment [gay] but in a lot of cases they don't understand what they're saying... I have heard kids say that to other kids... But I've really, I've let it go, I've haven't pulled anyone up on it... It didn't seem to be major, it wasn't a major issue at the time and it didn't seem to be something I needed to step into right then..." (Int. M)</p>
<p>Structural elements</p> <p><i>Internal horizon:</i> Teachers respond by being nonchalant about sexual diversities because sexual diversities are not seen as problematic in the primary school context.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Gay' equals 'stupid', not homosexual Diverse sexualities are viewed as not problematic and not important and therefore don't need to be 'addressed' 	<p>"You know, that's so gay, you know, you're so gay, I remember saying that in high school (laugh)... Um, I think as I meant it as in, they weren't literally gay, but just to say that it was more like, oh you're stupid..." (Int. K)</p> <p>"I think people talk like that now like regular conversation." (Int. I)</p>
<p><i>External horizon:</i> Diverse sexualities are not important.</p>	
<p>Dimensions of Variation</p> <p>DoV1 Teacher belief: diverse sexualities are not important</p> <p>DoV2 School/Institutional culture: no formal inclusion of diverse sexualities</p> <p>DoV3 Socio-cultural influences: a culture of heteronormativity</p>	

Category 1 describes teachers' conceptions of being nonchalant about responding to concepts of diverse sexualities where the teacher doesn't necessarily associate a problem with diverse sexualities but views diverse sexualities as not important or indifferent. Table 5.1 describes the **referential aspect** of teachers' pedagogical responses as being nonchalant about concepts of diverse sexualities.

The **structural aspect** of Category 1 is revealed in relation to the internal and external horizon. The **internal horizon** describes the foreground of the category and the distinct features of the category that separate categories. The **external horizon** as an area of awareness forms the context in which the theme sits. The qualitatively distinct features of Category 1 reveal teachers' conceptions are: the term 'gay' equals 'stupid', not homosexual; responding to the use of the term in the primary school context becomes irrelevant and concepts of diverse sexualities are viewed as not problematic and therefore don't need to be 'addressed'. As uncovered in the following discussion, the conception of teachers' pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities is they are nonchalant about responding to diverse sexualities.

5.1.1 'Gay' equals 'stupid', not homosexual

'Gay' equals 'stupid', not homosexual is one way a participant described their experience of students' name calling using the term 'gay'. This participant's description of his/her response to name calling within the primary school context suggests it's OK to call someone 'gay' if you mean 'stupid' but not ok to just call someone 'gay' if they are not gay. The teacher made no association with name calling using the term 'gay' as problematic. He/she had used the term 'gay' to mean 'stupid'.

You know, that's so gay, you know, you're so gay, I remember saying that in high school (laugh)... Um, I think as I meant it as in, they weren't literally gay, but just to say that it was more like, oh you're stupid or you're, you meant it to mean that, so it didn't mean, you know I was calling that person, gay or you were a lesbian but it was more yeah, that was so stupid why did you do that sort of thing... Um, I don't think I did actually that time because they did sort of address it themselves, like they didn't take it any further and there wasn't anything more and no one was offended by it or anything sort of stem from it,

they turned it around completely and then forgot about it... You know so; I didn't think I needed to step in at that stage I guess. (Int. K)

This experience suggests that the teacher is unaware of any problem with using the term 'gay' to mean stupid for them personally and therefore, no problem for the students to use the word in the same way. The teacher didn't acknowledge a problem with using the word 'gay' to call someone stupid. Similarly, another participant described the use of the term 'gay' to mean 'not cool' and indicated this was 'accepted' in the primary school context.

I mean I'm aware of the term 'gay' and I most, in most instances, I'd say this generation of children don't, my understanding of it, well my son who is now 27, they didn't associate it with homosexuality in their teenage years, gay was not cool, it was someone who wasn't gay, as opposed to someone who had a preference for, as a homosexual. Um, but inappropriateness, I guess I've observed it, but I haven't directly been involved in it. You're making me think here (pause). **I've sort of been in working environments where it's just been accepted, like neither here nor there.** (Int. Q)

These two teachers were not aware of any potential problematic use of the term 'gay' because, from their perspective, the intent of the use of the word does not link with diverse sexualities. This relaxed approach reveals a somewhat morphed use of the term 'gay' as not having reference to LGBTI people or diverse sexualities. Because no 'problem' is identified, the teacher is nonchalant about the phenomenon, unconcerned and indifferent.

5.1.2 Diverse sexualities are viewed as being not problematic and not important

Teachers' conceptions of their experiences about addressing diverse sexualities reveal that diverse sexualities are viewed as being not problematic and not important. Teachers believe no student intent to harm by using homophobic epithets so from their viewpoint there is no need to respond to homophobic name calling. Students' use of the word 'gay' was revealed by participants to be accepted by primary school teachers as a common aspect of youth culture.

They'd see that on TV, people say someone's gay cause you hear it everywhere. I wouldn't be at all surprised if they say it and I don't even know (pause)... cause it's just almost normal, I shouldn't say normal, it's not a good word. It's almost just um (pause) **I think people talk like that now like regular conversation** and certainly on any media things they would hear (pause). ..**In the big scheme of things, I don't think it's a big deal**, I don't. It's the same, it's no different like you go through stages like sometimes I have no idea what a kid is even, you know they'll come up with a term and I'll think, what does that mean and it might mean oh, it's cool and they might have a totally different word and to me it's in the same category. (Int. I)

But then someone else will pipe up and say, yeah, that means happy, so happy and like they've completely forgotten about what they've said and they're talking about that it means happy and it's sort of like all over and done with, I don't think it's anything that they've meant to hurt somebody but it's just a little bit of a saying I guess that was quite popular back in the day as well... I think I've heard that this year, oh that's so gay, you're so gay... (Int. K)

This apparent relaxed and unconcerned approach to responding to diverse sexualities indicates an acceptance by some teachers that the use of the word 'gay' has morphed in meaning. The transcripts reveal that some teachers think 'gay', used in a name calling sense or when referring to something as 'stupid', is now acceptable in the primary school context and wider community. The term 'gay' is viewed as having no link with diverse sexualities even though teachers raised the issue within the discussion of 'diverse sexualities' in the interviews.

One participant shared that diverse sexualities was part of his/her personal and family life and therefore his/her views about diverse sexualities were personal. She/he referred to diverse sexualities as being 'not a big deal'. Even though students were using the word 'gay' in a name calling context, the belief of the teacher was that there was no need to address diverse sexualities concepts because it was 'so normal'. The pedagogical response from this particular teacher was nonchalant.

Well, um, I'm just (pause) **I didn't make a fuss of it**. I remember that I just thought ok, I guess because in my family, we've got, you know, my friends, you

know I've got quite **a few very close friends and a family member who you know have same-sex relationships so it wasn't a big deal.** (Int. I)

This teacher was adamant that identifying as LGBTI had no connection to the derogatory use of the term 'gay'. In his/her experiences at school with students using the term in a name calling capacity, the teacher viewed 'gay' as 'normal', non-problematic, not important and therefore was nonchalant about responding.

5.1.3 Dimensions of variation: Category 1

The dimensions of variation in Category 1 illustrate the personal beliefs of teachers, school communities and cultural aspects of diverse sexualities discerned in the context of the external horizon of diverse sexualities as not important. The internal horizon of Category 1 includes teachers' experiences as 'gay' equals 'stupid', not homosexual, diverse sexualities are viewed as not problematic and not important. Referential and structural elements of teachers' conceptions of diverse sexualities in Category 1 are represented within the developing structure of awareness.

Teachers' accounts of their conceptions reveal diverse sexuality is not problematic and not important. Some teachers believe there is no problem with name calling using homophobic expressions such as 'gay'. Their beliefs are that there is no link between using the term 'gay' and LGBTI people and that the term does not infer negativity towards LGBTI people. Therefore, their beliefs are that name calling in this manner is not problematic and not important to address. This suggests a growing tension between a personal belief that diverse sexualities are not important and school and cultural practices of heteronormativity.

The teachers' awareness of any potential responsibility to address diverse sexualities as problematic was unrealised due to heteronormative concepts. Unlike the other categories where teachers acknowledge diverse sexualities in some capacity, Category 1 reveals teachers' beliefs as not associating protective measures, concern neither for school/institutional rules nor for parent expectations or no concern for equity of LGBTI people; the concept of diverse sexualities is viewed as non-problematic and not important. Teachers believe name calling using the term 'gay' and the like is accepted within the schooling context and as part of the culture within the wider community.

Schools and institutional culture support the teachers' beliefs by creating an environment where diverse sexualities are taboo. Even though a growing global trend in Western culture supports equality for LGBTI people and Australia is included in this trend with movement towards equality for LGBTI in Commonwealth Law and community activity, there is still a sense of inequality, for example in relation to same-sex marriage. This example demonstrates that the wider community views LGBTI rights as 'not important'. This wider cultural influence impacts on teachers' beliefs. The exclusion of diverse sexualities in formal documents in Queensland's educational institution indicates the powerful influence of wider cultural values and the heteronormativity that ensues at the school level. The concept of heteronormativity suppresses inclusion of diverse sexualities in school curriculum, institutional policy and procedures and feeds a culture that legitimises homophobia and homophobic bullying. The non-existence of diverse sexualities in formal education documents in Queensland is reflected in the 'non importance' for teachers to address diverse sexualities in the primary school.

Wider social and cultural practices and beliefs influence both school culture and individual teacher's beliefs that diverse sexualities are not important. Sex and sexuality has and continues to be a taboo topic and many still believe sex and sexuality to be a private matter. This deep-seated cultural belief still lingers in the current social climate and contributes to teachers' beliefs about the non-importance of sexuality in the primary school context. The pressure of institutional and wider cultural beliefs adds to the tension felt by teachers when responding to diverse sexualities in the primary school.

Summary of Category 1

In Category 1 the participants reveal a nonchalant approach to diverse sexualities in the primary school context. Teachers view diverse sexualities as non-problematic and unimportant with a relaxed and unconcerned approach to addressing or responding to diverse sexualities. Category 2 reveals a pedagogical response to avoid diverse sexualities.

5.2 Category of Description 2: Teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses as avoiding sexual diversity in the primary school context

Category 2 describes teachers' conceptions as avoiding sexual diversity in the primary school context. Table 5.2 provides a summary of the referential aspects, the overall meaning of the category, and the structural aspects, the foreground and expanding awareness of the teachers' conceptions of their experiences.

Table 5.2

Pedagogical responses as avoiding sexual diversity

Phenomenographic features	Evidence
<p>Referential aspect</p> <p>Teachers' conceptions involve avoiding a response to sexual diversity in the primary school. Sexual diversity is viewed as problematic and this perception influences teachers' pedagogical responses.</p>	<p>"So it's kind of like, everyone knows and no-one cares but you just can't say it... but the fact that it has to be hidden cause I could be fired..." (Int. O)</p>
<p>Structural elements</p> <p><i>Internal horizon:</i> Teachers respond by avoiding sexual diversity because of actual or perceived beliefs about diverse sexualities and implications</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • negative professional repercussions 	<p>"I can actually be sacked on the spot..." (Int. N)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professionally unsupported 	<p>"I think very much the principal at this school um, doesn't want us doing it." (Int. B)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homophobic name calling equals bullying 	<p>"It wasn't singled out as... homophobic behaviour... it was just always dealt with as part of the bullying framework." (Int. E)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing bullying may reinforce negativity 	<p>"... we're attaching that tag 'homosexual' equals something that's bad." (Int. F)</p>
<p><i>External horizon:</i> Sexual diversity is problematic.</p>	
<p>Dimensions of Variation</p> <p>DoV1 Teacher belief: sexual diversity is problematic</p> <p>DoV2 School/Institutional culture: no formal inclusion of diverse sexualities</p> <p>DoV3 Socio-cultural influences: sexual diversity is a social problem</p>	

Category 2 describes primary school teachers' pedagogical responses as avoiding concepts of diverse sexualities. Table 5.2 describes the **referential aspect** of teachers' pedagogical responses as avoiding a response to sexual diversity. The focus of awareness in Category 2 is on the teacher who holds the pedagogical decision to avoid addressing diverse sexualities in the primary school context.

The **structural aspect** of Category 2 is revealed in relation to the internal and external horizon. The **internal horizon** describes the foreground of the category and the distinct features of the category that separate categories. The **external horizon** as an area of awareness forms the context in which the theme sits.

The qualitatively distinct features of Category 2 reveal teachers' conceptions are:

- negative professional repercussions are real
- teachers are professionally unsupported to address diverse sexualities concepts
- homophobic expressions equal bullying not a connection to diverse sexualities and
- responding to bullying regarding diverse sexualities may reinforce negativity and prevent teachers from potentially addressing diverse sexualities.

As uncovered in the following discussion, some conceptions of teachers' pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities are to avoid responding to diverse sexualities.

Category 2 describes teachers' conceptions of avoiding diverse sexualities where the teacher acknowledges a problematic aspect to sexual diversities in the primary school context but avoids the sexuality component and 'deals' with the behavioural aspect, for example, bullying. One participant shared:

Oh like things where people would go, "oh you're so gay"... and I would have to come in and say you know... now that's not the term we use, we don't do name calling in this school and it was always just dealt with as in we don't do name calling in this school... (Int. E).

The term 'gay' was avoided; the teacher responded by addressing name calling via a bullying framework that was not inclusive of homophobic bullying. When teachers

are trying to manage priorities with conflicting messages about roles and responsibilities, pedagogical decisions are impacted.

Um, I don't know, I think there's probably a whole lot of things that teachers should probably be trained in first before we worry about that. I mean, I know it's important that kids should know about it. I guess that's why probably it's ok for nurses to come into schools that have the correct information, up to date information and are trained. That maybe it is better for them to come and do that job. Whereas we're sort of educators around literacy/numeracy, those things and I think some teachers need to get better at that first before they need to worry about sex education. (Int. D)

This participant describes his/her expectations for teachers to focus on curriculum in areas of literacy and numeracy as opposed to teaching for health or social issues, in particular sex education. This pressure influences the teacher to value a certain education offering even though he/she acknowledges the importance of sex education. Some teachers describe their experiences as being worried about negative professional repercussions if they were to acknowledge diverse sexualities.

5.2.1 Negative professional repercussions

Participants fear negative repercussions by responding to diverse sexualities in the primary school context. For some the consequences, real or perceived, were at the forefront of their conceptions.

I also have to be very cautious and careful because if I'm seen not to be supportive of the Catholic Church I'm compromising my position... It means you have to be very, very careful because if I put a foot wrong, I can actually be sacked on the spot because Catholic schools are exempt from discrimination based on religious beliefs and practices. (Int. N)

This particular participant was aware that by addressing concepts of diverse sexualities he/she could lose their professional appointment. As a result, some teachers avoided responding to diverse sexualities altogether. Not only were some Catholic school teachers concerned about their jobs in which schools are exempt from the Anti-discrimination Act but some were concerned in a variety of contexts.

5.2.2 Professionally unsupported

Teachers avoided addressing concepts of sexual diversities due to concerns about being professionally unsupported and potential professional ramifications. This was evident in teachers' accounts of their experiences, a potential influence of the leadership of the school and influence of institutional culture. This participant describes how the role of the principal impacts on the decision to avoid addressing concepts of sexual diversities.

I definitely feel our admin team at our previous school very much saw the need. It was a very low socio-economic school... we had already started, the teachers were training in that program and that was very much supported... I think very much the principal at this school um, doesn't want us doing it. (Int. B)

He just still had the dress on... I don't think (pause), well, for the actual event (the school play), it would've been because, it wouldn't have been, like I said before, it wouldn't have been accepted, like the principal wouldn't have let that happen in the school. (Int. I)

Addressing diverse sexualities is avoided by teachers when they feel they are unsupported in their professional capacity. One participant expressed concern for her/his physical and emotional safety:

Um, well being gay myself, it's hard to come into an environment like this because I'm not open with the kids well they don't know that I'm in a homosexual relationship or anything like that so when discussions like that come up it's a bit too close to home where I should feel comfortable to talk about (my partner) and you know... It's that fear factor from the parents, the socio-economic area, the clientele at this school oh, threats, bashed, name calling. (Int. R)

Some participants shared their sexual orientation during the interviews. Homosexual, lesbian and heterosexual sexual orientations were revealed. The need for teachers to do this highlights the complexities of how diverse sexualities are un/mis/represented in the primary school context. Their experiences, due to their personal circumstances, presented more complex issues.

So, I myself am gay but I'm not allowed to be gay which I think in itself is a hindrance because I just think of how many, if you were allowed to be open in the education department, whether it be state school or a Catholic organisation, it would actually make it normal. Because at the moment it's hidden but all the kids know cause an ex-student told them so they all keep insinuating oh well (participant name) is a lesbian, but I'm not allowed to acknowledge and go well yeah I am and I think that's what they're waiting for, they're waiting for clarification. Well she is and you know just get on with it and we'll all become normal. (Int. O)

One participant had different responses to diverse sexualities when different leadership became involved. One response was to avoid sharing anything about her/his personal life due to the opinion of a leadership member and when the leadership changed, the participant's response changed. Although not directly related to a pedagogical decision, the culture of the school to accept/not accept the participant as an individual impacted on his/her pedagogical decisions.

I didn't say anything cause that was the comment that was made... she was watching Big Brother (reality TV show) and the gay person on Big Brother, I can't remember who the gay person was but, she was like, well isn't he just a little princess, we'll all be judged when we get to the gates of heaven. And I said, we all will be won't we and yeah, I was quite angry and upset and then yeah, (name of previous principal) and her are all friends and they all...

No, no, I just left it and went on my way and then when (name of current principal) came along and um, things happened at home and I had to explain to her what was going on and why it was happening and she couldn't care less, do you know what I mean... I thought, it's fine, it's just a normal, it's just a relationship, just your partner coming to the Christmas party so I felt quite comfortable doing that and bringing him along. (Int. R)

The real or perceived school culture regarding diverse sexualities impacts on teachers' pedagogical decisions. Teachers' concerns about professional support from leadership within schools impacts on teachers' pedagogical decisions to avoid concepts of diverse sexualities.

5.2.3 Homophobic expressions equal bullying

A pedagogical response to homophobic expressions was avoided by teachers. Teachers felt the name calling was potentially problematic due to the perceived connection between diverse sexualities and the use of terms such as ‘gay’, ‘homo’ or ‘faggot’. The use of the terms was treated as bullying; teachers avoided the ‘sexuality’ component.

We don’t accept name calling and that you know, so it was dealt with under the bullying framework... It wasn’t singled out as something you know, um, homophobic behaviour or anything like that it was just always dealt with as part of the bullying framework. (Int. E)

Um, yeah, the term gay is used on a daily basis, you know, that’s gay or, I like to turn it around and go, what’s so happy about it? Why do you find that so happy little one?... Yeah, and then they have to justify themselves, I ask them why it’s so happy. And most often the term gay is associated with stupid. You know, it’s gay, no it’s not, it’s not that happy, I can’t see how a table can be happy, it’s an inanimate object, no you know what I mean, no I don’t know what you mean, explain it to me. If you’re big enough to say it, you’re big enough to explain what it means but I think it’s just you know, more often than not, they’re just like whatever. And move away from it, it’s not that they’re intentionally being vindictive or using it, it’s just that they’ve heard it so often, wherever, that it’s just a you know, an understood term... Yep, they don’t even know, it’s not even processed in that manner. **They don’t even intentionally use it, I’m sure it’s just that they’ve said it so many times around their mates that it’s lost all meaning...** (Int. L)

If the participant viewed the students as making no connection between the homophobic expressions and ‘sexuality’, the pedagogical response was avoidance. Even though the teacher acknowledges the potential problem, it was avoided. Unlike Category 1 where teachers viewed the use of term ‘gay’ as not problematic and not important, Category 2 reveals teachers acknowledging the problematic aspect of name calling but not the underlying issue of ‘gay’ being synonymous with ‘stupid’.

One participant made no connection between students using the term ‘gay’ and any derogatory meaning. Responding to the question, “Have you dealt with students,

for example, saying ‘that’s so gay’ or something of the like?’” the teacher associated the homophobic name calling and Aboriginal terminology:

Cause I don’t think they’re being mean to anybody by saying that cause I don’t think that’s their intention so I wouldn’t make it into a big issue when it’s not for them... Because I don’t know that (pause), well I just, maybe I’d feel that I’d be making a mountain out of a mole hill. You know, do they really know what they are saying by saying it? Nut, I wouldn’t... So when I hear kids like that (name calling using the word 'gay') I probably think they’re not doing anything derogatory so... Well I’ve just been doing a whole unit, we’ve been doing this unit on Aborigines and um, on the stolen generation and national sorry day sort of stuff and um... we were nervous about doing with such little children and whether it was a bit too much... And you have to be so careful about how you say everything and really it’s the same, I guess I should be thinking it’s the same, you know, if I use Aboriginal terminologies and how you know, what you say, and I suppose for a person who (pause) is gay, they would be thinking the same thing but (pause), gay was a word, long before they were gay. I don’t think of it as, I don’t think of it as derogatory, I don’t. (Int. I)

Even though the teacher acknowledges the potentially problem laden terminology, ‘gay’, and aligns the potential deficit with another minority group (Aboriginal Australians), potentially viewed as problematic also, she/he decides to deny the intended purpose of name calling to offend and avoid addressing the diverse sexualities aspect or the behaviour. On the other hand, one participant acknowledges the potential problem of the terminology the students are using and the link to diverse sexualities but avoids addressing this problem with the students.

I had two boys in my class whose mother was a lesbian and had a lesbian partner... And at that age, the kids thought that that was fantastic, having two mums, that didn’t make a connection that that’s what that meant but yet could say comments about oh gay people, it’s wrong to be gay but not realising that that’s what... the people they’d just praised for having two mums, that’s what that meant... Well, I didn’t really, **I just giggled because it’s cute**. Like seeing that they don’t necessarily see that two girls together as a gay couple but yet they have these negative comments obviously from other adults that have said that that’s wrong, but clearly it’s not. (Int O)

Another participant didn't make a connection between name calling using homophobic expressions and sexuality and addressed the bullying but avoided the connection to diverse sexualities.

You know, I've got heaps of gay couple friends, men and women, who want to get married and can't... Well I don't know because I don't take it as a hit on gay men and women, I take it as bullying is not ok, I don't care what you say. I don't sort of have any thoughts either way on like I don't sort of go "you shouldn't be saying that, that's wrong that they're not gay". I don't think of it like that, I think of it from the bullying perspective... Yeah, I guess so, rather than the gay issue. (Int. C)

In some instances, teachers responded by not responding. Some participants linked the concept of diverse sexualities with some kind of problem but avoided addressing the issue as bullying altogether.

I think especially young boys that age are very worried about appearing to be gay and so they start being over the top, 'oh no, get away from me, don't touch me'. They were very much like that with him. They didn't want him in their group or him around them because that they don't want people to think certain things about them, and yeah and them excluding him maybe targeted him a little bit more. Maybe he stands out more to us. Um, oh, I don't know, I don't know if it ever became an issue that we had to respond to. It wasn't a teasing thing, it wasn't a bullying thing. It just became he had his own little group and others had their group and they had different interests and yeah, it didn't need to be something I had to address so much. (Int. D)

Here, the teacher acknowledges that boys are concerned about 'appearing' gay and specifically targeted a student who 'appeared' gay to exclude him in case of any association of 'gayness'. The teacher denied this as teasing or bullying and avoided addressing diverse sexualities. Similarly, if the perceived LGBTI student didn't acknowledge a problem with the teacher, the teacher avoided a pedagogical response directly related to diverse sexualities.

You know, and it's um you know sort of as he went through school you sort of saw him get older and the boys that had always been you know friends with him, you know his core group of mates, always were his little group of mates

but you could see the sort of non-core group sort of change and their attitude to him become less and less accepting and the teasing sort of started and the bullying happened um, yeah... Well he never, I don't know, he just, I think, (pause) he didn't want to seem to be dobbing... I don't know, some kids just don't want to, they just want an easy life, they just wanna, they just think oh look I can take it or I don't want to report it... I think he worked it out? He lived in mining town. I think he worked it out... I think so, and I think he just kind of, he was the kind of kid anyway that did anything for a quiet life. You know, just wanted, you know he didn't want to be the centre of attention other than when he was with his group of friends and was being terribly flamboyant. Um, but he didn't want to, he, he, he didn't want to provoke anyone and he didn't want to engage in a fight, he just wanted to be, I think. (Int. E)

This excerpt illustrates the tensions for teachers to respond to diverse sexualities. The teacher acknowledges the bullying but justifies the non-response as supporting the inferred, unwarranted perception that the student wanted to be left alone. Teachers avoided addressing homophobic expressions as it appears some teachers felt addressing the bullying was a 'safer' option.

5.2.4 Reinforcing negativity

Participants expressed worry about reinforcing negativity by addressing homophobic bullying. Teachers acknowledge the problematic nature of diverse sexualities as homophobic bullying and are conscientious about reinforcing negative perceptions of diverse sexualities; they choose to avoid addressing diverse sexualities altogether.

I think the language has morphed. Um, I can see how homosexuals could be offended by it but I don't think they're using it, the kids who I teach. They're not using it; they're not equating it to homosexual. Um, and I think sometimes if we make a point of it then we're attaching that tag 'homosexual' equals something that's bad. Um... are we just reinforcing the use of gay as a negative term, are we just preaching that? (Int. F)

Asking these kinds of questions suggests teachers are grappling with the idea that there is attachment between the use of homophobic expressions and prejudice towards LGBTI people. It appears by not addressing the problematic, derogatory use

of the terminology referring to LGBTI people, teachers feel they are not reinforcing homophobic bullying.

5.2.5 Dimensions of variation: Category 2

The dimensions of variation in Category 2 illustrate the individual, community and cultural aspects of diverse sexualities discerned in the context of the external horizon of diverse sexualities as problematic. The internal horizon of Category 2 involves teachers' concern with professional repercussions, being unsupported and issues derived from addressing bullying. Referential and structural elements of teachers' conceptions of diverse sexualities in Category 2 are represented within the developing structure of awareness.

Teachers' accounts of their experiences reveal that some individuals believe diverse sexualities are problematic, some of the participants perceive their role as teacher as not being responsible or not being able to respond to diverse sexualities. Personal teacher experiences influence how teachers respond to diverse sexualities. Some responses were influenced by the teachers' personal relationship with LGBTI friends and family. These responses suggested normalising diverse sexualities in their personal lives impacted on their decision to avoid responding to diverse sexualities, including homophobic epithets, in the primary school context. It is not conceived as a big issue. This might suggest tension between a personal belief of normalisation of diverse sexualities and their decision not to respond to diverse sexualities within the school context.

Some teachers believe it is not the teachers' role to address homophobic comments or engage in inclusive sex education; "It's not our role to defend homosexuals' lifestyle or anyone's lifestyle, that's their job." (Int. H). Addressing issues such as homophobic comments were seen as 'safe' to address as 'bullying and harassment' opposed to addressing the homophobic comment/s. Some teachers view the role of the teacher to encourage broader social values such as tolerance. The teacher brings their own beliefs about what a teacher should be and do to the role and this personal belief is a foregrounding influence of teachers' motivation for responding or in this case, not responding. As teachers' awareness widens the influence of school culture impacts on their decisions in how they respond to diverse sexualities.

Teachers shared experiences where **school culture** has promoted diverse sexualities as problematic. For example, the principal may have denied teachers the responsibility and role to implement sex education or denied the presence of students with diverse gender/sexuality identities. The teachers presented these scenarios with both positive and/or negative feelings about the level of support depending on their own personal values. This suggests a building tension between personal teacher beliefs and perceived role of the teacher within the school based context. These types of responses indicate tension between personal beliefs of normalisation of diverse sexualities of the teacher, growing tension of school based expectations and fear of wider social and cultural beliefs and expectations regarding the role of the teacher.

Wider social and cultural practices and beliefs influence both school culture and individual teacher beliefs thus adding to the tension felt by teachers when responding to diverse sexualities in the primary school. Topics such as religion, childhood innocence and National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) have an impact on the culture of the school and the teachers' conceptions. Teachers shared experiences in which their own personal beliefs were to support students and be inclusive of diverse sexualities however, religious lore impacted significantly on the way in which the teachers responded, even with support from leadership of the school to be 'inclusive'. Cultural beliefs around childhood innocence impact on teachers' decision to respond or not to respond to homophobic bullying or questions about sexualities from students. Some teachers expressed schools need to focus on teaching literacy and numeracy opposed to inclusive sex education. This suggests tension between a high profile government focus on NAPLAN testing and the need to address social issues. The move towards improving literacy and numeracy puts pressure on teachers to avoid addressing social issues in schools such as homophobia or inclusive sex education.

Socio-cultural beliefs are reflected in school contexts and in personal teachers' beliefs. Because there is a continuum of beliefs and expectations around the term diverse sexualities and inclusive sex education in primary schools, teachers are experiencing tension and confusion about how they could or should respond.

Summary of Category 2

Category 1 revealed a pedagogical response that was nonchalant about diverse sexualities. Category 2 describes teachers' pedagogical responses as avoiding diverse sexualities. The participants were aware that concepts of diverse sexualities in the primary school context are problematic. The qualitative features of Category 2 reveal that teachers appear to be grappling with a number of concepts relating to diverse sexualities such as being fearful of potential professional impacts, worrying about losing their jobs or afraid of being hurt by others. The administrative support, or lack of, influences teachers' choices. Responding to students who are involved with homophobic bullying is an ongoing scenario experienced by participants. Teachers avoided responding to the diverse sexuality issues attached to homophobic expressions due to perceptions of potentially perpetuating negativity, the disassociation of diverse sexualities or the denial of homophobia and reference to bullying. Category 3 reveals teachers' pedagogical responses as being unsure about what to do.

5.3 Category of Description 3: Teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses as being uncertain about responding to concepts of diverse sexualities

Category 3 describes teachers' conceptions as being uncertain about responding to concepts of diverse sexualities in the primary school context. Table 5.3 provides a summary of the referential and the structural aspects. The dimensions of variation describe the expanding awareness of the teachers' conceptions of their experiences.

Table 5.3

Pedagogical responses as being uncertain

Phenomenographic features	Evidence
<p>Referential aspect</p> <p>Teachers were unsure about what to do, how to respond to diverse sexualities. They responded with a lack of confidence and confusion.</p>	<p>“They tell each other, you’re a lesbian, you’re a homo..I think I just responded that way because I was a prac teacher and I didn’t know the protocol around what I was and wasn’t allowed to say them...” (Int. K)</p>
<p>Structural elements</p> <p><i>Internal horizon:</i> Teachers respond by being uncertain</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous experiences cause uncertainty • Professional role and responsibilities are unclear • Lack of training influences uncertainty • Teacher self-reflection on uncertainty 	<p>“I mean we talk about different colours and different nationalities and race and everything and can we mention, yeah, that there are lesbian couples...” (Int. A)</p> <p>“I think that’s the policy. God I hope that is.” (Int. E)</p> <p>“Cause there’s nothing written, there’s nothing, you’re not given, you go to university... the tiniest bit delves into sexuality and kids but that’s about it, there’s nothing because there’s nothing out there.” (Int. G)</p> <p>“You make me feel like a baddy now... I’m not prepared to do anything about this?” (Int. I)</p>
<p><i>External horizon:</i> Diverse sexualities are an unknown.</p>	
<p>Dimensions of Variation</p> <p>DoV1: Teacher belief: diverse sexualities breeds uncertainty</p> <p>DoV2: School/Institutional culture: unclear policy and procedures</p> <p>DoV3: Socio-cultural influences: pressure from governments, religions and other socio-cultural ‘problems’</p>	

Category 3 describes teachers' pedagogical conceptions as being uncertain about how to respond to concepts of diverse sexualities in the primary school context. Table 5.3 describes the referential aspects of teachers' pedagogical decisions as being uncertain.

The **structural aspect** of Category 3 is revealed in relation to the internal and external horizon. The **internal horizon** describes the foreground of the category and the distinct features of the category that separate categories. The **external horizon** as an area of awareness forms the context in which the theme sits.

The distinct features of Category 3 reveal that teachers rely on a number of professional resources to support their pedagogical decisions to curriculum, school/departmental policies and procedures, code of conduct, pre-service/professional training, and available expertise. Teachers feel uncertain about how they are expected to respond and they are relying on their own personal values. Limited resources are available for teachers to guide their pedagogical responses to concepts of diverse sexualities. The following discussion describes teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses as being uncertain.

5.3.1 Previous experiences cause uncertainty

Participants reflected on their pedagogical responses as being unsure about responding to diverse sexualities by associating experiences with how they respond to 'other' socio-cultural concepts such as 'race'.

I suppose you're always very hesitant to know whether you can refer, I mean we talk about different colours and different nationalities and race and everything and can we mention, yeah, that there are lesbian couples and men couples and yeah... (Int. A)

Referring to the teacher's previous experiences in responding to cultural diversity, the teacher questioned the potential pedagogical relationship with responding to diverse sexualities.

The following participant relied on personal experience with his/her own children to explain his/her conception of the uncertainty about responding to students who raise questions about sexuality or tease each other with homophobic expressions.

More from a bullying point of view rather than anything else um, and, yeah it's like, it's not necessary, it's unfounded and yeah, it's yeah, rather than, cause I don't have any affiliation with anyone's sexuality you know and I don't sort of push that either cause they're only twelve and do they really understand what it means and what is so bad about it if they are anyway, do you know what I mean? **You know, I don't know...** I don't think they're too young, I just think that they don't really understand what they're saying. They're just doing it to tease each other, they don't really understand the full you know, things behind it... Um, ok so, as in, exposing kids to things that, like, do they, **ok where am I trying to go with this?** So I don't give kids more information than they need. Especially, like there's a fine line between what they need to know and what they already know and you don't want to give them information that they don't know about or that they're not ready for yet. Not that I think they're not ready for it but just you know, like any form of sexuality, if they ask you a question, **I've got my kids and they'll ask me a question and I'll go off this tangent about the birds and the bees and they'll be like, "that's not what I was talking about."** And you give them too much information so I'm weary of giving the children too much information where it's not needed... Where they were just teasing them, they didn't mean to call them gay cause they just thought they were gay, they just, you know... obviously think that it's not ok to be gay so if the kids are thinking, it's not ok to be ok, it's not cool or it's not normal to be gay so therefore we're gonna tease you about it... **I just, how do I decide? I don't know,** you just sort of, you just um, just trying to think of an example. Um, like I give them a basic rounded explanation you know, you know. Are they dating someone from the same sex rather than specific information... **I don't know.** (Int. C)

The participant is uncertain about how to respond. They are concerned about notions of childhood innocence and the need to address teasing. These ideas illustrate a lack of confidence in the teacher's response. The following participant revealed a complete reliance on her own previous experiences and an apparent 'confession' of not knowing 'what else to do.'

Yeah, I think so, but not, I don't say it was a totally conscious...and it was a saying at the time, that everything was gay, that was a sort of, but I just thought,

they're not going to be tolerant adults... I'm kind of making a judgement, I thought this is the beginning of (pause) you know, each group, the children involved were going to always have issues you know with um, their place in the world you know, and they weren't going to be um, highly successful academically at all. I thought you're going to fit into that little part of society where it will be a real gay bashing I feel... And at the time you thought, what could I do to make this better and **I couldn't come up with anything apart from sort of saying that's silly**, think of a better word, there must be another descriptive word (laugh) you could come up with... I mean I was having behaviour issues with them anyway... Well I must admit I didn't put a lot of thought, I had a lot of things to do at the time... And as I said, they were behaviour problems anyway so that didn't figure um, highly, it was just annoying at the time but **I didn't know what else to do...** You know, I wasn't um, no, **I didn't have a clue really a part from pointing out that it wasn't appropriate** etc. (Int. H)

Participants relied on their personal experiences to guide their responses but also questioned their professional role and responsibilities.

5.3.2 Professional role and responsibilities are unclear

Teachers are informed by their employers' policies and procedures, curriculum and guidelines. Participants revealed some uncertainty about their confidence in their own responsibility as professionals to know and understand employer expectations regarding diverse sexualities but also uncertainty about the employers actual or perceived expectations.

You know how kids say, oh you're so gay, I'm like well do you know what that means or you know so if I was going to have that conversation I would probably go to admin and say you know, what am I allowed to, what would you suggest that I say in this conversation or how would I word it or how would you support me in saying you know? (Int. S)

... **Because I don't know if it is my right?** If I was an RE [Religious Education] teacher and if it was an RE class and I was directed to by my employer to run that session, I would. I would research it, I would get the props

that I needed and I would do it so um but without that backing from my employer I think that there might be a line being crossed. (Int. P)

I think, in terms of, look I honestly couldn't tell you word for word and I'm sure I was supposed to have read and cited and signed the policy at one point in time or another but I think the policy is, like a no discrimination stance. They have no discrimination stance and um, I think, I think it then goes back into well if there is discrimination on the basis of sexuality then it becomes like a bullying no way issue... **I think that's the policy. God I hope that is.** (Int. E)

Looking for support from administrators, curriculum and or policy documents suggests teachers are uncertain about how to respond to diverse sexualities with respect to their professional responsibilities. The following excerpt indicates that the teacher relies on both personal experiences/beliefs and his/her employers' expectations.

Yep, yeah I think you need to be very careful because it's like religion, it's not my place to tell you if you're right or wrong, you have your own beliefs but, I can certainly put my own spin on things and provide both perspectives and then you can make your own decision from there especially in the public system that everything has to remain neutral because it's not my position to enforce my beliefs on you or anything like that... **Um, I think the department would, no, I don't think the department would want me to do anything to do with sexuality.** I don't think they'd want me to even speak of it... Well, I think that the department as far as family planning goes is all that we're required to touch on and even so it's not something that I specifically touch on you know, outside agencies are brought in to do that and you know... But um, I don't think the department would appreciate me going forth and you know, telling the world that everybody should be straight or everybody should be gay or everybody should wear pink pants on Thursday... They would still want me to follow their procedures and the code of conduct and anything that I did say would probably breach the code of conduct anyway. (Int. L)

This participant appears to have conflicting conceptions about how he/she responds to diverse sexuality commenting he/she would make her own decision and "put [her/his] own spin on things" yet commenting that the public system "has to remain

neutral”. Teachers are confused about how to manage their personal beliefs and employer expectations. Participants reveal that they are uncertain about employer expectations, policies and or procedures regarding diverse sexualities.

5.3.3 Lack of training influences uncertainty

Teacher uncertainty when responding to concepts of diverse sexualities may be influenced by a lack of training. One teacher reflects on his/her lack of training to support professional decisions when responding to diverse sexualities.

Ok where are you (student) going with this because a lot of the time I, because there’s nothing really, I hadn’t really researched anything, I was just going on gut feeling... I’ve experienced that confusion as a young person myself but then coming back and having a professional hat on, so to speak, and having to think right, how am I going to attack this? Cause there’s nothing written, there’s nothing, you’re not given, you go to university and you’re taught yes there is a little bit, the minute, the tiniest bit delves into sexuality and kids but that’s about it, there’s nothing because there’s nothing out there, you’ve got to search for information yourself... In terms of just um, how much information is too much information?... and I thought, crap, should I’ve said that or do I just... Well, it’s unfortunate you know, I can’t pull him aside to point it out but we can certainly talk to him about what’s appropriate (sigh)... I guess I’m still gathering information (laugh). (Int. G)

The teacher was relying on her/his own personal experiences as a young person and building empathy into her/his response. She/he highlights the desire for professional and or pre-service training opposed to “going on gut feeling”. The conflict between personal experiences, professional training needs and resources available inspires an uncertain response by this teacher when a student discusses his own sexual identity.

5.3.4 Teacher self-reflection on uncertainty

During one interview the participant expressed a reflection on his/her pedagogical responses as being uncertain about how he/she felt. Even though she/he made a final decision to avoid addressing sexual diversity, this excerpt demonstrates

the internal dialogue of one teacher's uncertainty about how to respond to diverse sexualities.

You make me feel like maybe I'm a baddy now... I'm not prepared to do anything about this? Oh I don't, I suppose I'm wondering gee, should I have, am I supposed to have done something about this? Nut, I still wouldn't do anything. Mmm... but I, but I thought, but now I think I don't (pause) yeah; I don't see it as a big issue. (Int. I)

Even though the participant 'decided' how they felt, the excerpt demonstrates an example of the uncertainty in teachers' thought patterns when making pedagogical decisions.

5.3.5 Dimensions of variation: Category 3

The dimensions of variation in Category 3 illustrate the personal beliefs of teachers, school communities and cultural aspects of diverse sexualities discerned in the context of the external horizon of diverse sexuality as an unknown. Teachers are uncertain about how to respond. The internal horizon of Category 3 includes teachers' conceptions as relying on previous experiences, being unclear about their professional roles and responsibilities and not being trained. Referential and structural elements of teachers' conceptions of diverse sexualities in Category 3 are represented within the developing structure of awareness.

Teachers' accounts of their conceptions reveal that some believe that addressing diverse sexualities is potentially problematic; they acknowledge that there is a need to address diverse sexualities and they believe it is important to be inclusive of diverse sexualities but they are uncertain about how to respond. The belief of some teachers is that concepts of diverse sexualities are not without their complexity; that there is potential for 'danger'. They acknowledge that they don't agree with homophobia or homophobic bullying and that this is not acceptable for them in their workplace. They believe in equality and inclusion of diverse sexuality concepts in the primary school but they do not know how they 'should' respond. Teachers are unsure about their responsibilities within their role as teacher and how to negotiate their personal beliefs within the context of their workplace.

School and institutional influences contribute to building tension between teacher personal beliefs to acknowledge diverse sexualities and their uncertainty as to how to respond in their professional capacity. Schools and educational institutions in Queensland have no clear stance on inclusion of diverse sexualities in primary schools other than perhaps the Catholic institution which is very clear about not endorsing diverse sexualities. However, curriculum, policy documents and training opportunities are non-existent in terms of supporting teachers to respond to diverse sexualities either formally or informally. Teachers are unaware of any existing policy or resources other than the anti-discrimination act. Government policies and wider social practices add to the uncertainty of teachers about their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities.

Pressures from **wider social and cultural** expectations make teachers unsure about how they should or could respond to anything regarding diverse sexualities. For example, racism has been ‘dealt with’ in a certain way in schools and teachers are referring to this as a potential ‘guide’ for dealing with ‘other’ social equity or diversity issues such as diverse sexualities. The research conducted by Lingard (2014) and colleagues on productive pedagogies reveals teachers in Queensland in the late 1990s were afraid of multi-cultural social justice education. Teachers were found to be highly supportive of students in need but were limited regarding ‘working with and valuing difference’ in particular, racism (Lingard, 2014). Popular media is more and more inclusive of diverse sexualities with movies and television shows being inclusive of characters with diverse sexualities. Government policies are becoming more inclusive of diverse sexualities and there is public debate about religion and diverse sexualities and marriage equality. Even though this movement towards equity for LGBTI people is becoming more apparent, it is clear that parts of the wider community oppose this visibility of diverse sexualities. The influence of these conflicting messages in wider social and cultural practices influences both the school and teacher contributing to the uncertainty as to how the teacher should or could respond to diverse sexualities.

Summary Category 3

Teachers’ uncertainty when deciding how to respond to diverse sexualities is revealed in Category 3. Teachers’ conceptions reveal teachers respond as uncertain because of their previous experiences, the lack of clarity of the role and

responsibilities of the teacher and the lack of training provided regarding diverse sexualities. Category 3 describes teachers' pedagogical responses as being uncertain.

5.4 Category of Description 4: Teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses as maintaining home and school boundaries

Category 4 describes teachers' conceptions as maintaining home and school boundaries and defining roles and responsibilities regarding diverse sexualities.

Table 5.4 *Pedagogical responses as maintaining home and school boundaries*

Phenomenographic features	Evidence
<p>Referential aspect</p> <p>Teachers' conceptions involve the consideration of pressures from parents' needs and wants, both actual and perceived, and teachers' own feelings/beliefs about their role and responsibilities when responding to diverse sexualities.</p>	<p>"But then I thought... what can I say about this, what are you alright with me, what will you support me saying but it just kind of came up and I was like, just deal with a little bit but not enough that your parents, not enough that you're gonna go home and say today, Miss (name) said it's alright for me to like men... I'm just thinking I don't want to rock the boat." (Int. S)</p>
<p>Structural elements</p> <p><i>Internal horizon:</i> Teachers respond by maintaining home and school boundaries that define responsibilities for appropriate student knowledge about diverse sexualities.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to parents' needs and wants • Perceived or actual non-support from parents to respond to sexual diversity • Maintaining parents' rights to privacy • Maintaining teacher integrity: staying out of trouble • Maintaining the responsibility of responding to diverse sexualities 	<p>"I'm not the parent and you don't know what their expectations are or what they've told them or discussed or if they want that child to know about those types of things, so." (Int. R)</p> <p>"...the community we work in, yeah I mean some of them are very narrow minded..." (Int. A)</p> <p>"The school has a very strong policy on risk management of privacy of parents." (Int. N)</p> <p>"...you have to be cautious of so you don't step on parents' toes and feelings so you don't get in trouble..." (Int. C)</p> <p>"I didn't want to get into what gay meant because I don't feel as a teacher that's my role to really say that..." (Int. A)</p>
<p><i>External horizon:</i> Diverse sexualities have boundaries.</p>	
<p>Dimensions of Variation</p> <p>DoV1: Teacher belief: maintain home and school boundaries</p> <p>DoV2: School/Institutional culture: negotiating 'appropriate' curriculum</p> <p>DoV3: Socio-cultural influences: community has influence over 'appropriate' diverse education</p>	

Category 4 describes teachers' conceptions as maintaining home and school boundaries when responding to formal or informal pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities. Table 5.4 describes the referential aspect of teachers' pedagogical responses maintaining institutional and community boundaries.

The **structural aspect** of Category 4 is revealed in relation to the internal and external horizon. The **internal horizon** describes the foreground of the category and the distinct features of the category that separate categories. The **external horizon** as an area of awareness forms the context in which the theme sits. The qualitatively distinct features of Category 4 reveal teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to concepts of diverse sexuality:

- maintaining parents' needs and wants
- perceived or actual non-support from parents to respond to sexual diversity
- maintaining parents' rights to privacy
- maintaining teacher integrity by staying out of trouble and
- maintaining the responsibility of responding to diverse sexualities.

As uncovered in the following discussion, the conceptions of teachers' pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities are to maintain home and school boundaries.

5.4.1 Maintaining parents' needs and wants

Maintaining parents' needs and wants is paramount to some teachers' decisions when responding to diverse sexualities. A participant describes her/his personal views about responding to diverse sexualities and how her/his view on parents impacts on her/his pedagogical decision making.

Cause it's in everyday you know, world, it's part of my world so it's nothing to me and it should be nothing to them, you know what I mean, you are who you are, it should be nothing to them. You're your own individual and it doesn't matter so I see it in a positive light and that's how I'll start talking about it. I'll do it to an extent but then yeah... Extent means I'll only go so far, I'll go so far until I have to stop... I mean that as a teacher I'll only go so far because you don't know what their parents, because I'm not the parent and you don't know what

their expectations are or what they've told them or discussed or if they want that child to know about those types of things, so. (Int. R)

The teacher maintains parents' unknown wishes over and above their own personal beliefs about responding to sexual diversities. On the other hand, one teacher totally disregards parental input and maintains the pedagogical professional decision to respond to diverse sexualities in formal educational sense as he/she sees fit.

Yes, I've organised for my employer to purchase a copy and when I hand out parental permission for them to watch, it's a PG rated DVD, um I give them also a link so parents can access to see what's about. So if they have any reservations about viewing, or their child viewing this particular resource they can agree for their child not to be present or for their child not to be exposed to that content... Um not so much diverse sexuality. So, but I think, I add that as an adjunct basically... It's not something that I, it's not a focus of my lesson but it is mentioned and I think it's important to mention that, maybe I'm negligent or remiss to mention it to parents but not, I don't think substantial conversations are made at home or I don't know, but I think children should be aware that there are other, (pause) people have relationships that are not heterosexual... Not negligent, yes ok, I said the word negligent (pause-sigh)... (Int. F)

The participant uses the word 'negligent' to refer to his/her perceived responsibility to gain permission by parents to explore diverse sexualities within a formal educational context such as health education. It appears that regardless of parental wishes, students are at the mercy of teachers to make pedagogical decisions about diverse sexualities, good or bad.

5.4.2 Perceived or actual non-support from parents to respond to sexual diversity

Participants are influenced by a sense of community and school culture. Parents' views on diverse sexualities are 'judged' by teachers and their perception of parents' beliefs, this influences their pedagogical decisions.

I suppose in our, the community we work in, yeah I mean some of them are very narrow minded and you're just I'm always as a classroom teacher very wary of the conversations I do have with children and the conversations I need to stop

and not continue as much as you would like to find out more information. Sometimes you're on the burning end of you know, this was said and explain to me why. (Inter A)

I think that would be hard mainly because of the parents, not the kids, the parents. That's, I think that's my, probably why I would have reservations bringing it up. It's not because of the kids, it's the parents. The kids are quite open-minded and the kids are quite open to these ideas and they'll ask you questions. Their questions are honest and their questions are because genuinely they want to know the answers. (Int. E)

Yeah (pause), I guess some of it could be a reaction to comments from home. I'd say home possibly more so than teachers cause teachers tend to be a bit careful about saying things that could be (pause) offensive or it could be you know, make other kids have reason to ostracise another child. Some parents, in my experience, say things to their own children really I would consider inappropriate. You know, they can be, probably without meaning to, make comments that could be quite hurtful. Well things like saying, boys don't play with those sort of things, you know boys don't play with dolls or dress ups (pause), I don't want to see any son of mine doing, doing that or wearing that or those sort of comments. (Int. M)

Yes, I had to contact parents and again I think that's exactly what I uncovered, that at home it was perfectly acceptable to speak to people in these ways and it was perfectly acceptable to label and use sexual terms to label people... It was difficult, a very difficult conversation because you start to tap into the parents beliefs and the parents start to become defensive about their parenting and I think it just really, I just sat there and looked at this father and thought, you are quite an ill-informed human being and not a terribly enlightened human being... (Int. N)

It should be normal for them, it really should, it's like the Facebook page that says, it was very hard for me today as I had to explain to my little child, um they asked why does uncle (participant's partner) go everywhere with uncle (participant) and they said oh um, it was very hard to explain to my child that they were in a relationship just like mummy and daddy and then it says, then the

kid says, oh righto, no worries, can I have a biscuit? And like, just moved on and it should be like that, it so should be like that... It would be nice but I don't know what to do, I don't know what to do to get around that... I don't think, honestly I don't think it would, it's more so the parents. I don't think these kids would have an issue with it. Um some parents, yeah. (Int. R)

Teachers are influenced by parents' actual and or perceived beliefs and views about sexual diversity. It appears that teachers make judgements about parent community without evidence or reason. Their pedagogical responses are guided by parents' wishes, views, beliefs and actions, actual or perceived. Some participants describe their responses as considering parental perspectives on diverse sexualities including parents' rights to privacy.

5.4.3 Maintaining parents' rights to privacy

One participant described his/her pedagogical response to diverse sexualities as adhering to school policy on protecting the privacy rights of parents and students.

The school has a very strong policy on risk management of privacy of parents and students and like there are so many protocols around what I can tell people and what I can't tell people about kids and situations and it does that because it's very much into risk managing and they don't want to have litigation so they are very, very careful about privacy... They're involved in the school like um, you know, there's one parent in a same-sex relationship and both of them women are very involved in the school but the thing is the kids are quite accepting of it and I think you know that there's never been an issue raised by the parents about the situation and the teachers just treat them as respectful as they can to the women and it's not a problem. It's just done very carefully and very privately but they are involved in the school. (Int. N)

Teachers' pedagogical decisions have been influenced by parents' perceived 'rights to privacy'. Some participants were guided by maintaining parents' perspectives but also, staying out of trouble with parents and or the school administration or the wider community. This influenced teachers' pedagogical decisions responding to diverse sexualities.

5.4.4 Maintaining teacher integrity: staying out of trouble

Teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities were described as adhering to employer policies, again actual or perceived, and 'staying out of trouble'.

And then if they you know, want to know more, talk to their parents, certainly not going to condone and say, yes, that's great cause you can't, that's in the code of conduct, you can't push your personal views onto students in whatever format... I guess the maturity level of the students and what they wanted to know and what we felt was important for safety reasons, personal safety reasons, um parents were comfortable with that and you had to have training and I guess the primary teachers, the classroom teacher, haven't had training in that so you know you had to have had some kind of training before you were giving these comments so that there was educational backing to what you were sayings and you had verified sources I guess. (Int. J)

This participant recommended teachers refer students to parents instead of responding directly. The participant's justification was to maintain the integrity of the teacher who was not trained in responding to diverse sexualities. This kind of comment suggests, in order for teachers to feel confident in addressing diverse sexualities, they need training. The teacher also infers that discussing diverse sexualities in a positive manner would be a 'personal view' and a 'code of conduct' issue. The teacher assumes their employer is unsupportive of diverse sexualities in any form within the primary school context. In contrast, the following teacher appeared very confused about maintaining boundaries between home and school with influences such as his/her own personal values, the values of the Catholic school and the values of the parent community. His/her pedagogical response was influenced by the possibility of getting 'into trouble'.

Well, I feel like some parents have different views and I didn't want to, I was just like, this is how it is and it's fine but I felt like some parents might come in and be like well you know it's not alright for you to be saying men love men and that that's an alright thing cause in our household it's not an alright thing so I didn't want to like just say it cause for me I don't want these kids to think it's a shunned thing and for everyone to be like oh gay (whispered), we can't even talk

about that or can't even say that you know. That's such a taboo word and so but then I thought, it's not really my place to like put that view on them you know that hey this is an alright thing and this is just part of the world and that's totally fine and then parents come in and say well we don't think that's fine and that's not what we want you to tell our children... Like if that's what you want to say to your kids and sadly that's what you want to say to your kids (laughs), that's not my place to say you can't tell your kids that... and for people to see that as being normal not just as being your view point. Parents would just see that as being my point of view and thinking that I should just push my point of view onto students whereas it would be nice if was just normal, it's just a normal thing, you were just telling them that it's normal... I didn't want to shun it cause it's a Catholic school but some of them were like (gasp), what you can't say that and I thought well, we're not gonna skirt around it but I'm not going to go into it because it's not really my place in a Catholic school setting... But then I thought, you are tempted to like go in to it but then you think, **am I gonna get myself into strife** and especially because it's so spare of the moment... And (laugh) **I didn't want to be the one to tell them on that particular day and get myself into trouble.** (Int. S)

Several participants expressed a similar concern regarding the maintenance of home and school boundaries with some kind of negative professional repercussions associated with their decision to respond to diverse sexualities.

I'd have parents telling me, "you told my child this and they don't need to know that yet." **I'd just get in trouble because of all the red tape...** Well, you've got to be sensitive to what parents want their children to know... So just, yeah, red tape that you have to be cautious of so you don't step on parents toes and feelings so **you don't get in trouble cause you've crossed the line as well from parents and therefore admin and whatever else...** So you've just got to be careful. (Int. C)

Don't know an awful lot about the code of conduct, I tend not to pay attention, **just keep my nose clean** (laugh)... No, no, no, I think it's still, it's always going to be an issue that's up for debate from people and if you've got a particularly masculine man or father and you're saying that it doesn't matter whether you're gay straight or whatever, that they would come up and say it's not my position

and not my place put forth what my believes, and because children are so, they're like sponges, they'll take in anything, you don't want to have to defend your position so it's. I mean I'll always stand up for what's right and wrong and what's fair and equitable for all but I'm not gonna put my personal opinion across um, as rambunctiously as I'd like to because **it will only get me into trouble.** (Int. L)

But like, I've witnessed, like I witnessed at (another) school, parents don't come and see you, they go to the newspaper... No, it's probably not because **we walk on a lot of eggshells** and we don't, sometimes we don't say what really should probably be said because we're too scared that whatever we say is going to be splashed across the Courier Mail tomorrow morning or is you know Today Tonight is going to be outside the school or you know, especially, if in your class you've got a parent that you know is a bit of a nuts parent, and gets irate at the drop of a hat over everything and anything, **you do change your teaching style because it's just not worth the hassle.** (Int. E)

I didn't want to say the wrong thing and for them to tell mum and dad and **I would've got in trouble in that sense.** (Int. K)

A number of participants were concerned about negative professional repercussions as they described maintaining home and school boundaries. Participants also described their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities as not their responsibility.

5.4.5 Maintaining the responsibility of responding to diverse sexualities: parent versus teacher

Participants describe their role as a teacher as not being responsible for formal or informal pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities, maintaining it is the role of the parent.

But you can't, what am I trying to say? I think I, as a teacher and especially in the lower school, **I can't be the one who brings it up. Because I think that some parents would have an issue with me being the one who brings it up...** (Pause) I think, to me, (pause), it's ok for us to say, cause, I'm not trying to convert anyone, like it's not like I'm trying to you know, you are what you are

and it's just the way you are and it's just going to be the way that it is. But I think there'd be a lot of parents who would feel like we were then trying to and especially if they've got really strong views and they feel like we're trying to you know, change their child's point of view... (Int. E)

Um, I suppose because you wonder if you are overstepping the line with the parent if that's does, is the parent ready for their child to know that? I didn't want to get into what gay meant because **I don't feel as a teacher that's my role to really say that... Well parents as we know what parents are like and how parents feel about what's their rights and responsibilities to tell their children and what to do.** Um, I didn't want to cross any boundaries with his parents and I thought that's their role to or their discussions that they need to have with their son. (Int. A)

Maybe, if they're topics outside of what we said we were going to cover, it's not up to me, it's not my choice as their teacher. It's the choice as the parent to do that. I mean, **I think again, honestly as a teacher I feel like we teach a lot of things and we're parents a lot more times than the actual parents** are and for me, if it was my daughter asking me these questions I'd have no issue in explaining it as best I could for her age um, you know, and as a parent I'm fine with that and some things, you know, **I think is a parent's responsibility not you know, always the teachers responsibility.** (Int. D)

I think, for me as a professional, I have no issue if it is part of the curriculum, if it's part of the curriculum and it's part of what I'm supposed to be teaching them, then awesome, happy to, I'd do it straight away. But I don't want to have a casual conversation with a small group of students that can then be misinterpreted, go home and then the parent says, she said what and then I'm in strife in the office because of something that's been misconstrued. Um, I get it if it is part of the curriculum and it's documented, then I'm happy to do it... Yep and I'm certainly happy to talk to my boys about anything at home, **but that's my role as a parent, not my role as a teacher.** So um, but yeah I do think to a degree, I'm very much a controlled, I'm a helicopter mum, I hover, I do everything to try and help my boys reach every potential they could ever possibly do so I think it's my job as a parent to talk them about sex but then

there's a lot of kids out there who never get that talk **so I guess it is a fuzzy area as to whose job it is.** (Int. P)

This participant considered that there are potential problems with assigning sex education to parents in that some children may 'never get that talk'. Many participants expressed belief that it is not the role of the teacher to respond to diverse sexualities. However, one participant moves away from assigning responsibility to parents to taking on the responsibility themselves as a professional.

I dare say there are parents out there who have particular viewpoints that are very much um who (pause) who are not so, you'd probably say anti-homosexual or that they probably believe that it is a choice or they do believe that it's um not something that they want their children to be exposed to. By not including that I think that children this age need to be made aware. I just feel that there's kids out there who may be having those feelings or maybe having that conflict inside themselves and they might be in these situations where I think the repercussions of these students being placed, the conflict that they must be going through must be terrible compared to a family who's open about speaking about these types of relationships. (Int. F)

Teachers maintain home and school boundaries by grappling with the idea of who has responsibility for responding to diverse sexualities, teacher or parent?

5.4.6 Dimensions of variation: Category 4

The dimensions of variation in Category 4 illustrate the personal beliefs of teachers, school communities and cultural aspects of diverse sexualities discerned in the context of the external horizon: diverse sexualities have boundaries. The internal horizon of Category 4 involves teachers' concern with maintaining home and school boundaries that define responsibilities for appropriate student knowledge about diverse sexualities. Referential and structural elements of teachers' conceptions of diverse sexualities in Category 4 are represented within the developing structure of awareness.

Teachers as **individuals** believe, as revealed by some teachers' accounts of their conceptions, that diverse sexualities have boundaries within and between the home and school. Teachers believe their role is to maintain 'appropriate' boundaries

between their role as teacher and the role of the parent in the home. ‘Appropriate’ is negotiated by the teacher taking into consideration their own personal values and the values espoused by the school and the community/parent expectations.

Teachers believe they can choose to negotiate with parents or not. Teachers’ beliefs could be placed on a continuum of risk. At the high risk end, teachers believe they could be persecuted by parents and/or the media or be ‘in trouble’ with their employer. The extreme of the continuum would be that teachers believe they could lose their jobs for responding to diverse sexualities in an ‘inappropriate’ way. At the low risk end of the continuum, teachers believed they could respond in any way they wished without consequence, without regard for school, institution or parent influence. In the middle of the continuum is a debate about who is responsible for sharing knowledge about diverse sexualities, the teacher or the parent.

Social and cultural beliefs around sexuality and diverse sexualities reinforce the concept of boundaries and appropriateness. **Schools** are bound by institutional policies, government policies, legislation and law and religious beliefs. They are also influenced by parents’ expectations, teacher personal beliefs and the wider community. The growing tension between teachers, schools and the wider community is evident in teachers’ belief that it is their responsibility to maintain home and school boundaries.

Summary of Category 4

Category 4 is defined by teachers describing their pedagogical conceptions as maintaining home and school boundaries. The description is revealed by participants describing their pedagogical responses as: maintaining parents’ needs and wants including the perceived or actual non-support from parents, maintaining parents’ rights to privacy, maintaining their own integrity as teachers by “staying out of trouble” and maintaining the role of the teacher as not being responsible for education regarding diverse sexualities. Category 3 described teachers’ responses as being uncertain. Category 5 describes teachers’ conceptions of their pedagogical responses as protecting students when issues of diverse sexualities arise.

5.5 Category of Description 5: Teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses as protecting all students from issues of sexual diversity

Category 5 describes teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses as responding to ideas about diverse sexualities in a protective manner. Teachers responded by protecting the individual student's safety and by protecting general student well-being. Table 5.5 provides a summary of the referential aspects the structural elements. The dimensions of variation describe the expanding awareness of the teachers' conceptions of their experiences.

Table 5.5 *Pedagogical responses as being protective*

Phenomenographic features	Evidence
<p>Referential aspect</p> <p>Teachers responded to ideas about diverse sexualities in a protective manner. They responded by protecting individual students' safety and by protecting general student well-being.</p>	<p>"I feel it is my job as a teacher to keep all children safe... and it's like, I can't help it, it's just my natural instinct to protect." (Int. O)</p>
<p><i>Structural elements</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting notions of childhood innocence 	<p>"So it is nice for kids to stay innocent for as long as possible." (Int. J)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting the LGBTI Community and or the actual or perceived LGBTI student 	<p>"Probably because I felt protective because I have gay friends and ummm yeah I just didn't want that little boy to label people and not knowing what it meant..." (Int. A)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting all students 	<p>"I think everyone has a right to feel safe." (Int. F)</p>
<p><i>External horizon:</i> Teachers are motivated by a perceived responsibility to be protectors of children.</p>	
<p>Dimensions of Variation</p>	
<p>DoV1</p> <p>Teacher belief: primary responsibility is to protect children</p>	
<p>DoV2</p> <p>School/Institutional culture: 'protecting' notions of childhood innocence</p>	
<p>DoV3</p> <p>Socio-cultural influences: heteronormativity protects children</p>	

Category 5 describes teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses as being protective of students regarding diverse sexualities. Teachers responded by protecting individual students and by protecting all students' well-being. Table 5.5 describes the referential aspect of teachers' pedagogical responses as being protective.

The **structural aspect** of Category 5 is revealed in relation to the internal and external horizon. The **internal horizon** describes the foreground of the category and the distinct features of the category that separate categories. The **external horizon** as an area of awareness forms the context in which the theme sits.

The qualitatively distinct features of Category 5 reveal that teachers' conceptions are: childhood innocence needs to be protected, LGBTI people need to be protected and students who identify or are perceived to identify with diverse sexualities are protected. As uncovered in the following discussion, the conception of teachers' pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities is to be protective of all students.

5.5.1 Protecting notions of childhood innocence

Teachers responded to ideas about diverse sexualities in a protective manner. They responded by protecting notions of childhood innocence; that children are 'too young' and 'too innocent' to know about diverse sexualities.

Like when the doctor of nursing came and gave her talk, for some it was the first time they'd heard it, for others they know everything, oh think they know everything, and you know, are certainly aware of same-sex couples and sex blah, blah, blah, and... um, **so it is nice for kids to stay innocent for as long as possible.** (Int. J)

I think grade twos are still very, very young and I think grade fives, some of them are growing into puberty and they are at that age starting to become independent, their own thinkers and starting to make sense of the world themselves. At grade two I just don't think they're quite at that level yet. **I like the idea that they are still innocent, naive and don't need to be told some things** and some, certain ages, um like grade five will ask harder questions than grade twos. (Int. O)

You get some classes that have a different maturity level. Um and you possibly don't need to be as um, forward in your conversations with them. (Int. B)

Year nine was always when we did sex ed introduction, which these days is probably a bit late... So then you have the discussion about that could be an alternative relationship, could be a lesbian in there and that's accepted at high school that you talk about broader relationships whereas primary is more protected and coddled. (Int. J)

Teachers' descriptions of their conceptions of acknowledging the age, maturity level and general developmental stages of students, influence their pedagogical decisions when responding to diverse sexualities. If teachers view the students as too young or not mature enough, they see the students as requiring protection. It appears this judgement is up to the individual teacher.

5.5.2 Protecting the LGBTI Community and or the actual or perceived LGBTI student

Participants described a sense of responsibility to protect the LGBTI community and the self-identifying LGBTI student. Teachers perceived some students as potentially identifying with a diverse sexuality and described the desire to protect these students also. The following participant felt protective of LGBTI people but also the young student who didn't understand the meaning of the word he was using to name call.

Ummm, probably because I felt protective because I have gay friends and ummm yeah I just didn't want that little boy to label people and not knowing what it meant... Yeah I felt protective I suppose of gay people, yeah and protective of that little boy as well. I didn't because you know how kids can pick up on the words and go for it and then I thought if doesn't have an understanding of it... then he... (Int. A)

The teacher felt protective of both the potential offensive nature of the name calling to people who identify as 'gay', such as his/her friends but also felt protective of the name caller. It appears that this participant feels protective of the student who seems to use the word 'gay' in a name calling scenario without knowing the potential meaning/s of the word.

This participant felt protective of a student who self-identified with a diverse sexuality.

In this case it was child safety as what it comes down to in the end, is child safety... And um, my concern was for his safety you know, I kept saying to him, if you are going to be you know, overtly (pause), you know, touchy in that relationship just be prepared for him to, not to respond in kind and what does that mean... my problem was, I want him to be safe and if, and to be aware or weary of whatever he does will have a consequence or not and so I'm thinking, should I just shut my mouth and let him experience that pain? ... But cause you know, because of my nature and my um, (pause) my empathy, I wanted him to be safe. (Int. G)

This teacher was concerned for the primary school student's well-being as the male student attempted to engage in a 'relationship' with another male student. The teacher was concerned not for the student's physical safety in regards to his 'sexuality' as such but concern for his safety in terms of a 'broken heart'. The following participants felt protective of students who were perceived to identify with a diverse sexuality.

He walked around (laugh) with the dress on for a while in the classroom... I do remember that cause he didn't want to take it off... Well, we were all just getting changed and while he was deciding what he was going to wear, you know, picking the other things, he just still had the dress on... I don't think (pause), well, for the actual event, it would've been because, it wouldn't have been, like I said before, it wouldn't have been accepted, like the principal wouldn't have let that happen in the school. ..He wouldn't have and I also think, if I'd let him (pause) he would have been probably picked on more you know, because everyone would've thought that was just too weird. ..You know, what's he wearing a dress for? That would've been probably my, more of a protection thing for him. (Int. I)

He was, oh, was, probably still is, very animated, he's confident, everything had a degree of flare about things, he was, so he was quite dramatic when things went well, when things didn't go well he was very dramatic as well... Pink, he's girl, his friends were predominantly girls and also sorry, without sounding too

stereotypical, his manner of speech, his just his effeminate behaviour just in general... But I think you tend to protect those students... Um, and I don't know if you do it overtly but you tend to when you're talking about boyfriend and girlfriend, especially in a year seven situation, you tend to acknowledge that there's other relationships that people may, may, not prefer, but may be naturally attracted to. (Int. F)

These excerpts raise issues of gender and sexuality stereotypes and the relationship between gender and sexuality. The teacher identified the student as having a potential link to diverse sexualities given the student's gender performance, that this identification of sexual identity may be problematic and hence the link to protecting this student. This view was legitimated by the descriptions of the following experience:

It comes from um having someone suicide because they were compromised with their sexual identity and out of that experience you know I firmly believe that it's very important to affirm the person and to make them feel it's ok, not to put them into an isolating experience where they feel that the doors are closing and that it's wrong and that it's bad and any of those negative experiences. (Int. N)

This experience significantly influenced this participant to take on the role of protector. This participant had a traumatising experience which he/she describes as influencing his/her motivation to protect LGBTI students.

5.5.3 Protecting all students

Participants described their conceptions when responding to diverse sexualities as a matter of protecting all students. Their responses were informed by beliefs for children to feel safe, live in a just world and for children to be treated 'equally'.

Because **I think everyone has a right to feel safe...** It's not that I didn't think he was safe; it's just that, in a way, the maternal nature of teaching that you make sure that everyone feels safe. I think there was a potential for kids to bully him... Um, because he was different, just like there is any, there's potential for any child to be different based on race, based on physical appearance, based on behaviour they've exhibited in the past... (Int. F)

It's the one thing **I can't tolerate is an injustice** and I think that's a big injustice. I think that it's just not fair, why does it have to be such an issue? (Int. C)

I think homophobia though, just because a child repeats it, I don't necessarily see that as homophobia... It's the hatred that comes with what they're saying. That's how I clarify the difference between someone who is a homophobic person and a young, a child repeating something they've heard so if you heard it from a parent, if I heard a parent saying something, I would by all means challenge that parent... I haven't had to do it, but I would definitely challenge, I wouldn't do it publically, I would pull them to the side... And challenge them about you know, that it's not their place to discriminate and how every child has the right to an education and to not be, to feel safe and that if they're going to talk like that in front of young, the kids then that's not acceptable... Yes and no, I don't like any kind of discrimination. I would do the same thing if I heard two people talking about a Muslim child that I had in my class or a fat child or a handi-capped child, I just don't tolerate intolerance at all... I would challenge any one on that, it happens quite a lot when you have intellectually impaired children or children who are a little be behind, you over hear the whispers and stuff and I don't have a problem correcting parents about that especially if they're like classroom helpers... **Cause I feel it is my job as a teacher to keep all children safe.** (Int. O)

And quite often they'll, I guess for me it comes from ignorance, it's not ok to use the word retard, it's not ok to use the word spastic, it's not ok to use the word gay... My belief with your sexuality is that you can't change that either, it's in your genetic makeup so, I don't, I can't imagine being someone who is homosexual and hearing that word being thrown around as an insult, it's just so very hurtful... **I don't like anybody being treated differently.** I think that's why I ended up working in the area of disability. So, I don't like anyone missing out because of something they can't change. So, if you have a different colour skin, if you have a different religion, if you have a different gender, it shouldn't make any difference. (Int. P)

No, I suppose it's more of a, I suppose when I grew up as a kid, I was, I was the kid everyone talked about because of my family so for me it's more of an inbuilt thing, I will not allow any child that I'm working with or see... Yeah, it's a, yep, and I get that all the time, especially when I go on camps and things, I always get told, stop being a mum, I'm a teacher... And it's like, I can't help it, **it's just my natural instinct to protect.** (Int O)

Many participants revealed that their primary motivation in responding to diverse sexualities is to be protective. Participants have trumped sexuality with the notion of protection; protection of students regardless of sexuality, 'race', religion, gender or disabilities.

5.5.4 Dimensions of variation: Category 5

The dimensions of variation in Category 5 illustrate the personal beliefs of teachers, school communities and cultural aspects of diverse sexualities discerned in the context of the external horizon that teachers are motivated by perceived responsibility to be protectors of children. The internal horizon of Category 5 involves teachers' concern with protecting all students, protecting LGBTI people and protecting notions of childhood innocence. Referential and structural elements of teachers' conceptions of diverse sexualities in Category 5 are represented within the developing structure of awareness.

Through **teachers'** accounts of their conceptions, some teachers believe they are protectors of children. Regardless of what it is the child needs 'protecting' from, teachers believe it is their responsibility. Some believe their personal experiences of being a parent themselves should guide how they respond to diverse sexualities as being protective. They protect students from homophobic bullying. They protect the bully who is doing the homophobic bullying in a bid to protect the student from something they do not understand. Teachers believe it is their role to protect students from information about sexuality they do not 'need' to know and to protect them from outside influence by providing information they do 'need' to know.

Teachers view the role of the **school or educational institution** regarding diverse sexualities as implementing policies to protect students. For example, behaviour policies, bullying policies, curriculum frameworks, and external resources are part of schools' responsibility to protect students. Regardless of the policies,

procedures and expectations of schools, teachers view their primary role is to protect students. This suggests a growing awareness among some teachers to respond to diverse sexualities as important, not problematic and that they are able to show confidence in their pedagogical decisions without necessarily having to consult the wider community. They have more confidence to respond to diverse sexualities in the primary school context with a belief of protection as the priority.

Cultural expectations about gender and sexual diversity influence the perception of teachers as protectors. Perceptions of boys and girls and the binary that reinforces heteronormativity, permeates culture reinforcing teachers as protectors of children who don't 'fit' wider cultural expectations. The real or perceived fear that students are at risk if they don't adhere to social and cultural practices seen as 'normal' from the wider community is an increasing influence on teachers to be protectors of children.

Summary of Category 5

Category 5 describes teachers' conceptions as being protective of students when they respond to diverse sexualities, regardless of problematic circumstances, teachers view the protection of students as most important. Paramount to their pedagogical responses was to protect individual students and by protecting all students' well-being. Category 4 describes teachers' pedagogical responses as maintaining home and school boundaries and Category 6 reveals teachers embracing diverse sexualities.

5.6 Category of Description 6: Teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses as embracing sexual diversity

Category 6 describes teachers' conceptions as embracing diverse sexualities as part of life. They responded positively to the idea of addressing concepts of sexual diversity both proactively and reactively. Table 5.6 provides a summary.

Table 5.6 *Pedagogical responses as embracing*

Phenomenographic features	Evidence
<p>Referential aspect</p> <p>Teachers' conceptions reflect a perspective in which diverse sexualities were embraced as part of life. They responded both passively and actively to addressing diverse sexualities. Sexual diversity was seen as a social issue that could be addressed in schools.</p>	<p>"I think it's something that should just slip in... Like what's wrong with that, when you're reading a big book. One's about mum and dad and the child and one's about dad and dad and the child. Why don't you read that to a four year old? ... and then you keep going on with life." (Int. S)</p>
<p>Structural elements: <i>Internal horizon:</i> Teachers respond by embracing diverse sexualities.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embracing existing diverse family structures 	<p>"I think that if you've got a parent that loves you or two parents that love you then that's what you need and if it just so happens to be that you've got two mummies that's what you've got." (Int. E)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embracing individual students 	<p>"I support her and I support her belief and I support that so, she totes deserved a high five." (Int. L)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embracing the education of students about diverse sexualities to support their personal development 	<p>"I make it a point to mention the fact that not everyone's going to be, have a heterosexual relationship... there's probably going to be kids who don't or who are attracted to the same-sex relative to the um, the opposite sex..." (Int. F)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embracing sexual diversity in everyday practices 	<p>"I think it (inclusive sex education) just needs to become part of what we're teaching these children." (Int. B)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embracing sexual diversity for social and cultural development e.g. anti-bullying, safety, tolerance and embracing diversity 	<p>"I think if we're trying to teach the kids to be good citizens and to be accepting of different cultures and different beliefs then homosexuality is it's just one of those things." (Int. E)</p>
<p><i>External horizon:</i> Diverse sexualities are part of life.</p>	
<p>Dimensions of Variation</p> <p>DoV1: Teacher belief: diverse sexualities are part of everyday practice</p> <p>DoV2: School/Institutional culture: allow for teacher autonomy</p> <p>DoV3: Socio-cultural influences: equality for LGBTI people</p>	

Category 6 describes teachers' conceptions as embracing diverse sexualities. They responded by embracing diverse sexualities as 'part of life'. Table 5.5 describes the referential aspect of teachers' pedagogical responses as embracing diverse sexualities.

The **structural aspect** of Category 6 is revealed in relation to the internal and external horizon. The **internal horizon** describes the foreground of the category and the distinct features of the category that separate categories. The **external horizon** as an area of awareness forms the context in which the theme sits.

The qualitatively distinct features of Category 6 reveal that teachers' conceptions are:

- embracing existing diverse family structures
- embracing individual students
- embracing the idea of educating students about diverse sexualities
- embracing sexual diversity in everyday practices and
- embracing sexual diversity for social and cultural development.

In the following discussion, the conception of teachers' pedagogical responses to embrace diverse sexualities will be revealed.

5.6.1 Embracing existing diverse family structures

Embracing existing diverse family structures is revealed by some teachers as acknowledging and incorporating same-sex parents as part of school life. One participant described their experience as embracing a same-sex family as part of talking to students about a whole range of family structures.

Because they were using his family as a target, trying to say that his family was something, you know, weird. Whereas it's just the way life is, his family is not weird, everyone's family is different. I don't know, I think it just felt like the right way to deal with the situation at the time and I think also because of the fact that also in that class there were so many different family structures that that was an easy road to take sort of thing; something they could understand... I think, I think that you know, I, I think that if you've got a parent that loves you or two parents that love you then that's what you need and **if it just so happens**

to be that you've got two mummies that's what you've got... I think, and if you've got two mums well you've got two mums, you know. (Int. E)

The teacher was embracing diverse sexualities as part of a whole range of family structures in order to support an individual student who was being teased about a family break up. This particular participant's conceptions describe supporting diverse family structures with the purpose of supporting the individual student's perspectives about diverse sexualities. The same-sex known family structure to this student was part of everyday life.

5.6.2 Embracing individual students

Participants describe supporting individual students through a range of circumstances. Teachers embrace the students' situation, attitude and perspectives on diverse sexualities. This is one example of how the teacher embraced a student and her views on diverse sexualities.

Um, she, um is gorgeous, very well adjusted, very, I, I, I didn't know for a long time um until there was a camp meeting and I just kind of thought, hang on a second, those two women are standing very close together. And I can't see that that would be a step mum and a mum... and so um, I put two and two together and I made an assumption based on that... she came and said to me one morning that it was absolutely abhorrent that people shouldn't be allowed to get married just because they're the same sex and it doesn't matter who you love and I high fived her, good on you, pet, it's exactly right... I'm going to support her as much as I can. I mean I'm not going to get up, go out and fly a banner and do that, especially not at school but she came up and expressed something to me and I support her and I support her belief and I support that so, she tote's deserved a high five. (Int. L)

This participant describes a situation where a student actually discusses 'love' in relation to another student of the same-sex.

Once we'd talked about that he was, he became a little bit more comfortable with it, in terms of he said, we explored the word, he said I think I love him. Love, what's love? (laugh). And we explained that, well he said, when I think about him I feel all warm and funny and gooey and all these, it took weeks and

weeks to come out... I felt I needed to be really open minded about how they feel cause someone, particularly at that age, to come forward and say something about their private feelings, about they actually feel, about how their bodies are making them feel so it's a massive step. So as a teacher my job is to truly celebrate that, excellent, good work and not sweep it under the carpet, not put it off, push it under the carpet and not you know well, you'll work it out later on in life. You know, it starts then, it starts earlier, in terms of genetic make-up, we don't know, you just never know. (Int. G)

The teacher was intent on embracing the individual student's needs at that time.

Even though the teachers acknowledge potentially problematic situations, they embrace the individual student's perspectives.

5.6.3 Embracing the education of students about diverse sexualities to support their personal development

Participants acknowledge the personal development of students in regard to their social development and personal sexualities identity as important. This participant explains his/her experience as a deliberate pedagogical decision to include diverse sexualities in formal sex education classes.

During things like sex ed (education) those type of health lessons I make the point that pretty much a theme running through that because, a lot of those sex ed talks, especially if they're run by Family Planning Queensland, or similar organisations, um they don't really preach that message or communicate the fact that some people are going to be orientated or they're going to choose, not choose, they're going to have um, homosexual partners or they're going to be homosexual or lesbian... I make it a point to mention the fact that not everyone's going to be, have a heterosexual relationship... Because I preach, or I teach, realism. I think it's um, I think it's also the fact that my audience, there's probably going to be, more than likely, statistics will show this, there's probably going to be kids who don't or who are attracted to the same-sex relative to the um, the opposite sex... (Int. F)

Even when teachers are faced with an organisational culture that doesn't necessarily support the inclusion of diverse sexualities, this participant finds a way to

embrace the concept to support students' individual personal development. The excerpt is quite lengthy but in order to gain an understanding of the complexity of the teacher's experience the context has been included.

All the time, I have kids challenge it continuously and say they don't believe what the church is about and all the rest of it. Fortunately I've been teaching religious ed. in Catholic schools a long time so I've had a lot of chance to sort of think through the approach and I always take it very cautiously and carefully and say to the kids it's you know, the new testament doesn't emphasise anything about homosexuality, Jesus never passed any comment about sexual sin, sexual identity, homosexuality sexual identity nothing, there is nothing. So therefore, my beliefs are that um Jesus is really on about the individual and looking after the individual. The rest is church culture, it's church history over a period of time and that is always evolving you just have to be patient... what I always teach is that the church teaches about free will and conscience and that that is how all decisions have to be made do I always emphasise if you have an informed conscience and you've spent time understanding who you are as a person and understanding what your sexual identity is about then that is in fact informing your conscience and the church actually says once formed, you have to follow it and that's how I get around it..So you, even though the church has this culture and beliefs around diverse sexualities, you're choosing a particular section out of that culture that really supports them to be individual and... yeah that's what I tend to do. And I think that's where a lot of informed religious education teachers in Catholic schools will go, they will go that way. They will talk about informed conscience and moral decision making rather than going the hard line about what the church says about homosexuality. (Int. N)

This excerpt indicates that teachers can and will include content in their teaching that is not part of the curriculum or necessarily part of institutional culture due to personal beliefs. Both participants' pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities were to embrace the concept, to be proactive in particular curriculum areas. This participant describes how an external provider supported the teacher to embrace the diverse sexualities as part of the program.

I think that at [my] previous school, because we did the model through Family Planning and the program was very much stepped out and we used that model

from year 1 through to year 7 and I think everyone was on the same page and the program that you used was called *Talking About It* and it had a number of lessons um and you talked about the right language you know... Well, it talked about um, like, I guess, it talked about homosexuality and um people making choices of um, two men choosing to be together, two women choosing to be together. I can't remember in terms of (pause)... I guess it seemed to cover a number, like it was relationships, physiological reproduction, names of all the body parts. It included things like um, I can remember a girlfriend doing an activity putting condoms on bananas and using meds and things. Which is a really different model to the close your eyes model we seem to be using at our school. (Int. B)

Teachers, through formal and informal pedagogical situations, embrace the education of students about diverse sexualities to support the students' personal development. Some participants have embraced sexual diversity as part of their everyday practice.

5.6.4 Embracing sexual diversity in everyday practices

As teachers reflect on their conceptions, they describe both actual embedding of diverse sexualities into practice but also the desire for 'it' to be part of everyday practices.

I guess being teenagers it's harder to change their attitudes because that might actually be something they've grown up with. So, when they're little, if you can talk to them when they're littler and more receptive to knowledge and more receptive to hearing another point of view, because they're looking to find who they are themselves and so they're trying to find their own space in the world, so sometimes it's actually easier to train the younger ones. When you asked the question before about having to teach about sex in school, and I never have had to do it, I think that the opportunity to teach, and you don't have to go in to full on graphic details of teaching for little kids you can just modify it, it's about acceptance, this is how some people choose to be and this is how other people are... When you're reading the stories, why aren't you doing, why can't you have books, books used to only ever have white people in them, now they've got

all different colours, so why can't you have a story about Tommy who's mums took him to school on the first day and that's all it has to be. (Int O)

So it's not just protective. But, it also hopefully allows the other children in the group um, affords them some understanding, because everybody is going to have people that they went to school with or people that they were friendly with, everybody is going to have exposure to people who um, who are homosexual... **I see it as just part of life...** But I think unfortunately the standard behaviour is still that put down mode and it's very much um, something, cause I've gone back to year five for the last couple of years you see that perhaps less than in year seven. You know, "you're gay" or "you're a fag" but they're things I very much talk about in the class... **I think it (inclusive sex education) just needs to become part of what we're teaching these children** and that we're teaching them safe behaviours, if we're making time to um have Queensland Rail come in and talk to the kids about crossing rail ways safely um, the safety house program you know um, drug ed. in terms of life education and it even needs to be more than that because these are big issues. (Int. B)

These excerpts reveal teachers' conceptions as embracing diverse sexualities as a part of everyday, formal and informal situations and as a part of what they believe everyday teaching should include.

5.6.5 Embracing inclusion of sexual diversity for social and cultural development; anti-bullying, safety, tolerance and embracing diversity

Some participants embrace the inclusion of sexual diversity in their everyday practices with the purpose of social and cultural education. Some participants describe their conceptions as responding to students with the purpose of negating homophobic bullying, teaching for tolerance and embracing diversity. The following excerpts reveal teachers' willingness to teach within a sociological and social equity context.

Yep, talking about sexuality? Yep, I'm aware of a conversation that happened in a prep classroom so, um, around the age of five to six. They were talking about Ellen Degenerés... And they were talking about the fact that she is gay, not straight, and what that means... I think (pause), um, **I think it's important for this age kids to understand that difference is ok** and I think part of the

bullying in primary schools is about kids who are different, he's got red hair, he's fat, he's skinny, you wear glasses, she talks funny, whatever it may be, it's what they target. Whereas, if you sort of point out that difference is ok and that difference is quite nice it can end up being quite a positive experience... Now, there is no swearing at staff so if we include this as a word that has serious consequences, children are cluey, they'll work it out and it's not worth the risk. So I do think they learn appropriate behaviour by what they're expected to do. We can necessarily count on all houses, especially when some of the parents use the words themselves but I can't see why we can't. (Int. P)

I think, as a whole class, students tend to at that age level, tend to bring out the oo's and the ahh's but um, I think now days it probably more acceptable, just through the main stream media that people know that there are gay people out there and they know that there's lesbian people out there. I think, even kids who are in grade six, grade seven can acknowledge that there is that difference now, it's not the (pause) it's not the, what's the word (pause), it doesn't attract the same stigma as it did five years ago as it did ten years ago as it did I dare say twenty years ago... I think that's good because I don't think anyone should be judged um, based on their, their sexual orientation... I think there should be tolerance and acceptance that people are different... That you should recognise that people are different, the fact that you might not necessarily agree with the way that they're living their lives, that should be fine, you should be able to agree to disagree and you should recognise that um... Yeah, I think it's the fact that's it equality. That people, shouldn't necessarily judge, they should be judged by the content of their character and not the fact that they're um, oh, determined by their race their culture, sorry to steal Martin Luther King, genius. But yeah, that's the way I look. I think I've been brought up in a family that is also, um, that support that that view point. (Int. F)

Well yeah, I think that your own personal ethics and morals are always going to be a bit of a compass when you're teaching. I mean there's certain situations where you kind of have to take a step back and it doesn't matter what your own personal ethics and morals are cause you just have to say well this is, this is it. But I think if we're trying to teach the kids to be good citizens and to be

accepting of different cultures and different beliefs **then homosexuality is it's just one of those things.** (Int. E)

Everything comes down to education. If the kids know about it and accept it and accept it as a part of life then I guess you're still gonna have a percentage of people who are still going to tease people whether they're disabled or homosexual or whatever. Um, but I think it would, in my opinion, could reduce it if they're educated about... Teach... I don't think, I'd never thought about it. I don't think it would hurt to teach children cause I mean like I said before, if you teach the kids that's it's ok, it's normal for people to be gay in society then there not gonna tease people about it. I mean you're still gonna get people who will do it but not as much maybe... Well, and like anything, **if you teach them early enough in life to accept things they will, they'll just accept it as normal...** Little kids especially and if you teach them that some people are like this and some people are like that, doesn't matter. It's all about who you love and relationships and family and your family doesn't mean it has to be a man and a women and you know, things like that, they would just accept it. They would just go, fair enough that's normal, I don't want to be like that-that's normal or guess what, maybe I want to be like that. (Int. C)

Participants embrace inclusion of diverse sexualities for social and cultural development of students. Teachers describe their experiences as embracing sexual diversity in the same vein as teaching to embrace difference, embracing equality, being accepting of cultural diversity and embracing sexual diversity as 'part of life'.

5.6.6 Dimensions of variation: Category 6

The dimensions of variation in Category 6 illustrate the personal beliefs of teachers, school communities and cultural aspects of diverse sexualities discerned in the context of the external horizon that sexual diversity is part of life. The internal horizon of Category 6 involves teachers embracing existing diverse family structures, embracing individual students and embracing sexual diversity in everyday practices. Referential and structural elements of teachers' conceptions of diverse sexualities in Category 6 are represented within the developing structure of awareness.

Teachers believe that diverse sexualities are part of life. Their accounts of their conceptions reveal some teachers' personal beliefs are equality for all people

regardless of sexual orientation. Homophobic bullying and heteronormativity are believed to be an opportunity to teach for individual student development and for social justice.

Teachers acknowledge that there are likely to be students in their classrooms who may identify with sexuality other than heterosexual, or may do so in the future. The teachers acknowledge that students have LGBTI people in their lives and/or are likely to in the future. As individuals, teachers' personal beliefs are to include homonormative concepts into their classrooms, curriculum and everyday pedagogical decisions. They acknowledge that diverse sexualities are visible in the media and popular culture and believe teachers are to embrace diverse sexualities as part of life.

Sexuality diversity as part of school life is viewed in the sense that teachers are autonomous in their pedagogical decisions regarding diverse sexualities. **Educational institutions and schools** have been revealed through teachers' accounts that there is limited to no support of positive inclusion of diverse sexualities in the primary school context. Across the categories teachers are developing a growing awareness of the influences educational institutions and schools have on their pedagogical decision making. The categories, as teachers' conceptions reveal, indicate that schools and educational institutions have cultural influences including:

- diverse sexualities as non-existent in educational policy and curriculum
- diverse sexualities are problematic and schools choose not to respond, for example, no homophobic bullying policy
- how teachers should respond to diverse sexualities is not evident or clear in school based policy, there is no training and no resources
- curriculum inclusive of diverse sexualities, if any, is negotiated with the community.

However, in Category 6, even though educational institutions and schools are not seen to explicitly support diverse sexualities, they are not described as preventing teachers from including concepts of diverse sexualities if they choose. The educational institutions and schools neither support nor condemn teachers for including diverse sexualities as part of school life. Culturally schools promote a heteronormative climate which indicates a 'silent' condemnation.. Even the Catholic institution, with its clear stance on condemning sexual diversity in the broader

community, does not have clear policy on homophobic bullying or teacher expectations regarding how teachers should respond to diverse sexualities. Teachers have a growing awareness that their employer and/or school culture and the wider community can be supportive of their pedagogical decisions to respond to diverse sexualities positively.

The global movement towards equality for LGBTI people is becoming part of everyday life. Social equality for LGBTI people is increasing as **Western cultural views** are constantly moving towards normalising homosexuality. In Australia, the equality movement for LGBTI people is evident in law reform and public debate. Politicians are declaring support for marriage equality and there is government funding for LGBTI organisations. This social and cultural movement impacts on school culture and teacher agency. Wider social and Western cultural expectations are moving towards embracing diverse sexualities as part of life. This movement is influential on teachers' pedagogical decisions.

Summary of Category 6

Category 6 describes teachers' conceptions as embracing diverse sexualities. They respond positively to diverse sexualities both proactively through formal education scenarios and reactively when students bring up diverse sexualities. The interviewees indicated sexual diversity is and should be embraced in an educational setting for the purposes of promoting inclusive social and cultural development of students. Also, embracing sexuality diversity as part of everyday teaching practices was informed by embracing individual students and existing diverse family structures.

5.7 Summary of Chapter 5: Categories of Description

In Category 1, the importance of addressing diverse sexualities is somewhat non-existent or nonchalant. Category 2 reveals teachers' awareness of potential problems associated with responding to diverse sexualities and 'choice' to avoid the situation. Category 3 describes teachers' conceptions as being uncertain about what to do. Teachers' awareness of the importance of addressing diverse sexualities becomes more apparent within each category. Category 4 describes teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses as maintaining home and school

boundaries or understanding the importance to respond ‘appropriately’ to diverse sexualities within the boundaries of home and school relationships. Category 5 reveals teachers’ awareness of the importance of protecting students regarding sexual diversity but also protecting the equality of LGBTI people, actual and perceived. The final category, Category 6, describes teachers’ conceptions as embracing diverse sexualities. The categories reveal a growing awareness of primary teachers’ differing pedagogical options, from being nonchalant, avoiding, being uncertain, maintaining roles, or protecting to embracing diverse sexualities.

In Chapter 6, the outcome space is presented as the structure of awareness of the phenomenon of teachers’ conceptions of their responses to sexual diversity. The phenomenographic findings are represented in the outcome space to show the categories of description and the dimensions of variation. These phenomenographic findings will be discussed and explored with reference to the literature (Chapter 2) and the social constructionist theorisation of sexuality and pedagogy (Chapter 3).

Chapter 6: Discussion and conclusion

Chapter 6 aims to situate the study within the broader field of ‘diverse sexualities’, ‘education’ and ‘teacher pedagogy’ research. Empirical evidence is revealed as the outcome space, including an explanation of the model presented and the aligning metaphor in Section 6.1. The two significant empirical discoveries (Section 6.2) from this study are that, first, teachers experience concepts of diverse sexualities as part of their daily work (Section 6.2.1), and second, that teachers respond pedagogically in a variety of ways with little guidance for, or understanding of, the appropriateness of their responses (Section 6.2.2). Throughout Section 6.2.2 the social constructionist framework presented in Chapter 3 guides the reflection on teachers’ pedagogical responses including a discussion of the dimensions of variation within examples of scenarios. The significance of these findings connecting the ‘real world’ to research has implications for students, teachers, families and educational institutions as detailed in Section 6.3. Research potential for the future is considered given the outcomes of the research (Section 6.4), with a summary of the research provided in Section 6.5.

The main research question presented in Chapter 1 is what are teachers’ conceptions of their pedagogical responses to concepts of diverse sexualities in the primary school context? The sub questions are

- (1) What are teachers’ experiences with scenarios in which diverse sexualities are introduced by primary school students?
- (2) How confident are teachers to respond to scenarios in primary school that refer to diverse sexualities?

The main research question is answered as the outcome space (Section 6.1). Sub questions 1 and 2 are addressed in Section 6.2.

6.1 The main research question: The outcome space

The outcome space (Figure 6.1), characterised by a staircase, represents the qualitatively different ways teachers’ conceptualise their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities (main research question), the collective view of how teachers respond to concepts of diverse sexualities and the dimensions that influence teachers’ decisions. The outcome space can be described as the representation of the

qualitatively different ways of experiencing a phenomenon represented as the complex of categories of description (Booth & Marton, 1997, p. 125). The categories of description were established in Chapter 5 where the categories were defined and delineated from each other. The dimensions of variation were established across the categories. This stage of the analysis involves using the social constructionist framework presented in Chapter 3 to contextualise this research and the phenomenographic framework of the structure of awareness to discuss the categories of description and dimensions of variation. The structure of awareness involves a discussion of the categories of description and the relationship not just from within but between them and the phenomenon itself. The diagrammatic representation of the primary school teachers' conceptions of how they respond to diverse sexualities is the outcome space (Figure 6.1).

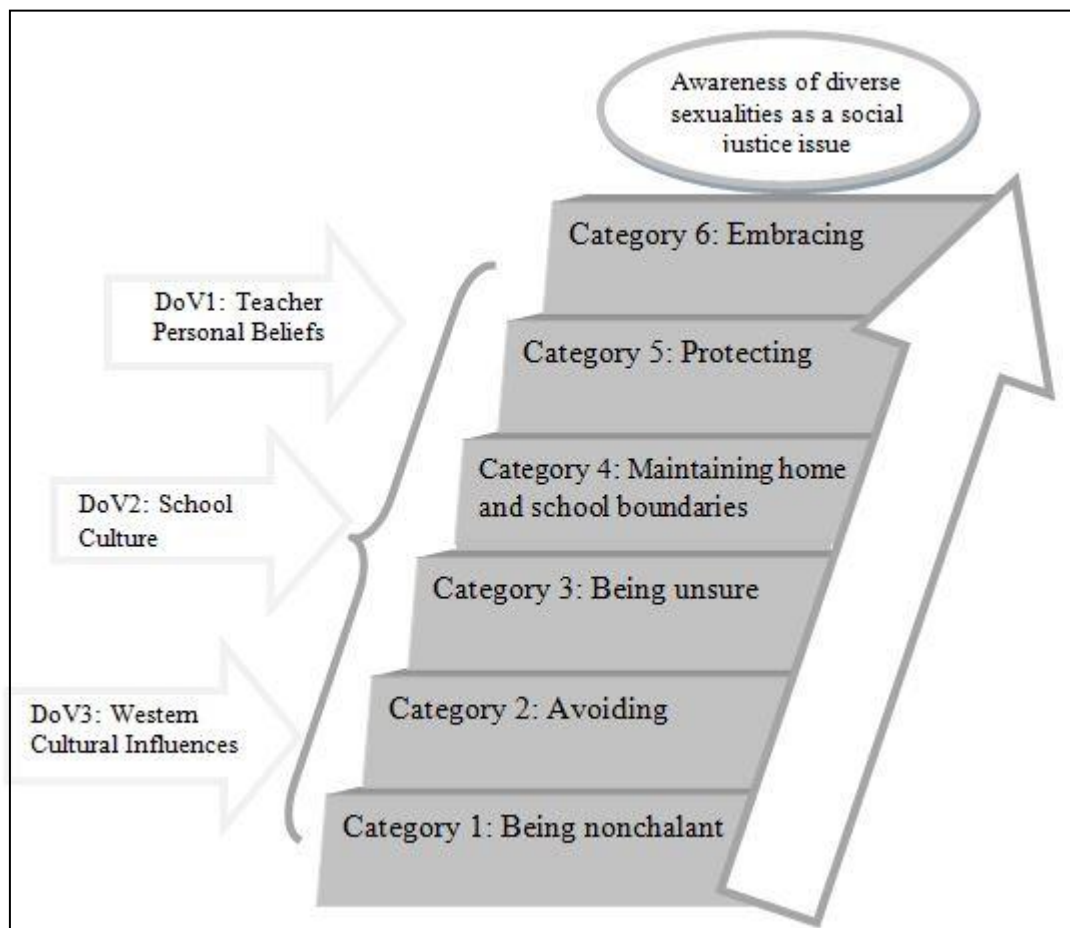


Figure 6.1 Outcome space: primary school teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities.

Theorising teachers' conceptions of pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities

The outcome space reveals the categories of description as teachers' conceptions of how they respond to concepts of diverse sexualities: being nonchalant, avoiding a response, being uncertain, maintaining home and school boundaries, protecting students and embracing diverse sexualities. The categories are represented as steps. The dimensions of variation are represented within arrows through which influence the variation within the categories. The dimensions are teacher beliefs (DoV1), school and institutional culture (DoV2) and Western cultural influences (DoV3). The dimensions of variation are contextualised theoretically within the history of sexuality theory and social constructionist pedagogical theories (the social constructionist framework presented in Chapter 3).

The dimensions of variation show how the pedagogical responses displayed in the stairs influence teachers conceptions. Teachers were found to be influenced by their beliefs about the role of teachers and how they identify with professional responsibilities. **School culture** was another influence on the decisions that teachers make about their pedagogical responses to situations involving diverse sexualities (DoV2). **Western cultural values** and the deeply embedded social practices of the wider community also impacted on teachers (DoV3). The three dimensions of variation are contextualised within the history of sexuality theory and social constructionist pedagogical theories (as detailed in Chapter 3). Western cultural values (DoV3) and the deeply embedded practices of the wider community have been developed and continue to develop with a complex history of understanding about sexuality and significant changes in sexuality theories. School culture (DoV2) is influenced by Western cultural values and community expectations situated within a history and contemporary understanding about sexuality and pedagogical theories. **Teacher personal beliefs** (DoV1) are influenced not only by Western cultural practices and school culture but by their own life experiences which are also embedded in the historical and socio-cultural contexts explained in Chapter 3.

The dimensions of variation influence teachers' pedagogical decisions within and across all of the categories of description. The first category represents the discovery that teachers respond to the concept of diverse sexualities by being nonchalant. The second category reveals that teachers avoid responding to the

concept of diverse sexualities. The third category demonstrates that teachers are uncertain about how to respond or are unsure about what to do. The fourth category represents teachers' conceptions as maintaining home and school boundaries in which the teachers are negotiating and defining the 'rules' for home and the 'rules' for school. The fifth category reveals teachers conceptions of pedagogical responses as protecting students and the sixth category reveals teachers' conceptions as embracing concepts of diverse sexualities in the primary school context. The visual representation aims to show teachers' hierarchical levels of awareness in their pedagogical responses, from being nonchalant through to embracing diverse sexualities.

The outcome space (Figure 6.1) is represented as a set of stairs to show the hierarchical nature of the categories. The external horizon discerns the context of the phenomenon (Marton & Booth, 1997). In this research, the categories are defined by external horizons. For example, Category 1 is contextualised by, "Diverse sexualities are not important" as the external horizon. Each step represents a category which demonstrates the teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities, but together they form a set of stairs, which comprises the collective representation of the teachers' pedagogical responses to the phenomenon. The hierarchical significance is explored further.

The external horizon for each category is as follows:

- Category 1 - Nonchalant = Diverse sexualities are not important
- Category 2 - Avoiding = Sexual diversity is problematic
- Category 3 - Being unsure = Diverse sexualities are an unknown
- Category 4 - Maintaining home and school boundaries = Diverse sexualities have boundaries
- Category 5 - Protecting = Diverse sexualities equal protection of children
- Category 6 - Embracing = Diverse sexualities are part of life

The hierarchical nature of the stairs represents the way in which teachers' awareness towards diverse sexualities as a social justice issue grows as the categories build on each other. For example, the teacher who embraces diverse sexualities has greater awareness than the teacher who avoids responding. Awareness is defined as

the teachers' understanding of the individual, institutional and cultural influences and how these impact pedagogical decisions when responding to concepts of diverse sexualities.

The outcome space is a significant finding that represents qualitatively different ways in which teachers experience various aspects of diverse sexualities in the context of the primary school. The outcome space is a collective view of the variation in descriptions of individual teacher conceptions (Booth & Marton, 1997). It has been revealed that teachers respond in six qualitatively different ways with three elements of variation across the categories. These findings have the potential to inform the research community and education community to understand how teachers perceive their world when making pedagogical decisions about responding to diverse sexualities.

6.2 Sub questions 1 and 2: New discoveries: adding to the literature

- The two main contributions this research makes to the field answer the research sub questions. Sub question 1: What are teachers' experiences with scenarios in which diverse sexualities are introduced by primary school students? is addressed in Section 6.2.1: Diverse sexualities is a concept that primary school teachers face in their daily work through a variety of scenarios
- Sub question 2: How confident are teachers to respond to scenarios in primary school that refer to diverse sexualities? is addressed in Section 6.2.2: Teachers respond in qualitatively different ways to scenarios of diverse sexualities; responses characterised by pedagogical ambiguity

The literature has previously sought to establish that students within the primary school age bracket may identify with a diverse sexuality (Herdt & McClintock, 2000, Hillier et al., 2010, Michaelson, 2008, Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2000). Importantly, this current research argues that diverse sexualities is a concept that is not necessarily just about sexuality identity, but that concepts of diverse sexualities are regularly presented to teachers in a variety of scenarios.

6.2.1 Sub question 1: Diverse sexualities is a concept that primary school teachers face in everyday work through a variety of scenarios

The participants revealed a variety of scenarios in which concepts of diverse sexualities emerged, often as part of everyday teaching experiences. Research in Australia and internationally (Blaise, 2009; Epstein, 1997; Renold, 2000; Robinson, 2013) regarding sex education has long tried to establish that students know about sexuality (heterosexuality) within the primary school context. Similarly, research has indicated that students know about and identify with a sexuality (including diverse sexualities) during the primary school years (Herdt & McClintock, 2000, Hillier et al., 2010, Michaelson, 2008, Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2000). The current study supports evidence from the work of Herdt and McClintock (2000), Hillier et al., (2010), Michealson, (2008a) and Renold, (2002) as discussed in Chapter 2 that some students do know about diverse sexualities in the primary school context. However, this research reveals, through empirical evidence, a range of scenarios in which students and teachers deal with concepts of diverse sexualities, not just related to sexual identity or homophobic bullying. Historical and theoretical implications are evident in teachers' conceptions of their experiences with diverse sexualities and are explored in Section 6.2.2. This research reveals that primary school teachers face a range of scenarios regarding diverse sexualities in their everyday work.

The scenarios shared by teachers reflect their understanding about sexuality as a phenomenon. In Chapter 3, sexuality histories and theories were explored and definitions about sexuality were explained. The outcome of this exploration suggested that a stagnant definition of sexuality was not possible as a definition of sexuality could only exist with people and their experiences at a given point in time (Weeks, 2000). Even though some teachers attempted to label and categorise ideas about diverse sexualities, it was revealed by the collective representation that the idea of diverse sexualities is too complex and variable to expect a single definition. The teachers reveal in their descriptions of their experiences that they have diverse, complex and multi-variable representations of ideas about diverse sexualities. The experiences of teachers are evidence of students bringing their experiences to the primary school context also.

The education community has been informed for some time that students are aware of sex and sexualities from a very young age (Blaise, 2009). Some teachers, as evidenced by this research, still respond to diverse sexualities by 'protecting' students from knowledge they consider the students are too young to know about.

Robinson (2005) describes gender and sexuality as socially constructed whereby the child acts as a knowing agent in the process of normalising heterosexuality or heteronormativity. This research concurs that primary school students know about concepts of diverse sexualities. Primary students ask questions about diverse sexualities, they use homophobic expressions (often as a daily occurrence), they sometimes reveal homosexual feelings to teachers, some have same-sex parents and some are being raised queer (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2000). These findings support the work of Epstein (1997) that awareness of sexuality exists in primary school settings. The data presented here challenge the myth that ‘teaching’ students about homosexuality is wrong because students are not mature enough to understand heterosexuality let alone “such concepts as homosexuality” (Epstein, 1997, p. 38) because they are likely to have some knowledge of diverse sexualities already. Furthermore, Robinson (2008) suggests that “Children (in Australia) encounter knowledge about sexuality in their everyday lives through media, interaction with peers and some through queer family members and friends” (Robinson, 2008, p. 121). This study contributes significantly to this body of research in its assertions that not only do students in primary school settings know about heterosexuality, they know about homosexuality and are communicating with teachers and peers about diverse sexualities.

The participants in this research identify scenarios in which the teachers themselves interacted with or observed a student who was communicating ideas about sexuality that did not include heterosexuality. Teachers revealed a range of scenarios that they had experienced, including:

- Students who were perceived to be homosexual (by the teacher and/or students) / a student who ‘confessed’ to loving another student of the same sex
- Homophobic bullying and name calling
- Students with same-sex parents
- Teachers who identified themselves as homosexual, lesbian or identified colleagues who identified with a diverse sexuality / collegial perspectives of diverse sexualities, both positive and negative

- Teachers who proactively/reactively addressed diverse sexualities as part of ‘sex education’.

All of these scenarios are situations that teachers described as part of their experiences. These are the situations in which teachers are making pedagogical decisions about how to respond to concepts of diverse sexualities in contemporary Queensland primary school classrooms, playgrounds and staff rooms. The histories of cultural understandings about sexualities and current sociological practices influence teachers’ pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities. Links with theories of sexualities and education, as explored in Chapter 3, are made within each of the following sections. The revelation of teachers’ experiences is underpinned by uneasiness and ambiguity about how they ‘should’ be responding to diverse sexualities. The following section explores teachers’ responses to these scenarios in relation to the relevant body of literature.

6.2.2 Sub question 2: Teachers’ responses are underpinned by pedagogical ambiguity

Teachers’ conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities reveal a complex range of scenarios to which they respond variously and with apprehension. The dimensions of variation are used to support the discussion regarding teachers’ conceptions. Teachers are regularly faced with a range of scenarios about diverse sexualities both during formal and informal teaching situations. However, they are not confident in responding as they are potentially untrained in sex education (Carmen, Mitchell, Schlichthorst, & Smith, 2006), largely unsupported (Robinson, Ferfolja & Irwin, 2002). Teachers are left to make individual decisions based on personal beliefs (DoV1), school culture (DoV2) and Western cultural influences (DoV3) (including sociological beliefs and practices outlined in Chapter 3). Teachers’ responses to these different scenarios are explained in the context of the literature (Chapter 2), the outcome space and the social constructionist framework presented in Chapter 3.

For ease of discussion, elements of the outcome space such as the categories, dimensions of variation and the external horizon are interwoven with relevant reflections using the literature and social constructionist framework.

Teachers make pedagogical decisions about students who they perceive may identify with a diverse sexuality.

The focus of this research is not to necessarily focus on students who may identify with a diverse sexuality or who are perceived to not 'fit' the heterosexual mould. However, teachers raised multiple professional experiences linking diverse sexualities with student sexual orientation.

Teachers made connections between sex, gender and sexuality. Students who express gender variant preferences are thought of as gay or lesbian (DePalma, 2011; Slesaransky-Poe & García, 2009). Teachers perceived students to be homosexual or potentially identifying as homosexual in later life due to unfounded beliefs about links between gender and sexuality stereotypes. This finding resonates with literature that explores gender performance and sexual orientation and research outcomes that encourage professional learning for teachers (Bower & Klecka, 2009; Hermann-Wilmarth, 2007; Walker & Milton, 2006). The focus is to teach teachers about gender and sexuality concepts in order to challenge heteronormativity and promote an equitable education for all, inclusive of sex, gender and sexuality. Pressure from schools and communities and a lack of resources make teachers uncertain about how they should respond to students when they disclose sexual orientation (Gilchrist, 2003). Teachers respond to students whom they deem homosexual or potentially homosexual in a variety of ways as expressed in the outcome space.

Students who are recognised as identifying with a diverse sexuality as a phenomenon in itself are contextualised by the external horizon. If diverse sexualities are not important in the school context, it adds meaning to teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical response as nonchalant. Teachers who are nonchalant (Category 1) about diverse sexualities may be influenced by essentialist theories. A teacher may take an essentialist stance and believe that a student is the way they are because they were born that way (Weeks, 2000). The teacher may consider the issue not important as identified in the external horizon of Category 1: diverse sexualities are not important. With essentialist theory as the basis of decision making the teacher may assume, developmentally, the student would progress their sexuality identity as nature intends. Therefore the teacher may believe it is not important to 'interfere with nature'. Essentialist beliefs may provide justification for a teacher to avoid (Category

2) responding to or addressing diverse sexualities with a student who is perceived to potentially identify with a diverse sexuality.

Teachers' pedagogical choices are potentially influenced by developmental theorists such as Piaget (1951) and teachers may believe that students will learn about their own sexuality as they develop cognitively and physically. Hence by using a nonchalant (Category 1) response, the teacher may imply that the student may be seen as not developmentally ready to understand a concept. Teachers may also be influenced by constructionist theorists such as Bernstein (1996) in which the pedagogy of the teachers is seen to be influenced by the state, the educational institution and society itself and the nonchalant teacher could be seen as influenced by a nonchalant government, schooling system and society. This is evident in the lack of guidance for teachers from the state, the system or wider society in providing a consistent, cohesive approach to responding appropriately to diverse sexualities in the primary school context.

Conflicting conservative and liberal socio-cultural beliefs and practices (DoV3) regarding gender and sexuality stereotypes influence teachers' pedagogical decisions as being uncertain (Category 3) about what to do. Teachers respond in ways that are uncertain because they are aware of conservative socio-political views about diverse sexualities and they are potentially aware of the growing liberation of equal rights for LGBTI people. The contexts in which teachers are working reflect a wider view of diverse sexualities as an unknown. Pedagogical theorists such as Friere (1970) championed education for social justice purposes but some teachers in this study appeared to be influenced by conservative views about sexualities, unable to employ pedagogic practices to support equality for LGBTI people. This social justice pedagogy developed by Friere may influence the contemporary teacher to help students think critically about the oppression of people with diverse sexualities or the misrepresentation of diverse sexualities within the heteronormative context of schooling (Adams, 2010). However, not one teacher shared an experience in which a pedagogical response employed critical thinking about the absence of diverse sexualities in the primary school arena. Teachers are uncertain about what to do because the alternative outcomes of responding in a way such as acknowledging or supporting students who identify with a diverse sexuality are unknown.

Community expectations (DoV3) and institutional governance (DoV2) of gender and sexuality position teachers to manage and maintain home and school boundaries (Category 4). Teachers are bound by the institutional governance of gender and sexuality binaries and are able to protect (Category 5) students only as opposed to liberate or normalise. Pedagogical research in Queensland revealed teachers generally excel in providing supportive classroom environments (Lingard, 2014). However, teachers over compensate with protecting students and providing a supportive environment rather than promoting difference and valuing diversity (Lingard, 2014). The influence of government in supporting normalised individuals fit for the wider heteronormative community may be conflicting with teachers' sense of liberation for embracing the normalisation of LGBTI identities.

The Waldorf educational movement (DoV2) has been highly influential on pedagogical decisions (Kamen & Shepherd, 2013). A culture of lifelong learning, creativity and education for the real world is the essence of Waldorf education (Morrison, 2009; Steiner, 2013). Teachers taking on this philosophy might embrace diverse sexualities in the primary school context. A Waldorf influence would see a teacher taking on the teaching role as embracing (Category 6) students' sexuality development as part of their learning journey (Kamen & Shepherd, 2013).

An essentialist perspective agrees people are born a certain way and they may have no choice in their sexual orientation (Jagose, 1996). A perspective of, 'that's the way people are born' is the belief of (DoV1) some teachers' in which their pedagogical responses are influenced to be inclusive or embracing of diverse sexualities. It is perceived that because one can't choose their sexual orientation, then all should accept this as a reason for equality and 'normalisation' of diverse sexualities in formal educational contexts.

Currently, teachers are left to **individual** devices (DoV1) to discern an 'appropriate' response to students who they deem may identify with a diverse sexuality. There is no curriculum, training or support for **schools** (DoV2) and teachers to respond to LGBTI students in Queensland (Goldman, 2011, 2012; Queensland Government, 2012). There is little guidance for teachers about the implications of the teacher who has a nonchalant attitude to homophobic bullying, the teacher who avoids the student, the teacher who protects the student or the bully, or the teacher who embraces the student. Teachers respond in a variety of different

ways with the likelihood of grave impacts on the student who is potentially LGBTI or perceived to be LGBTI (Ashman, 2004; Gilchrist, et al., 2003). There are currently no training, limited policies and no support to guide teachers in how to respond to students who are perceived to or actually do identify with a diverse sexuality (Goldman, 2010, 2012; Queensland Government, 2012, 2013).

Teachers' pedagogical responses to homophobic bullying are varied.

The findings in this research are significant in terms of the prevalence of homophobic bullying in primary schools in Queensland. A plethora of research in secondary schools explores homophobic bullying but little attention is paid to homophobic bullying in the primary school arena. While programs have been developed to support secondary school teachers and schooling institutions to respond to homophobic bullying nationally, identified support offered to primary school teachers is limited (Ashman, 2004; Gilchrist, Howarth, & Sullivan, 2003; Harword, 2004; Hillier et al, 2010; Kendall & Sidebotham, 2004; Mikulsky, 2005; Murray, 2001; Sengstock, 2006). The categories of description reveal how teachers respond to homophobic bullying and the dimensions of variation explain the expanding teacher awareness. The external horizon contextualises the phenomenon. The results indicate teachers are not confident in responding to diverse sexualities as a bullying scenario. Specific support related to homophobic bullying for primary schools and teachers in Queensland is minimal (Goldman, 2010). Teachers are left to make professional pedagogical decisions based on personal experiences, beliefs about employer and community expectations embedded in a history of global events and sociological practices.

At points in time, global human rights movements focussed on equality for people regardless of religion, race, sexuality and other oppressed minorities such as those with disabilities. In the late 1960s there were gay liberation movements in some European countries yet the most famous, the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York, launched human rights, legal and social reform for diverse sexualities. The AIDS epidemic hindered gay liberation until the 1990s in which the queer theory movement provided a platform for equality (Altman, 2008). The social and political reforms for LGBTI people over the past fifty years have created an environment in which one could argue for a pedagogical response to diverse sexualities with the position of injustice towards difference, in this case diverse sexualities. Teachers are

part of a society influenced by these major global events and respond in ways reflective of these, at least in part.

Even though significant events have changed some **Western cultural beliefs** (DoV3) about diverse sexualities, there is still a strong culture of heteronormativity (Bridge, 2007). Global historical events and socio-cultural practices developed over time impact on the culture, expectations and practices in schools (Young & Collin, 2004). A **nonchalant** (Category 1) response to sexual diversity by primary school teachers is characterised by school and institutional policies and curriculum bounded by heteronormativity, and the impacts for students are significant. Schools are sites in which bodies are governed to fit a certain gender and sexuality mould (Butler, 1990, DePalma, 2011). They are sites which reinforce and promote a normalised individual suitable for the wider community (Apple, 2004). Teachers' everyday work is influenced by the expectations and unspoken rules espoused by educational institutions and if heterosexuality is part of these unspoken rules, teachers may view 'other' situations about 'other sexualities' then they may not see the relevance or importance of a response. Even though teachers do not refer to these instances of name calling as homophobic bullying, due to the 'hidden' nature of heteronormativity in school and Western culture, the experiences they describe are defined as episodes of homophobic bullying (Nixon, 2010).

Some teachers take the stance that everyone has the same opportunity to learn and develop in schools. Meritocracy espouses that success is based on merit, individual effort (Young, 1994). If a male student is particularly effeminate and is being bullied, a teacher may **avoid** (Category 2) responding to this situation with the belief that the student is responsible for their own actions and if they choose to be effeminate then they need to deal with the consequences. Some teachers did not respond to labelled effeminate boys being bullied because they rationalised that the student chose to be 'flamboyant' or 'creative' or 'always hanging out with the girls'. The bullying was not addressed due to a belief that the student was responsible for their own actions. This pedagogical position doesn't recognise structural (DoV2) or social influences (DoV3) such as heterosexism or heteronormativity (Dwyer, 2010; Ferfolja, 2007; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2000) and reinforces the onus for schooling success on the individual.

Heteronormativity regulates gender practices (Renold, 2006) and legitimises homophobia and homophobic bullying (Bridge, 2007; Renold, 2002). Heteronormativity thus influences teachers to view diverse sexualities as not problematic, not important and not needing to be addressed in the primary school context. Heteronormativity also impacts teachers' agency to discuss and reflect on diverse sexualities issues such as homophobic bullying. Teachers contribute to homophobia through inaction in their response to students' use of homophobic remarks (Micahelson, 2008b; Murray, 2001; Petrovick & Rosiek, 2007). As shown by this study, teachers who are **nonchalant** or **avoid** responding to homophobia may not intend to support homophobia but are unable to move past heteronormative concepts embedded in internal pressures from personal beliefs and external pressures of school or institutional culture (Ferfolja, 2007). Some teachers see no problem with students using homophobic expressions.

Teachers find themselves in situations where students use terms such as 'gay' or 'faggot' or 'lezzo' to insult another student or to refer to something as 'stupid'. Category 1 is defined as teachers being **nonchalant** about responding to diverse sexualities. In particular, some teachers identified students' use of homophobic expressions almost as an accepted daily experience in the primary school context. Homophobic expressions, whether intended as homophobic slurs or not, are terms that are not accepted in parts of the wider community. For example, according to events within Australia's football community (Australian Football League, AFL), a stand is being taken against homophobia and homophobic slurs (Stark, 2013). High profile football stars are publically 'coming out' against homophobic expressions. Public and highly valued socio-cultural practices such as the anti-homophobic stance amongst professional football may encourage teachers to employ a similar stance. Teachers' awareness of personal beliefs, institutional and cultural practices impacts pedagogical decisions and influences the response to diverse sexualities. Awareness of equality for diverse sexualities is influenced by geography and social practices embedded in place (Ragusa, 2006). For example, some teachers accept that diverse sexualities (including homophobic bullying) constitute part of regular derogatory conversation in the local community, "it's a mining town" (Interview E), and therefore implying that homophobic bullying is acceptable in mining towns and by association, in the school community. The geographical location and cultural

practices associated with a community impact the decisions teachers make in order to navigate their understanding of community expectations. **Home and school boundaries** (Category 4) are maintained according to localised expectations whilst juggling wider community values.

Similarly, in other categories, teachers identify experiences in which students are using homophobic expressions although in contrast, they acknowledge the problematic potential. As teachers' awareness expands beyond 'not important' they take on different pedagogical approaches. In Category 2 the teachers see homophobic expressions as problematic: the students are doing it and the teachers acknowledge it as inappropriate but **avoid** the issue. For example, if the teacher believes the student has no concept of diverse sexualities when using a homophobic slur, the teacher may choose to avoid a response with the belief that it is not in the students' realm of understanding (zone of proximal development, Vygotsky, 1997) to acknowledge the issue. If the teacher believes the student has no prior knowledge, including social and cultural knowledge, about diverse sexualities, they may choose not to respond (Gunnarsdóttir, 2013).

In Category 3 (**being uncertain**), the teachers realise the students are using homophobic expressions, see it as problematic but **don't know what to do** about it. In this instance, the teacher may have acknowledged homophobia as a social justice issue influenced perhaps by a critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) in which they identify that there is a social problem with homophobic bullying. However, influences from the expectations of schools and overarching governance (Apple, 2004) from the employer renders within teachers a sense of uncertainty.

Some teachers identify the homophobic bullying and may or may not address it depending on individual beliefs about how the **employer and/or parent community** (Category 4 - maintaining home and school boundaries), may or may not be supportive. Governance (Apple, 2004) influences both the way in which the community are influenced by norms and the way in which the school promotes the normalisation of students. Teachers are key navigators of the pathway between parents' expectations and the expectations from the school (Payne & Smith, 2012) and this impacts on the way in which teachers respond to homophobic bullying.

Category 5 (**protecting**) sees teachers as protecting students when homophobic slurs are used and or protecting the 'bully'. Concepts of childhood innocence

(Postman, 1994) may influence teachers to believe students are too young to be responsible for their actions regarding homophobic bullying and therefore protect the bully because they may not know what they are doing.

Teachers in Category 6 (**embracing**) identify the bullying and address bullying situations as unacceptable in both reactive and proactive ways; they are reactive by addressing the issue on the spot and proactive by embracing diverse sexualities in a positive manner in several aspects of everyday pedagogy. Teachers who are proactive in addressing homophobic bullying issues may be influenced by queer theory in which they challenge the normalisation of sex education and present an alternative perspective (Meyer, 2010).

Teachers who address the homophobic bullying by **embracing** the concept of diverse sexualities may be influenced by the gay and lesbian liberation movement and queer theory or a queer pedagogy. A queer theory or queer pedagogy would attempt to destabilise normalised perspectives on sexuality (Jagose, 1996). Teachers may understand the concept of heteronormativity and attempt to shift student's understanding of sexuality as heteronormative to a broader understanding of diverse sexualities. The teachers who make a pedagogical decision to embrace diverse sexualities are potentially influenced by the underpinning ideas of queer theories.

Some teachers hold a **personal belief** (DoV1) that the use of homophobic expressions such as 'gay' to mean 'stupid' or 'bad' is acceptable. They see 'no problem' with students' use of homophobic expressions and therefore are unable to support equality issues such as addressing homophobia or heteronormativity. They are unable to identify homophobic bullying due to heteronormative concepts embedded in school and institutional policies and procedures and therefore are not addressing homophobic bullying in the primary school context (Apple, 2004; Ferfolja, 2007). As the teachers' awareness expands, the pedagogical responses move from being nonchalant to being proactive about addressing homophobic bullying and embracing diverse sexualities.

Homophobic bullying research is embedded within a wounded perspective. Research in Australia has perpetuated notions of "woundedness" (Harwood & Rasmussen, 2004, p. 317) with homosexuality as a state to 'deal with' or 'have issues around' including the concept of homophobic bullying. As outlined above, in Category 5 (**protecting**) teachers are aware of homophobic bullying and take a

protection stance for both the bully and the student/s being bullied. Regardless of whether the student is perceived to be ‘gay’ or not, the teachers take on the role of protecting the student from harm caused by name calling. This study reveals, through Category 5, a similar outcome to research discussed in the literature regarding the individual or perceived LGBTI victim as the ‘problem’ rather than heteronormativity as a holistic, cultural issue (DoV3) to address (Ashman, 2004; Bridge, 2007; Kendall & Sidebotham, 2004; Michaelson, 2008; Mikulsky, 2005; Murray, 2001).

Unlike other categories, in Category 5, regardless of the teachers’ personal beliefs, school policies or wider social expectations regarding diverse sexualities, the teacher supersedes these with the pedagogical response of protection. Protection provides a situation in which the teacher can ‘safely’ acknowledge the equity agenda, perhaps influenced by the **cultural** (DoV3) movement toward equity for GLBT people, but take shelter from potential risks in the teacher role of protector. However, some teachers actively address homophobic bullying due to personal beliefs about embracing diverse sexualities. Perhaps the influence of the Waldorf approach influences teachers to take into account the development of the whole student in the education process, including the development of a sexual identity (Kamen, 2013).

The implications are vast depending on how the teacher chooses to respond to homophobic bullying. The well-being of students who identify with a diverse sexuality or who may do so later in life is crucial in terms of how homophobic bullying is addressed at school (Mikulsky, 2005). It seems that teachers are not trained in appropriate responses to homophobic bullying and schools are not supported to implement policies and procedures to respond to homophobic bullying in primary schools in Queensland.

Teachers respond to students with same-sex parents in a variety of ways.

This study contributes new evidence about how teachers responded pedagogically to students who raised issues about same-sex parents, same-sex reproduction and students who have same-sex parents with whom the teacher was required to liaise. Teachers were not confident in how to respond to students who discussed same-sex parents or to the parents themselves. The data indicate that if teachers were confident in a pedagogical response it was because of their personal beliefs yet these teachers were still uncertain due to social and institutional

expectations. Participants revealed a variety of responses influenced by an expanding awareness.

Some teachers responded **nonchalantly** (Category 1) to same-sex parents or to students with same-sex parents when the topic was raised. Teachers viewed the sex of parents as not relevant to discuss or acknowledge. The focus of the discussion was on the practicalities of communication and a focus on the student. By not acknowledging the experiences or viewpoint of the student who is facing a heteronormative schooling experience daily the powerful message of silencing ‘other’ forms of sexualities are reinforced (Atkinson, 2002). Negative viewpoints of what is a ‘normal’ home life experience for the student is reinforced by not acknowledging the parental relationship or representations of that relationship in school life. Teachers would have no problem referring to a mum and dad or mum and ‘stepdad name’ relationship, for example, yet some teachers would **avoid** (Category 2) acknowledging relationships consisting of diverse sexualities.

Teachers are mainly **uncertain** (Category 3) about what to do and they grapple to **maintain home and school boundaries** (Category 4). They are not sure what words should be used to refer to parents of the same-sex, how much is ‘appropriate’ to say in front of the class and what other parents will think. Teachers revealed their uncertainty regarding word choice by drawing parallels to pedagogical decisions based on a history of working towards embedding inclusive Indigenous Australian perspectives in schools. Loutzenheiser (2010) highlights unwritten alliances with pedagogies for forms of oppression including racism and heteronormativity. Teachers revealed an uncertainty to use particular words when talking about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and the uncertainty inherent in their experiences of working with students who have same-sex parents. Participants were mostly concerned about ‘mainstream’ parents’ opinions about how teachers responded to same-sex parents and students with same-sex parents. Teachers interviewed did not express concern for the lack of advocacy or representation of families with same-sex parents. The findings of DePalma and Atkinson (2006) who investigated pre-service educators and university students’ ideas about diverse sexualities reveal pre-service educators believe that no parents might be dissatisfied with mis/underrepresentation of diverse sexualities in the curriculum or that parents might be proactive in supporting positive representation of diverse sexualities. Many

participants expressed concern about perspectives within the wider community on diverse sexualities (DoV2). Even when teachers acknowledged same-sex parents, they preferred to **maintain home and school boundaries** by supporting the assumed view of ‘mainstream’ parents, believing heterosexual parents wouldn’t support equity for diverse sexualities (DePalma & Atkinson, 2006). Uncertainties for teachers regarding the outcome of their pedagogical decision to acknowledge diverse sexualities in the context of same-sex parents are complex.

Some teachers acknowledge the potential difficulties for students with same-sex parents and act to **protect** (Category 5) them. Whilst not embracing diverse sexualities, if a student has same-sex parents, some teachers actively protected individuals from perceived or real harm. One teacher, for example, ‘accepted’ his/her student openly referred to his/her two mummies in front of the Year Two class. This teacher became protective when other students began using the same-sex parent situation as a bullying platform and discouraged the ‘bullying’ yet he/she did not openly discuss the family’s living arrangement. She/he protected the student by discouraging the language used but did not teach the students nor validate the student that it was OK or safe to continue referring to his/her parents as mummies. The teacher reinforced that it was not acceptable to use ‘those’ words to try and offend or hurt someone’s feelings. The teacher responded in this way because he/she thought the students were too young to understand. Teachers may hold beliefs about sexuality based on concepts of childhood innocence. This teacher’s pedagogical response was born from the belief that sexuality is the type of knowledge that defines and separates adult and children (Postman, 1994) and that this knowledge should remain with adults.

The teachers whose pedagogical responses **embraced** (Category 6) same-sex parents were influenced by individual experiences. Teachers who responded by openly supporting same-sex parents identified with a diverse sexuality themselves or had close family and friends who identified as homosexual. The personal experiences of teachers highlighted the power of interpersonal relationships and identity in influencing pedagogical decisions based on embracing diverse sexualities for social justice.

This new evidence about how teachers respond to families with same-sex parents has implications for students, teachers and educational institutions. Similar

levels of adjustment are reported to impact on students of same-sex parents and their families and students of heterosexual parents but the research does not explore the impact of teachers' pedagogy (Ray & Gregory, 2001). The potential difference the teachers' response could make to a student with same-sex parents could have an enormous impact on the child and the family. Teachers in Queensland primary schools are not provided with any formal guidance in how to respond to families with diverse sexualities (Goldman, 2012). This study shows that teachers variously respond by being nonchalant, avoiding the issue, being uncertain about how to respond, maintaining home/school boundaries, protecting students or embracing the issue. The data indicate these teachers' lack of confidence in their responses. Teachers make pedagogical decisions based on personal beliefs and school and Western cultural influences, rather than on evidence-based guidelines. Educational institutions provide minimal pre-service training or in-service training to teachers, and there are no policies, procedures or resources to support a consistent pedagogical response by teachers to families consisting of diverse sexualities (Carman, Mitchell, Schlichthorst, & Smilth, 2010; Robinson, Ferfolja & Irwin, 2002).

Teachers who identify themselves as homosexual or lesbian and teachers who identify colleagues as identifying with a diverse sexuality is not the focus of this research. However, participant sexuality identity was raised a number of times by the teachers interviewed and the relevance of teacher sexuality identity became evident upon reviewing the transcripts. Teachers revealed the impact of **personal beliefs** (DoV1) about personal sexuality identity on their pedagogical decisions when responding to concepts of diverse sexualities within everyday teaching experiences. Teacher sexuality identity research suggests that teachers experience deep moral conflict about 'coming out' or being 'outed' as LGBTI in a heteronormative environment (Epstein, 1994, Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2005). The evidence revealed from this research confirms the difficulty for teachers who identify with diverse sexualities to reconcile their personal sexuality identity and 'appropriate' pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context.

Teachers are influenced by **socially constructed ideals** (DoV3) about sexuality which evolved prior to the twentieth century and some of these ideals are still represented in contemporary cultural beliefs and practices about diverse sexualities. As explored in Chapter 3, the seventeenth and eighteenth century saw sexuality as

something to be policed, politicised, controlled and influenced by religion (Lipkin, 2004a). The rise of capitalism further inspired the ideal family consisting of married man and women and their children, a respectable adulthood (Weeks, 1981). These values are still espoused in contemporary classrooms in Queensland with teachers sharing their experiences about ‘hiding’ their own sexuality for fear of physical safety and employment ramifications. Not ‘game’ to reveal their same-sex relationships and or diverse family ideals to students for fear of societal ‘back lash’ by parents, employers and the wider community such as community publications. Teachers feel justified in protecting the bully because of these ideals, that students are aware or don’t know any different. Teachers believe students are influenced by the ‘traditional’ family makeup and that they themselves need to reflect this representation of sexuality (Weeks, 1981).

In some instances, teachers were worried about professional repercussions from **school** (DoV2) administration should they make a pedagogical response to concepts of diverse sexualities. For example, if a teacher was to respond to a student in a Catholic school who asked the teacher if they were gay and the teacher responded honestly, the teacher feared they would be dismissed, or the teacher who feared parent and community abuse should they become aware of his/her sexual orientation as a homosexual. Research by Hillier and Harrison (2004, p. 81) suggests that schools and educational institutions “which are supported by the church and the state, sanction heterosexuality” and teachers’ practices are dampened by dominant heteronormativity. Hence, the consequences that could ensue if the teachers were to respond in these scenarios are perceived by the teachers as real and potentially devastating for them as professionals but also in their personal lives.

Sociocultural practices (DoV2) of governance impact significantly on the pedagogical choices of teachers who identify with a diverse sexuality. Not only are schools sites to govern student behaviour reflective of wider society but also the behaviour of teachers (Foucault, 1991; Ball, 1990). Although educational commentary by Donnelly (2004) is not as brash as Willar Waller’s work in 1932 where he claims homosexuality was a disease which teachers could pass on to students and therefore should not be teaching, it is clear there is still a sense of fear in the more contemporary educational research field. Educational commentator Donnelly (2004) points out the education union argues for the rights of homosexual

teachers, he goes on to highlight that ‘many parents would consider the sexual practices of gays, lesbians and transgender individuals as decidedly unnatural and that such groups have a greater risk in terms of transmitting STDs and AIDS’ (Donnelly, 2004, p155). The Sydney Morning Herald construed Donnelly’s work as suggesting “only heterosexual teachers have a right to teach students about sexual matters” (Hutchens, 2014). Donnelly was commissioned to review the inaugural Australian Curriculum, launched in 2012, early in 2014, so his enquiry is still underway. The behaviour of teachers and expectations espoused by some of the educational community continue to govern the sexual behaviour and freedom of teachers.

Western cultural beliefs (DoV3) and practices and sociological influences such as governance impact on teachers pedagogical decisions to respond to contexts inclusive of diverse sexualities. Even when the situation relates to the teachers’ own sexual identity, the external demands on the teachers play out in everyday situations in classrooms in Queensland.

Teachers respond in a variety of ways to address diverse sexualities as part of ‘sex education’.

The debate regarding ‘who’ is responsible for sex education in Australia has been occurring since the 1970s. In the 1950s and 60s formal sex education was non-existent in schools; it was thought of as a private matter (Robinson & Davies, 2008; Tierney & Dille, 1998). However, in more contemporary times the shift in responsibility has moved into the school arena. The debate over the responsibility for educating children about sex and sexuality and what should or shouldn’t be included is one element in the history of the development of sex education in Australia (Walker & Milton, 2006). There are other wider social and political trends both nationally and internationally that have influenced education curriculum and policy development such as religious, cultural and political perspectives (Ashman, 2004; Jones & Hillier, 2012). Category 4 (maintaining home and school boundaries) reveals teachers’ conceptions that the parent community has ‘expected’ to have a say and be informed about how schools implement sex education but there are exceptions. The boundaries of responsibility for sex education are being maintained by teachers and a range of perceived and or actual perceptions of parents and the wider community are driving some teachers’ pedagogical decisions.

As outlined earlier in Chapter 2, students know about diverse sexualities but appear to be mis/informed by media, parents and peers (Robinson, 2008). Teachers of students in the early years tended to view the students as too young to know about sexuality and that it was the role of the parents to inform them at such a ‘young age’. As such, some teachers **avoided** (Category 2) addressing diverse sexualities in the early years and specifically directed students to talk with their parents about ‘these’ issues. Some teachers viewed formal sex education as not important hence, a **nonchalant** (Category 1) response. An interrogation of childhood development theories, such as the work of Jean Piaget (1951), has impacted on concepts around appropriate ages for children to engage in sex education (Robinson & Davies, 2008). As teachers moved into being responsible for older students they were more likely to be open to ‘appropriateness’ of sex education. Recognising sex education as currently a predominantly heteronormative approach to sex education, if included at all, is related to concepts of childhood innocence (Robinson, 2008). Teachers define students as too innocent to know about sexuality without acknowledging, as Blaise (2009) found, that they actually do know a lot about sexuality (heterosexuality) from a very young age.

Teachers are influenced by school and **institutional culture** and practices (DoV2). Heteronormative messages are communicated through the formal curriculum and implementation of government and school policies (Meyer, 2009). Teachers in primary schools in Queensland are working in conditions where requirements to include diverse sexualities in the curriculum are non-existent. Homophobic bullying policies at the state level are non-existent. Training opportunities to educate teachers about social equity issues such as homophobic bullying are not available in Queensland. Heteronormativity within the wider community and **Western cultural practices** (DoV3) impacts on the non-inclusion of diverse sexualities and the institutional decisions not to include formal documentation, teacher training or resources to support teachers in responding to diverse sexualities.

Teachers are **uncertain** (Category 3) about a growing cultural understanding (DoV3) of the equality agenda for LGBTI people and the rights and responsibilities of teachers. Teachers make suggestions such as referring to ‘other’ issues such as racism or prejudice against people with disabilities to support pedagogical decisions

suggesting they acknowledge the social equity agenda regarding diverse sexualities. Teachers make connections between how they respond to racism or other forms of prejudice and use this as a potential guide to respond to diverse sexualities. For example, some teachers, across a range of categories were questioning the use of appropriate terminology relating to Indigenous Australians and using this as a pedagogical guide for talking about diverse sexualities. Some participants suggested there was something to be learnt about how we teach students to be respectful of people with different cultural backgrounds and disabilities and perhaps an approach underpinned by a philosophy of ‘difference is good’ should be adopted. “Teaching for sexual diversity means students learning about how different cultural groups make meaning of sexuality, appreciating these differences without judgment, and understanding that it is respect for (as opposed to toleration of) these differences that mark a democratic pluralist society” (Sears, 1997, p. 4). Some teachers, however, reveal they have concerns about equality for LGBTI people in how they are represented in schools and in how the teachers respond, potentially in heteronormative ways. Heteronormativity denies students an education of sexuality that needs to be more “in sync with the changing lives of children and their diversity of family experiences” (Robinson & Davies, 2008, p. 237). Some teachers acknowledge the changing reality in which diverse sexualities are more ‘visible’ (Ferfolja, 2007) to students but they are unsure what to do given the moral and religious dimensions of this issue in wider society (DoV3) (Apple, 2004; Weeks, 2000). This research shows that teachers make pedagogical decisions to link experiences of diverse sexualities with ‘other’ diversity issues that arise in schools.

Conflicting with teachers’ ideals (DoV1) about LGBTI equality is a sense of heteronormativity (DoV2 & 3), hence some teachers’ conceptions of their pedagogical responses as being **uncertain** (Category 3). There is a culture of heteronormativity embedded in school culture (DoV2) with a rich history of normalising heterosexuality. For example, the history in Australian educational contexts sees teachers of the late 1980s being forbidden by the government to tell the ‘truth’ about sexuality (Harwood, 2004). There are teachers currently teaching in schools in Queensland who were teaching at that time and these concepts linger in teachers’ minds and contribute to the ongoing culture of heteronormativity. Some teachers in this study feel that they should be supportive and value the individual but

are **uncertain** about how they ‘should’ respond and are unable to find supportive resources and/or training. In 2010, Carmen, Mitchell, Schlichthorst and Smith reported over half of the tertiary institutions in Australia that are providers of pre-service teacher education training include sex education but this is not necessarily compulsory. It is evident that teachers may be justified in their perceptions within this current research of a lack of pre-service training or in-service training and support from school and educational institutions. Heteronormativity and concepts of childhood innocence influence tertiary education systems which do not embed diverse sexualities in curricula for pre-service educators. Also influencing tertiary institutions are government policies and procedures and other institutions such as teacher registration bodies (DoV2) (Carman, et al., 2010).

School based policies, national and school based curriculum and **institutional policies** and procedures (DoV2) are unclear regarding sexual diversities. Education Queensland has an Inclusive Education Statement previously published in 2006, however, prior to 9 July 2012 it did not specifically include “sexual orientation” or similar as key words to clearly define “sexuality” (Queensland Government, 2012, <http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/learning/Pages/Inclusive-Education.aspx>). The teachers interviewed for this study did not identify the Inclusive Education Statement as a known document to them nor were they able to identify specific curriculum or resources to support pedagogical decisions. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Queensland Government, in 2012, included specific definitions of terminology such as ‘diversity’ and ‘inclusive curriculum’ to encompass notions of sexual orientation. This allows a different reading of the *Inclusive Education Statement* (2006) to be inclusive of diverse sexualities. However, given that participants were not aware of the document and the lack of guidance on how to implement inclusive curriculum or pedagogical responses, change in teachers’ pedagogical responses at the coal face are unlikely. Interestingly, some teachers referred to employers’ code of conduct guidelines as a supposed directive about inclusive responses to diverse sexualities; however, the code of conduct from Education Queensland does not direct teachers’ responsibilities regarding diverse sexualities. The recently developed Education Queensland’s policy on *Supporting Same Sex Attracted, Intersex or Transgender Students at School* (Queensland Government, 2013) was not developed when the

teachers were interviewed. The policy has since been removed. Non-state employed participants did not refer to official documentation.

Concepts of heteronormativity permeate the **cultural systems** (DoV3) in which teachers are working. Primary school students know about sexual diversities and raise questions, share ideas and engage in or are exposed to homophobic bullying in classrooms and playgrounds. The data reported here show that teachers respond in a variety of ways to sexual diversities influenced by concepts of childhood innocence and heteronormativity. These concepts are embedded in cultural (DoV3) and institutional practices (DoV2) and personal beliefs (DoV1) of teachers (Bower & Klecka, 2009).

More recent trends towards equality for LGBTI people from other Western countries and wider Australian government laws and policies have influenced education policy to be inclusive of diverse sexualities in school practices (DoV2 & 3). This is reflected in some teachers' conceptions to include diverse sex education regardless of parental wishes and or school or state institutional policy. This is similar to the findings from Milton's research (2004) in which teachers acknowledge that children have the right to sex education as sometimes parents do not have the conversations about sexuality, although the teachers in Milton's research were involved in a project where parent input was a key element. Significantly, the current study reveals that there are teachers who are not concerned about parents' views about diverse sexualities education; rather, **teachers believe** (DoV1) students have the right to be informed about diverse sexualities and believe students should be taught to be respectful of sexual difference regardless of parental input. Some teachers believe they are **protecting** (Category 5) students by educating students about protective behaviours and healthy relationships inclusive of diverse sexuality concepts. This finding makes an original contribution to the field in Australian literature regarding sex education and teacher pedagogy.

Category 4, **maintaining home and school boundaries**, suggests that there is a continuum of consultation between teacher and parent (Figure 6.2). At one end of the spectrum teachers believe sex education, formal or informal, is the responsibility of the parent/carer. At the other end, the teacher takes sole responsibility with no consultation with parents. In between are varying instances of teacher and school versus parent and community responsibility for responding to diverse sexualities.

Teachers maintain boundaries along this imagined continuum depending on personal beliefs (DoV1), school and institutional expectations (DoV2) and Western cultural influences (DoV3).

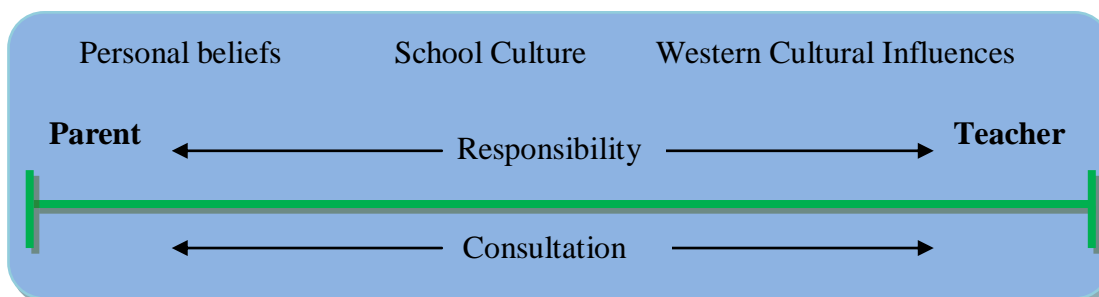


Figure 6.2 Teachers’ conceptions of diverse sexualities education: responsibility and consultation

Category 6, **embracing** diverse sexualities, reveals no continuum but a representation of how teachers’ personal beliefs influence their pedagogical responses to embrace diverse sexualities within the curriculum. Research regarding heteronormativity and homophobic bullying and the ongoing movement towards equality for LGBTI people through changes in Commonwealth Law (2010) may explain why teachers are embracing diverse sexualities in the primary school context. Teachers acknowledge heteronormativity and the need to address bullying as a holistic problem, not the problem of the individual as suggested by the woundedness perspective (Harwood & Rasmussen, 2004). Some teachers embrace diverse sexualities as part of everyday teaching and learning, including formal sex education classes.

Research conducted in primary schools in the United Kingdom and Australia share contemporary views on the responsibility of the school or family for sex education (Category 4, **maintain home and school boundaries**). Walker and Milton (2006) suggest that schools, families and communities are “progressing towards securing pragmatic partnerships” (p. 423) Although a move towards pragmatic partnerships to support school and community engagement in sex education is positive, there were still teachers who were concerned with parents’ opinions. This study reveals similar outcomes in relation to some teachers who are concerned about what parents think about sex education; they are concerned for parents’ rights and responsibilities yet there are teachers who are not concerned at

all. As discussed earlier (Chapter 5, Category 4), some teachers have **personal beliefs** (DoV1) that primary school students have rights to sex education (inclusive of diverse sexualities), justifying their views with the belief that not all parents communicate with their children about sexuality which was also revealed by Milton (2004). The mothers in Milton's research were earnest in ensuring all students were educated about sexual orientation because they wanted their children to be "tolerant of sexual diversity" (p. 22) as opposed to sexual diversity being normalised. Some teachers in this study reveal they are not necessarily concerned for parental input but are responding to diverse sexualities with a view to move past tolerance and acceptance and towards teaching respect of difference (Category 6 – **embracing**). In some instances, teachers revealed frustration as to why there was so much pressure on them that they could not present diverse sexualities as 'normal' that is, non-heteronormative.

Education Queensland employed participants didn't reveal awareness of Education Queensland policy or procedures regarding Inclusive Education yet some are responding in ways that their employer now espouses. Some teachers' decisions to embrace diverse sexualities align with the Queensland Government's recent addition to the policies and procedures register:

Inclusive curriculum: acknowledge[s] sexuality, [teachers] use contexts for learning that develop attitudes, values, knowledge and skills for students to accept; value and respect others and preparing students for positive participation in work, family and civic life; provide a range of approaches, practices and procedures that contribute to better outcomes, competencies and academic achievements for all students and help create an inclusive society; and evaluate their effectiveness on a regular basis (Queensland Government, 2012, p. 1).

This quote from the Queensland Government suggests that teachers should be responding to homophobic bullying, homophobia, heteronormativity and teaching for an equitable education and future for all, inclusive of diversity (diverse sexualities). This research reveals that there are some teachers who are fulfilling Education Queensland's policy and procedures regarding the Inclusive Education Policy. However, it appears the Queensland Education Department has not further considered the impact these changes may have on schools, teachers and students as they have not indicated dissemination of the update to schools or the wider

community nor was there indication of further training and support for schools to implement the changes. Clearly, some state employed teachers are not aware of their employer's stance on diverse sexualities or any formal documentation regarding diverse sexualities. Teachers are motivated to embrace diverse sexualities, to be inclusive because of **personal beliefs** (DoV1), not because of policy direction, which leads to inconsistency in responses. Teachers employed by the state and other educational institutions respond through nonchalance, avoidance, uncertainty, maintenance of home and school boundaries and protection of students. These responses are based on a range of historical, personal, school and culturally based beliefs and practices regardless of any known/unknown policy.

The research findings of Gerouki (2010) regarding diverse sexualities in Greek primary schools were discussed in Chapter 2. Given the findings of her research, it is pertinent to draw comparisons with this research more specifically. Gerouki (2010) reveals that teachers respond to sexual minority issues by ignoring the issues, dismissing the issues as unimportant or recalling a humorous type response. Gerouki (2010) refers to diverse sexuality as 'sexual minority issues' and revealed that Greek teachers were influenced by a generally conservative culture in which diverse sexuality was seen as taboo. The alignment of these findings with this research is evident in Category 2, where teachers avoid diverse sexuality, and in Category 1, where they respond with nonchalance. The influence of a conservative culture described by Gerouki is similar to this research confirming that dimension of variation three, cultural influences, impacts on teachers' pedagogical decisions. This research extends Gerouki's work with the finding of other pedagogical responses by Australian teachers in Queensland and the revelation of the impact of not only cultural influences (DoV3) but also institutional (DoV2) and personal beliefs (DoV1) of teachers. Adding further to Gerouki's work is the revelation of teachers' hierarchical awareness, influenced by the dimensions of variation, of their pedagogical responses to concepts of diverse sexualities. This research confirms Gerouki's work and extends the understanding of a range of teachers' pedagogical responses. This research also extends Gerouki's reference to 'sexual minority issues' as the phenomenon, to a range of scenarios defined by teachers' as concepts of diverse sexualities. Teachers in this study revealed a variety of scenarios involving diverse sexualities and a variety of pedagogical responses.

The key finding in relation to sex education is some teachers' willingness to include diverse sexualities in the formal curriculum regardless of what parents, the school and the wider community may think or expect (revealed in Category 6, embracing). This willingness to include diverse sexualities in the curriculum, however, is not consistently embraced. Teachers are not trained to deliver formal sex education learning experiences, inclusive of diverse sexualities, as there is no formal curriculum nor is there training available in pre-service or in-service contexts in Queensland.

While educational practices and institutional policies are silent on guidance and support for teachers and students are exposed to multiple representations of diverse sexualities in their daily lives, students in the primary school arena are beginning to challenge cultural norms in which diverse sexualities are subversive. The heteronormative culture of schooling is being challenged by students in the way of the scenarios revealed in this research, and teachers are unsupported to respond consistently and appropriately. Section 6.2 situated the findings in this research, the outcome space (Section 6.1), within the social constructionist framework presented in Chapter 3, including the broader field of sociology and education and teacher pedagogy, highlighting the empirical contribution. Links were made between teachers' conceptions and the historical context in which their everyday working lives are situated.

6.3 Contribution to the field: diverse sexualities in primary educational contexts

The contribution of this research to the international field of sex education, pedagogy and diverse sexualities is distinctive. The key discovery of the prevalence of diverse sexualities scenarios that teachers encounter is a significant contribution to the research field. The second contribution, the collective representation of teachers' pedagogical decisions in response to diverse sexualities is like no other research in primary schools in Australia. Other research, as discussed in the literature review, is focussed on formal curriculum, homophobic bullying and secondary school contexts. This research allowed primary teachers to describe the phenomenon of 'diverse sexualities' and reveal pedagogical conceptions by describing lived experiences. This research reveals a direct insight into the 'reality' of primary school teachers' experiences and the influences from within and around them that contribute to

pedagogical decisions when formal and informal situations arise in which diverse sexualities concepts are in focus. This study contributes to the research community, teacher educators and education policy makers in Queensland and Australia and has implications for students, teachers and educational institutions.

This research contributes new knowledge to the research field by highlighting primary students' willingness to share knowledge of diverse sexualities, and particularly the prevalence of homophobic bullying in the Queensland primary school context. Previous research in high schools in Australia describes high instances of homophobic bullying (Hillier et al., 2010; Michaelson, 2008; Milkusky, 2005; Sengstock, 2004). This study demonstrates that homophobic bullying does not just 'appear' in high school, but rather it exists in the primary school context as well. Teachers in this study report ongoing daily occurrences of homophobic expressions being used in Queensland primary classrooms. Although homophobic bullying was not the focus of the research, not highlighting the evidence of homophobic bullying shared by the participants during interviews would be remiss. This finding demonstrates that primary students are aware of, and prepared to vocalise knowledge about diverse sexualities. Considering the above mentioned research in high schools which discusses the devastating potential impacts on LGBTI students or perceived LGBTI students, the implications from the current study are significant.

It would also be remiss not to highlight the extent to which some teachers are unaware of their role and responsibilities regarding diverse sexualities, given their frequent encounters with scenarios of this nature. Guidelines and strategies are not included in curriculum or policy, pre-service or in-service opportunities. This research provides evidence to support the need for pre-service and in-service education for teachers about teaching for social equity, in particular sexuality (Carman, Mitchell, Schlichthorst, & Smith, 2010; Goldstein, Russell, & Daley, 2007; Ollis, 2010; Robinson & Ferfolja, 2008; Walker & Milton, 2006). This research contributes to the field of educational policy both in Australia and within the state of Queensland. There is some previous research on curriculum in Queensland regarding the neglect of teachers and schools to implement comprehensive sex education with any consistency (Goldman, 2010). Since Goldman's research, Australia introduced an inaugural Australian Curriculum, commencing in 2012 with the first implementation of four disciplinary fields across primary and secondary education.

The current draft of the national health curriculum includes the key idea of “relationships and sexuality” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012, p. 4) within the strand of “personal, social and community health” (p. 3). The relationships and sexuality section is elaborated with “exploring sexual and gender identities” (p. 6), however, the document does not specifically include concepts of diverse sexualities, sexual orientation, or gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual people.

Evidence from this research reveals that students and teachers require curriculum and policy guidance in order to approach diverse sexualities in the primary school context with continuity and from an informed perspective. Educational policy in Queensland is currently minimalist in addressing diverse sexualities and there is no evidence of policy support for schools or teachers to implement practices that are inclusive of diverse sexualities. Students are subject to school and teacher discretion regarding the way in which information is presented to them about sexualities.

6.4 Research potential for the future

This research revealed teachers’ conceptions of pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context. It has been revealed that teachers respond in a number of qualitatively different ways (categories of description) with variation within each category (dimensions of variation). The focus on teachers’ conceptions of this phenomenon can potentially form the basis of future research in related areas.

The research raises a number of questions for potential research into pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in primary school contexts. For example, are teachers’ conceptions similar throughout the country? There is scope to replicate the research in other states and territories of Australia. Furthermore, how should teachers respond to diverse sexualities? There is potential to trial school based projects to support teachers and schools to explore and develop a consistent pedagogical approach. This research revealed training and support for teachers is minimal; what are educational institutions and tertiary pre-service education providers providing in terms of policy, projects and training? An understanding of students’ experiences of diverse sexualities in the primary school would offer further

insights into this phenomenon. This research provides a platform for further research regarding diverse sexualities in primary schools.

6.5 Conclusion

The conclusion will discuss ‘real world’ implications for teachers, schools, education institutions, teacher educators and the community, including LGBTI people. A summary of the findings of this research are presented.

This research reveals a collective representation of teachers’ conceptions of pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school context as:

- Being nonchalant: diverse sexualities are not important
- Avoiding: sexual diversity is problematic
- Being uncertain: diverse sexualities are an unknown
- Maintaining home and school boundaries: diverse sexualities has boundaries of ‘appropriateness’ between home and school
- Protecting: teachers are motivated by a perceived responsibility to be protectors of students
- Embracing: diverse sexualities are embraced as part of life.

The dimensions of variation across the categories include: teacher beliefs, school and institutional culture and Western socio-cultural influences aligning with the theoretical underpinning of social constructionism. The dimensions of variation identify variation within these conceptions of the phenomena; three dimensions delineate connections and differences between the categories.

The implications for **teachers** as a result of this research are complex. Not only is it evident that teachers are unaware of employers’ policies and procedures, it is evident that they are not trained or supported to respond to diverse sexualities in the primary school context. Teachers’ beliefs are evident as a motivator for them to justify how and why they make pedagogical decisions responding to diverse sexualities. Teachers’ personal beliefs from individual and personal life experiences are a key resource when making pedagogical decisions. Palmer (2007) explains that genetics, culture, previous personal deeds (good and bad), the experience of love and pain and other emotions; contribute to teacher beliefs about themselves. Teachers in

this study shared personal limits, fears, strengths and potentials and how these influences from personal lives contribute to pedagogical decisions (Palmer, 2007). Teachers' beliefs about diverse sexualities include: diverse sexualities as not important, diverse sexualities as problematic, diverse sexualities breed uncertainty, diverse sexualities knowledge needs to be maintained between home and school boundaries, the primary responsibility of the teacher is to protect students and diverse sexualities is part of everyday life. Across the categories teachers describe their inner beliefs and values as triggering an ethical dilemma when making pedagogical decisions about diverse sexualities. They grapple with ideas of responsibility, ethical alignment with parents and school community and how this impacts on their own values and personal integrity (Palmer, 2007). Teachers revealed personal views by sharing boundaries between themselves and their students' lives, and their actual or perceived views of parents' rights and responsibilities. As Palmer (2007) suggests, "unlike many professions, teaching is always done at the dangerous intersection of personal and public life" (p.40). Teachers cannot separate personal lives and personal experiences from teaching; their beliefs impact on their pedagogical decisions about diverse sexualities. It would be naive to consider that the individual, however, is not influenced by school and cultural practices and expectations.

Educational institutions such as the state education department, independent schools and Catholic schools are vitally important in the support and development of schools and teachers to provide equitable education for all. The findings from this study indicate that teachers are not provided with clear or consistent direction or professional support in regards to responding to diverse sexualities by schools or educational institutions. School and institutional culture influences teachers' pedagogical decision making when faced with the concept of diverse sexualities in the primary school context. Teachers share their experiences of how primary schools in Queensland tend to reflect the wider Western, social culture: white, middle-class, heteronormative. A culture of heteronormativity is governed at the school level and teachers are 'pressured' to maintain the status quo. They are influenced by institutional values and priorities such as: no formal inclusion of diverse sexualities in curriculum, school leadership values, unclear policies and procedures, negotiations with the community that are deemed as 'appropriate', 'protecting' notions of childhood innocence and 'permission' to be autonomous. Yet, there are teachers who

are working against deeply entrenched heteronormative practices to teach in more equitable ways; embracing diverse sexualities. Teachers feel both an immense internal pressure, and pressure from schools and community expectations, yet at the same time are left to make personal choices about their responses to diverse sexualities without any pedagogical confidence. The diversity, variation and complexity of pedagogical responses as outlined here, reveal heteronormative primary school based cultural pressures, which are compounded by wider social and cultural pressures.

Western socio-cultural practices underpin the culture of schools including the way in which teachers respond to diverse sexualities within the primary school context. The Western cultural climate regarding perspectives on diverse sexualities ebbs and flows and teachers reveal their conceptions of pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities as being influenced by Western culture and community social practices. For example, teachers described:

- the culture of the school: ‘people’ reinforcing a culture of heteronormativity
- sexual diversity being viewed as problematic in society
- pressure from governments
- religious views
- other socio-cultural ‘problems’ e.g. racism
- community input regarding ‘appropriate’ diverse sexualities education
- concepts of protecting ‘innocent’ students and
- an equality movement for LGBTI people.

The influences are complex. In Australia, a history of cultural non-acceptance of diverse sexualities has been mostly driven by Christian concepts. However, during recent times an increased visibility of various Christian groups support for diverse sexualities has been seen. For example, the Gay Christian Network was founded in 2001 (The Gay Christian Network, 2013). Government decisions to acknowledge LGBTI rights in Commonwealth Law demonstrate an equality movement such as the recent passing of the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Bill (Potts, 2013); an historic movement as the first Sex

Discrimination Bill in the world to include intersex (Intersex Australia, 2013). Yet pressure from conservative Christian groups has some influence on governments to deny equal marriage rights. Many countries the world over are consenting legally to same-sex marriage (Australian Marriage Equality, 2013), which is contributing to the equality movement in Australia. Negative and unequal representations of diverse sexualities perpetuate heteronormativity which is part of why some teachers are nonchalant in their response. These public debates, such as the marriage equality debate, challenge heteronormativity in the lives of teachers in the primary school context. Such visible and heated debates, however, mean that diverse sexualities are represented in the media and community as problematic and often perverse.

Cultural ideals that link perversity with sex and sexuality perpetuate ideas about protecting students from knowledge about sexuality. Postman (1994) presents the idea of the ‘disappearing child’ as he discusses elements of Western culture that define the adult and child boundaries, one of which is sex and sexuality. He argues that the Western idea of ‘child’ is disappearing and that the media has been a key influence in this movement. Television in particular has deprivatised sex and sexuality from being accessed by adults to being visible to many, including children. Children know about sex and sexuality from very young ages due to ‘exposure’ (Robinson, 2008). Teachers are in the position of having to respond to more ‘visible’ instances in which students are perhaps more ‘sexualised’ and more knowledgeable about diverse sexualities.

The implications for the wider community are significant, especially LGBTI young people. This research reveals scenarios in which diverse sexualities are raised daily, particularly homophobic bullying which is prevalent in primary schools in Queensland. Teachers are not adequately equipped to respond. The statistics presented in the literature review outlining the grave disadvantage most LGBTI young people are facing are staggering (Ashman, 2004; Gilchrist, et al., 2003; Hillier, et al., 2010). This research demonstrates that teachers are not supported to respond to diverse sexualities in a pedagogically informed and consistent manner or a socially equitable approach. Training institutions of pre-service teachers and employers of teachers must develop and provide policy, procedures and training to support an equitable education for all, particularly for people who identify with a diverse sexuality, to achieve the goal of promoting a socially just society.

Teachers in Queensland currently do not have evidence-based guidelines to support their pedagogical decisions to respond to the student who says, ‘that’s so gay’ or ‘I like boys’ or ‘can girls have sex changes to be a boy?’ Teachers are not supported to respond to diverse sexualities because of unclear employer policies and procedures, a lack of pre-service and in-service training, and a lack of support from school administrators in dealing with scenarios involving diverse sexualities. Teachers are left to grapple with personal beliefs and school and wider community expectations about diverse sexualities.

A day in the life of a primary school teacher is changing. The vocalisation of primary school students’ knowledge and experiences of diverse sexualities is demonstrated in this research and teachers are faced with finding ways of responding. Teachers’ revealed their conceptions of their pedagogical responses to diverse sexualities in the primary school were varied, complex and laden with various tensions. Responding to diverse sexualities is a complex and often emotionally charged topic, particularly with reference to the primary school context and young children. However, a proactive approach to addressing sex education inclusive of diverse sexualities and homophobic bullying is required to address the inequalities inherent in heteronormative schooling practices and heteronormative teacher pedagogies. Detailed and comprehensive policy and curriculum is required to support schools and primary school teachers to implement safe, supportive school environments for all students. Both in-service and pre-service training is required to support teachers in critically reflecting on the potentially powerful position they hold to educate for social justice. Protection for teachers is needed so they can be honest; teach fearlessly for the rights of all their students and for all people in society. Changes are required to support teachers to make well-informed, critically aware, pedagogical decisions about diverse sexualities that promote the values of a socially just society.

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Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Com)

Work Place Relations Act 1996 (Com)

Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Application

	University Human Research Ethics Committee APPLICATION FOR REVIEW OF LOW RISK RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
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APPLICATION SECTIONS: A Research Proposal Overview | B Participant Overview | C Data Management | D Check List

SECTION A: RESEARCH PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

A1 Summary Information

A1.1 Project Title

Teachers' accounts of how they respond to primary school students who communicate ideas about non-heterosexuality

A1.2 Brief summary of project in lay language

The purpose of this project is to gather teachers' accounts of how they respond to primary school students who communicate ideas about sexuality other than heterosexuality. The focus of the research is on the teachers' view of their teaching experiences.

Scenario

Reece: That's so gay! (He refers to his blunt pencil which he throws on the floor.)

Teacher: Does this pencil look like it has a sex? Can you tell if it is female or male because last time I checked, in order to be gay you had to have a sex?

Reece: I dunno.

Teacher: Well, I'm telling you this pencil does not have a sex and cannot possibly have a sexual orientation. And if it did, and you were to call it gay in a derogatory manner, it would be inappropriate. Got it?!

Reece: (Raised eyebrows and cheeky grin on face.)

Mark: I have an uncle that is gay and I think what gay men do is disgusting.

Teacher: You are entitled to your opinion Mark but I think what you're talking about is a private matter for your uncle.

Mark: Well, I think all gay men are disgusting.

Teacher: I'm not sure what to say to you other than I know other people don't think the same way and maybe you could talk to your parents about this.

I am the teacher in this scenario. The scenario is a real experience from when I was a year six teacher in Queensland, Australia. The students would sometimes say 'that's so gay' and I tried to address this as a classroom teacher by talking to the students about how inappropriate it was to say such things. The scenario above describes how one of my students responded to me after I had reprimanded another student for saying his broken pencil was gay. When the students would say 'that's so gay' I found it offensive not only for me personally but for the inequality the term promotes for all GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender) people. What if one of my other students was to identify as homosexual? The most frustrating element of scenarios like the one I have described above is that the students used the term so frequently that they believed they were not doing anything wrong. As a teacher, I did not know how to address the issue. This scenario is not a standalone experience as I have had other experiences where students communicated knowledge about sexuality other than heterosexual. How are other teachers 'dealing' with these situations? What are they doing? How are they responding when students communicate ideas about gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered people? It is important how teachers respond as their actions have significant impacts on how students experience and view the world (Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007).

Please see attachment 1 "Literature Review".

Phenomenography is the research approach for the proposed study. Phenomenography is useful in identifying teachers' conceptions as it focuses on qualitatively different ways in which people experience and understand a particular phenomenon (Marton, 1986).

The participants in this research will be approximately 20 primary school teachers in Queensland, Australia. The process to be used for 'selecting' participants for interview will initially be through volunteering followed by process where each participant is asked to refer the researcher to other potential participants (Noy, 2008). Open-ended questioning in an interview context has been widely used by phenomenographers (Åkerlind, 2008; Marton, 1986; Trigwell & Prosser, 1997).

The data from the interviews will be processed and analysed into categories (Alexander & Booth, 2008). Once the categories have been established, the structural and relational aspects can be analysed. Booth and Marton (1997, p. 125) explicitly describe this process as "the complex of categories of description capturing the different ways of experiencing the phenomenon...and the relationship between them."

A1.3	<p>Participant summary</p> <p>There will be approximately 20 teacher participants in total. The teachers will participate in a 1 hour (approx.) interview with the researcher. Interviews will be audio recorded.</p> <p>Typical questions will be: Please tell me about a time when you've interacted with or observed a student who has communicated ideas about sexuality that do not include heterosexuality? Sub questions to follow may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you please tell me about a time when you've interacted with or observed a student who has communicated a homophobic comment or idea? • Please share with me your experiences of how you have responded to students when they have communicated an idea about sexuality other than heterosexuality? • Please share with me why you responded in this way? <p>The place of the interview will be negotiated with individual participants but could possibly include the participants' home or a private location convenient to the participant.</p>
A1.4	<p>Lay summary of research merits</p> <p>Through questioning teachers in Queensland and analysing the transcripts, it is possible to discover the collective understanding of how they respond to primary school students who communicate ideas about sexuality other than heterosexuality. The purpose of this study is to discover teachers' accounts about their own responses to students when students bring up ideas about sexuality concepts other than heterosexual. The teachers' ideas will be developed into categories of description. These categories of description will describe the teachers' conceptions. This knowledge of teacher experiences of their own pedagogy may produce unforeseen practical outcomes such as an insight into not only the explicit teaching of sexuality education but also the more covert responses to student behaviours or perspectives on sexuality. Teachers' conceptions of their responses to students' comments and ideas about sexuality other than heterosexuality is a phenomenon that has not been captured before in research in Australia.</p> <p>Please see attachment 2 "Research Plan".</p>
A1.5	<p>Provide a brief justification for considering this a low risk application.</p> <p>The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research defines "low risk research" in which the only foreseeable risk is one of discomfort. Research in which the risk for participants is more serious than discomfort is not low risk." (Australian Government, 2007, p. 16). The researcher has considered subject matter, participants' potential experiences in the project and the likelihood and severity of any potential discomfort of participants. While there are a number of risks related to this project, they may all be considered low-risk and have been managed in various ways.</p>
<p>A2 Potential Risks and Benefits <i>Please provide an answer to each question in this section—N/A is not accepted</i></p>	
A2.1	<p>Potential Risks — indicate if there are any potential risks associated with the project?</p> <p>Risk 1: The potential discomfort for participants may include feelings of anxiety as a result of being interviewed. Risk 2: The participants may experience inconvenience of giving up time to participate in an interview. Risk 3: Participants may feel discomfort discussing their pedagogical experiences. Risk 4: The participants may feel discomfort regarding the subject matter of diverse sexualities. Risk 5: There is potential risk in disclosing personal information about students of the teachers. Risk 6: There is potential risk in confidentiality of participants due to the snowball process in which initial participants may know who else is participating. Risk 7: There may be a risk to employment / professionalism of the participant due to the information shared during interviews.</p>
A2.2	<p>Managing the risk</p>

Minimising risk has been addressed in the research aims, the purpose and justification and research design. Benefits of the research involve gains in knowledge of teacher conceptions.

Risk 1: The risk for potential discomfort for participants has been managed through voluntary nature of the participant selection process. Participants are volunteering to be interviewed. Participants will be informed of the research aims prior to interview. Participants are able to withdraw at any time.

Risk 2: To minimise the risk of participant inconvenience participants are volunteering and are in control of interview time and place.

Risk 3: Risk is addressed by conducting one-to-one interviews for confidentiality. This risk is addressed by giving the participant information regarding the project prior to meeting so that they are aware of the focus and aims of the research to discuss their pedagogical experiences. This risk is also minimised by allowing the participant to withdraw at any time.

Risk 4: This risk is addressed by giving the participant information regarding the project prior to meeting so that they are aware of the subject matter. This risk is also minimised by allowing the participant to withdraw at any time.

Risk 5: This risk is minimised by the exclusion of teacher names, school names, and student names in all aspects of the data collection, analysis and reporting processes.

Risk 6: This risk is minimised by the exclusion of teacher names, school names, and student names in all aspects of the data collection, analysis and reporting processes.

Risk 7: Management of this risk will be addressed by providing participants with information regarding the project prior to interview to raise awareness of the research focus and to clarify the role as participant and their rights. This risk is also minimised by allowing the participant to withdraw at any time.

A2.3 Potential Benefits — indicate if there are any potential benefits associated with the project and who benefits?
 Participants may benefit from self reflection of their pedagogy and experiences.
 The benefits to be gained from understanding teachers' conceptions will contribute to the current research field,

A2.4 Balancing against the risks

Teachers are a very influential component of schooling experiences for students and therefore the teachers' accounts of their experiences regarding their responses to students with diverse sexuality perspectives are valuable.

Teachers' pedagogical responses can either promote or demote equality for GLBT people. If students are raising diverse sexuality perspectives and teachers accounts of their pedagogical responses reveal they don't know how to respond then further research may be needed. Outcomes of this research may provide reasons to do more research regarding diverse sexuality equality in primary schools to find out more about how schools, including teachers and students, can be supported.

The aim of this research is to contribute original knowledge to the current body of national and international research in sex education and diverse sexuality concepts in education. Teachers are influential via their pedagogy regarding student attitudes and learning outcomes. This research will add original knowledge of primary school teacher conceptions of pedagogy in response to student knowledge of diverse sexualities in Queensland, Australia. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic of sex education in the primary school, my research will provide an avenue to reveal teachers' conceptions in an otherwise taboo or normative conversation. It is possible the outcomes of this study will corroborate international research such as teacher interviews conducted by De Palma and Atkinson (2009) in the United Kingdom in which teachers shared "perceptions and histories that serve to support heteronormativity, but which also hold the potential to disrupt it" (p. 841). Although research within this field is unique in methodology (phenomenography) and context (the primary school), the conclusions and recommendations may reflect other research findings.

Great care has been taken to manage the associated risks in order to achieve the research aims and purpose.

A3 Other General Information *Please provide an answer to each question in this section—N/A is not accep*

A3.1 Location of research – where the research will be conducted

YES – QUT NO – provide details:

The location of research will be negotiated with the interviewee. The location of research will be held on private property.
 Should the participant choose to meet at QUT, research may be conducted at Kelvin Grove Campus.

A3.2 Is the QUT Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC) the primary or only ethics committee reviewing this proposal? If not, please provide details.

QUT Human Research Ethics Committee is the only ethics committee reviewing this proposal.

A3.3 Estimated timeframes for the project, ie DD / MM / YEAR
 Data collection cannot commence until you have received formal written approval.

START OF PROJECT	February 2010	START OF DATA COLLECTION	January 2012
END OF PROJECT	December 2014	END OF DATA COLLECTION	June 2012

SECTION B: PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

- B1.1 Who will be approached to participate?**
Initially, two primary school teachers in Queensland who are known to the researcher will be approached.
- B1.2 Approximately how many participants will be approached?**
Approximately 20 participants will be approached.
- B1.3 How will potential participants be identified and approached?**
Participants will be initially identified by the researcher as a known colleague to the researcher. They will be approached verbally and with a letter of consent. Participants will then ask colleagues known to them to volunteer for interview. They will be approached verbally and with a letter of consent.
- B1.4 How will the participants provide their consent to participate?**
Participants will provide consent to participate by signing the interview consent document. Please see attached.
- B1.5** YES NO Will the study involve participants who are unable to give informed consent?
If YES, please include details. _____
- B1.6 Will the potential participants be screened?**
The potential participants will not be screened.
- B1.7 Will participants be offered reimbursements, payments or incentives? Ensure details of any reimbursements, payments or incentives (e.g. gift voucher) are provided on the Participant Information Sheet.**
A book gift voucher of \$20.00 will be offered as an incentive.
- B1.8 Is there an existing relationship with participants?**
Yes, there is an existing relationship with the first four participants and the researcher. There is not potential coercion in recruitment as there is no captive or dependent relationship. Initial participants are known to the researcher as a method to gain participation.
- B1.9 Is it proposed to conduct a debriefing session at the end of the research (or at the end of each participant's involvement)?**
No debriefing required.
- B1.10 Will feedback, the outcome / results of this research be reported to participants?**
Participants can request outcomes or results upon completion of the project. The research project will have minimal direct impact on the participants. The outcome of phenomenographic research is a collective description of conceptions, not individual conceptions, and therefore not directly related to individuals.

SECTION C: DATA MANAGEMENT

C1 Future Use of Data

- C1.1** YES NO Is it likely / possible that any of the data collected will be used by yourself, or others for any research other than that outlined in this application? If yes, please describe below and ensure this is outlined in all the participant information sheets and consent forms generated under the clearance.

C2 Procedures & Protection

- C2.1 What data collection procedures will be utilised?**
- | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------|---|--|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO | QUESTIONNAIRE / SURVEY | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO | ARCHIVAL RECORDS |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | INTERVIEWS | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO | OTHER INSTRUMENT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO | FOCUS GROUPS | If you have indicated OTHER INSTRUMENT provide details. If there is insufficient space, please provide an additional document.
_____ | | |
- C2.2** YES NO Have the data collection procedures been previously approved by QUT or are they an academic standard instrument?
- C2.3 Provide brief details on prior approval or where instruments have been used previously, e.g. under a similar context to this proposal.**
Open-ended questioning in an interview context has been widely used by phenomenographers (Åkerlind, 2008; Marton, 1986; Trigwell & Prosser, 1997). The researchers are developing their own instrument/questions. Questions have been developed from phenomenographic theory and methodology. Please see section A.1.2. or attached document "Research Plan".
- C2.4 How will the data be recorded?**
 YES NO Individually Identifiable


YES NO Re-Identifiable or Potentially Re-Identifiable
 YES NO Non-Identifiable

- C2.5 **Data Ownership**
 Data ownership belongs to the principal researcher, Lisa van Leent.
- C2.6 **Protecting Confidentiality**
 Records of the study will be held by Lisa van Leent. No participants will be identified in any records.
- C2.7 **Data Sharing Arrangements (collaborative projects)**
 Supervisors of the research team will only have access to data held by Lisa van Leent during the data analysis phase when developing categories of description.

C3 Storage & Security

- C3.1 YES **Records will be stored for the required period.**
 The link to the QUT Retention and Disposal of Research Data (as outlined by Queensland State Archives) is:
<http://www.tils.qut.edu.au/initiatives/researchsupport/datamanage/planning.jsp#70>
- C3.2 **HARD/PAPER COPIES...**
- C3.2.1 **What is the location of storage (ie room and building location)?** 59 Hamish St, Calamvale QLD 4116
- C3.2.2 **How will access to the stored data be controlled?** Lisa van Leent will have sole control.
- C3.2.3 **Who will have access to the stored data?** Lisa van Leent
- C3.3 **ELECTRONIC DATA...**
- C3.3.1 **Where is the location of storage and back-up (ie a secure computer/server)?** Secure computer and or locked cabinet.
- C3.3.2 **How will access to the stored data be controlled?** Lisa van Leent will have sole control.
- Who will have access to the stored data?** Lisa van Leent
 Supervisory Team: Professor John Lidstone, Dr Mary Ryan, Dr Beryl Exley.
- C3.3.3
- C3.4 YES NO N/A **If applicable, has Faculty approval been provided for off-site storage?**

Appendix B: Participant Information and Consent Form

	PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT Interview
Teachers' accounts of how they respond to primary school students who communicate ideas about non-heterosexuality QUT Ethics Approval Number XXXXXX	

RESEARCH TEAM

Principal Researcher:	Lisa van Leent (PhD Student QUT)
Principal Supervisor:	Professor John Lidstone (QUT)
Associate Supervisor:	Dr Mary Ryan (QUT)
Associate Supervisor:	Dr Beryl Exley (QUT)

DESCRIPTION

This project is being undertaken as part of a PhD for Lisa van Leent. The purpose of this project is to gather teachers' accounts of how they respond to primary school students who communicate ideas about sexuality other than heterosexuality. The focus of the research is on the teachers' view of their teaching experiences. You are invited to participate in this project because you are a primary school teacher in Queensland.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from the project without comment or penalty. If you withdraw on request, any identifiable information already obtained from you will be destroyed. Your decision to participate, or not participate, will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT or with Education Queensland.

Your participation will involve a 60 minute interview conducted at an agreed location and audio recorded.

Questions will include: Please tell me about a time when you've interacted with or observed a student who has communicated ideas about sexuality that do not include heterosexuality? Can you please tell me about a time when you've interacted with or observed a student who has communicated a homophobic comment or idea? Please share with me your experiences of how you have responded to students when they have communicated an idea about sexuality other than heterosexuality? Please share with my why you responded in this way?

EXPECTED BENEFITS

It is expected that this project will not benefit you directly. However, it may benefit future research or development of education policy or teacher education in regards to teacher pedagogy and sexuality concepts in the primary school context. To recognise your contribution, should you choose to participate; the research team is offering participants book vouchers of \$20.00.

RISKS

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project. Risks include the potential for you to feel discomfort regarding discussing your pedagogy and the subject matter of sexuality concepts and potential inconvenience of giving up time. There is potential risk in disclosing personal information about students and yourself in regards to your profession. However, it is requested that no identifying information (e.g. student names) is to be used during the interview to ensure student and teacher anonymity. There is potential risk in other participants knowing you are also a participant. Your name will not be audio recorded or attached to transcripts. You are able to withdraw from participation in the project at any time.

These risks have been managed by sharing the identified risks with you and informing you that you are not obliged to share any information that you do not wish to share. Teacher names, school names, and student names will not be

included in any aspect of the data collection, analysis and reporting processes. These risks have been minimised through your ability to negotiate time and place to be interviewed, your ability to withdraw at any time and the voluntary nature of your participation. You are able to withdraw from participating in this project at any time. Contact the researcher, Lisa van Leent, to withdraw your participation. Contact details are listed below.

QUT provides for limited free counselling for research participants of QUT projects who may experience discomfort or distress as a result of their participation in the research. Should you wish to access this service please contact the Clinic Receptionist of the QUT Psychology Clinic on 3138 0999. Please indicate to the receptionist that you are a research participant.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. The names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses.

- Audio recording and transcripts will be treated confidentially in accordance with QUT policy.
- Data will be stored securely in accordance with QUT policy.
- The audio recording will be destroyed at the end of the project.
- The audio recording and transcripts will only be accessed by the research team.
- The interview will be conducted at a private location.
- No personally identifying information will be published in these research outcomes.
- Transcripts will be anonymised. There will be no identifying information attached to the transcripts.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate.

QUESTIONS / FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

If have any questions or require any further information about the project please contact one of the research team members below.

Name [Lisa van Leent \(PhD student at QUT\)](#)

Phone [0419 659 392](tel:0419659392)

Email lisa.vanleent@student.qut.edu.au

CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Unit on [\[+61 7\] 3138 5123](tel:+61731385123) or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au. The QUT Research Ethics Unit is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

**Teachers' accounts of how they respond to primary school students
who communicate ideas about non-heterosexuality**

QUT Ethics Approval Number XXXXXX

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS

- Principal Researcher: Lisa van Leent (PhD Student QUT)
Phone: 0419 659 392
Email: lisa.vanleent@student.qut.edu.au
- Principal Supervisor: Professor John Lidstone
School of Cultural and Language Studies in Education/
Faculty of Education/ QUT
Phone: 3138 3289
Email: j.lidstone@qut.edu.au
- Associate Supervisor: Dr Mary Ryan – Senior Lecturer
School of Cultural and Language Studies in Education/
Faculty of Education/ QUT
Phone: 3138 3569
Email: me.ryan@qut.edu.au
- Associate Supervisor: Dr Beryl Exley – Senior Lecturer
Phone: 3138 3267
Email: b.exley@qut.edu.au

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- have read and understood the information document regarding this project
- understand that the project will include audio recording of interviews
- agree to participate in the project and for interviews to be recorded
- have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team

- understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty
- understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Unit on [+61 7] 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project
- agree to participate in the project

Name.....

Signature.....

Date.....

MEDIA RELEASE PROMOTIONS

From time to time, we may like to promote our research to the general public through, for example, newspaper articles. Would you be willing to be contacted by QUT Media and Communications for possible inclusion in such stories? By ticking this box, it only means you are choosing to be contacted – you can still decide at the time not to be involved in any promotions.

- Yes, you may contact me about inclusion in promotions
- No, I do not wish to be contacted about inclusion in promotions

Please return this sheet to the investigator.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Can you please tell me about a time when you've interacted with or observed a student who was communicating ideas about sexuality that do not include heterosexuality?

Sub questions to follow included:

- Tell me about a time when you've encountered a student who has communicated a challenge to heteronormativity?
- Tell me about a time when you've encountered a student who has shared a non-heteronormative perspective (a perspective other than normalised heterosexuality)?
- Please share with me your experiences of how you have responded to issues of diverse sexuality education, formally or informally?
- Please share with me why you responded in this way?

Further prompts:

- What did you do?
- What is the difference between A and B?
- Tell me more about A?