Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, Issue #173, November 9, 2015.
© by CJEAP and the author(s).

WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES OF AUSTRALIAN LESBIAN AND GAY TEACHERS: FINDINGS FROM A NATIONAL SURVEY[1]

Tania Ferfolja, *Western Sydney University*,

and Efty Stavrou, *Independent scholar*

Historically, lesbian and gay teachers working in schools have experienced silencing, invisibility, and discrimination. This paper reports on research that examined the experiences of self-identified lesbian and gay teachers working in a variety of school types and school systems across Australia. Specifically, it explores these teachers' experiences of their sexuality in relation to factors associated with enabling or disabling a queer-positive culture and climate in the workplace. Although broader sociol-cultural discourses have increasingly accepted and even celebrated sexual diversity in Australia, especially over the last decade, resulting in a concomitant shift that has improved some employment contexts for some lesbian and gay teachers, this discussion illustrates that many school workplaces continue to produce challenges for staff that are sexuality diverse.

Introduction

Historically, lesbian and gay (hereafter L/G) teachers in schools have experienced silencing and discrimination both nationally and internationally. This is disquieting considering the potential ramifications of discrimination not only upon individuals in terms of personal and professional psychosocial wellbeing, but also workplace costs, productivity, and the enabling of queer-positive workplace cultures. This paper examines the experiences of self-identified L/G teachers working in public and private, secular and religious schools in early childhood, primary, and secondary education in Australia. In particular, it explores these teachers' experiences of

[1] I would like to acknowledge the work of Lucy Hopkins, who was the research assistant on this project, and Jacqueline Ullman for her comments on this paper.

their sexuality in relation to factors that may be associated with enabling or disabling a queer-positive culture and climate in the workplace. Although broader discourses of equality and equity in relation to gender and sexual diversities have increased in Australia, especially over the last decade, with a concomitant shift that has improved some employment contexts for some L/G teachers, the research detailed herein illustrates that many school workplaces continue to produce challenges for these individuals.

Schools as Sites of Workplace Discrimination

The literature published in the 21st century from a range of western, Christian-based, English-speaking regions which reflect the Australian socio-cultural context, demonstrates that identifying, or being "identified" by others as a L/G teacher remains variously problematic in terms of discrimination despite legislative changes and cultural shifts across the (Western) world (Callaghan, 2007; DeJean, 2007; Duke, 2007; Edwards, Brown, & Smith, 2014; Gray, 2013; Hardie, 2012; Harris & Jones, 2014; Meyer, 2010; Neary, 2013; Rudoe, 2014; Smith, Wright, Reilly, & Esposito, 2008). This literature continues to point to the institutional heterosexism and homophobia prevailing in educational institutions that serves to undermine and marginalise non-heterosexual subjectivities and behaviours.

Research that addresses such issues in Australian workplaces reflects international findings of inequitable treatment affecting the professional and personal lives of many sexuality and gender diverse teachers. Irwin's (1999, 2002) research on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) workplace discrimination highlighted widespread interpersonal and institutional discrimination against teachers, generalist educators, and academics. Participants reported experiencing ridicule, verbal abuse, physical and sexual assault, property damage,

demeaning actions, homophobic "jokes," and differential access to employment rights. More recently, Jones, Gray, and Harris (2014) examined new education policies related to queer teachers working in the Australian state of Victoria. They found that although many teachers were variously out to colleagues, sexuality was mostly hidden from students; additionally, many teachers lacked awareness about the policy and legislative protections available to them in terms of workplace discrimination. Similar findings have been documented over the past 20 years by the first author illustrating the ongoing challenges faced by many teachers across various workplace contexts (Ferfolja, 2014a, 2014b, 2009, 1998).

The effects of workplace sexuality discrimination are far-reaching; it may affect identity, relationships, emotional and physical health, professional growth, career opportunities, and employment retention. Some teachers are ostracized, may not be considered for promotion, or are fired. Few seek redress (Edwards et al., 2014; Irwin, 2002; Rudoe, 2010). It is not unusual for L/G employees to hide their sexual subjectivities in the workplace or to experience anxiety at the potential for discrimination to occur (DeJean, 2004). In many contexts, "gay and lesbian teachers still work in a climate of fear about coming out" (Donahue, 2007, p. 81) and are required to "navigate complex terrain negotiating tricky private and professional boundaries" (Jones, Gray, & Harris, 2014, p. 340). Despite these realities, not all teachers work in oppressive environments, and how one operates at work is situational and contextually dependent. For those experiencing discrimination, many do not position themselves as "victims" but as agentic subjects who are powerful in different ways (Ferfolja, 2014a, 2014b).

Improvements in employment conditions for L/G teachers are apparent in *some* schooling systems and school sites. However, many L/G teachers "manage" knowledge, exposure, or potential readings of their sexual subjectivities in some way during the course of a

typical workday depending on the climate and culture of their workplace (Ferfolja & Hopkins, 2013). This is not required of their heterosexually-identified counterparts who generally may share information about their partners and families without fear of harassment, embarrassment, or reprisal (Rumens & Kerfoot, 2009; Williams & Guiffre, 2011).

Protections for Sexuality-Diverse Teachers

Unlike Canada, which has been able to build protections for sexuality-diverse teachers working in publicly-funded institutions through reference to its Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Meyer, 2010), Australia has no such human rights charter and must rely on state and federal anti-discrimination legislation for protections. However, acts within the legislation, such as the Sex Discrimination Act, are relatively restricted to complaints within a defined field—such as "employment, education, accommodation and the provision of goods and services" (Parliament of Australia, n.d.). Moreover, anti-discrimination legislation may be "subject to amendment or repeal by subsequent Federal legislation. Once Federal Parliament has bestowed a right or entitlement in a statute, it is equally competent, under the doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty, to take such a right away" (Parliament of Australia, n.d.). Additionally, exemptions exist within the act to enable religious institutions, including schools, the right to discriminate against lesbian and gay teachers and students (Harris & Jones, 2014). Such retrograde exemptions, as Jones et al. (2014) point out, mean that "religious schools can *claim the right to refuse to hire, or the right to fire* [emphasis added], an employee on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity" (p. 342–343), enabling these institutions to actively discriminate.

Public departments of education draw on legislation to create policy which filters through to, and is supposedly taken up by, schools. Interestingly, at the time of writing, Victoria

is the only state to proactively include protection for teachers on the grounds of same-sex attraction and gender identity through extensive human resource policies (Jones et al., 2014). In other regions, such inclusions tend to be indirect, limited, less visible, or non-existent as is the case in Australia's Northern Territory and Queensland (Jones et al., 2014). It seems that schools have little guidance for the development of policy that supports sexuality and gender diverse teachers.

As Smith, Oades, and McCarthy (2013) highlight, although "national and state antidiscrimination laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity at work, many non-heterosexuals still experience both direct and indirect discrimination in the international and Australian workplace" (p. 60). Protective legislation alone cannot guarantee discrimination-free employment; indeed, discrimination may "go underground" or become more subtly enacted. Similarly, policy will not necessarily secure a positive workplace climate or culture for L/G teachers (or students). Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012) illustrate how policy is ambiguous and messy; enactments are dependent on a range of historical, contextual, and contemporary variables, and therefore outcomes are not straightforward and cannot be guaranteed. However, the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in Australia demonstrate that antidiscrimination legislation may, for example, provide a foundation from which to begin to change school micro-cultures and climates through a proactive institutional mandate that recognises and supports diversity (Ferfolja, 2013). Additionally, it may enable L/G teachers to enjoy a degree of employment comfort and security; that said, neither legislation nor policy necessarily guarantees feelings of safety or belonging.

Schools, Silencing, and In/visibility

Heterosexism is historically omnipresent in schooling cultures. It is reinforced through narrow and limiting policies, practices, and curriculum that discursively construct heterosexuality as natural, normal, and fixed, as the only acceptable form of sexuality (Epstein & Johnson, 1998), and as a sexuality to be celebrated and rewarded (Foucault, 1978). These antiquated understandings of sexuality persist in schools, resulting in the surveillance and regulation of all gendered and sexual subjects. Many of those who transgress the norm (or are considered by others to transgress) are punished in the Foucauldian sense through marginalisation, harassment, or other types of discrimination (Foucault, 1978). Such surveillance and regulation reinforces the silencing and invisibility of sexual diversities not only on the level of the subject, but in curriculum, policy, and pedagogical practice; in some institutions, even debate and discussion is silenced. As a result, whether or not one chooses to be visible as a non-heterosexual teacher and how one performs one's sexual subjectivity at work is an on-going issue.

In the early1990s, Griffin undertook a seminal study on lesbian and gay teachers' identity management and coming out approaches at work. She identified a number of strategies used by lesbian and gay teachers including "passing," "covering," and being "implicitly" or "explicitly" out (Griffin, 1991, pp. 194–99). The enactment of any particular strategy was dependent on the context. The need for careful consideration as to the degree of revelation regarding one's sexuality is clearly still a problem for sexuality-diverse teachers a quarter of a century later. Recently, Gray (2013) found that queer teachers most often tend to "speak to no one at work about the private world," "come out to colleagues [only]," or "come out to colleagues and students" (p. 702). Similarly, Edwards et al. (2014) found in their British study

that lesbian teachers were careful about coming out at work, stating that there "was an assumption that coming out and being out at school were unwise, particularly at the beginning of a teaching career" (p. 8). There was also concern about revealing their sexual identities to students and parents.

"Coming out" as a private, political, supportive, or educational act and the concomitant notion of "in/visibility" still receives considerable attention and debate in the literature (DeJean, 2007; Ferfolja 2014a, 2014b; Ferfolja & Hopkins, 2013; Gray, 2013; Hardie, 2012; Jackson, 2006; Neary, 2012; Rasmussen, 2004) and indeed resurfaces as an issue of significance for teachers in the research reported herein. This speaks not only to the complexities and emotional work involved in the notion of the coming out "confession" (Foucault, 1977), but highlights the ongoing conservative nature of schools and their role as identity regulators in the working lives of sexuality diverse teachers.

Methodology

This research, funded by a small School of Education grant from Western Sydney University, investigated the workplace experiences of Australian lesbian- and gay-identified teachers in relation to their sexual subjectivities. A mixed method approach via an online survey and a combination of telephone, Skype, and face-to-face qualitative, in-depth interviews was used. Due to space restrictions, this paper draws from the survey's quantitative aspects, reporting on participants' "outness" and visibility at work and how this intersected with school type, the existence of sexual diversity policy, the implementation of professional development and student targeted LGBTQ-related education programs, and prevalence of homophobia. These latter factors provided broad insights into school culture and climate for L/G teachers.

The Survey

The survey, hosted by Survey Monkey, comprised 31 close-ended and open-ended items. The items sought demographic information in relation to sexuality identity, workplace jurisdiction, system type (government, Catholic, or independent), school level (early childhood, primary, or high school), and employment duration with their current school. Broader questions regarding the culture of their school workplace in relation to sexual diversity were also asked, such as whether sexual diversity policies, programs, professional development, or targeted student training were available at the setting, who developed these resources, and their perceived effectiveness. Items also questioned personal interactions with colleagues, students, and parents, identity management strategies, comfort at work in relation to one's sexual subjectivity, and perceptions and experiences of homophobia/harassment. The online survey was advertised via links to various LGBTQ organisations' websites and e-newsletters, via social media, and by word of mouth. It took approximately 15 minutes to complete. As Duke (2007) noted, numerous researchers have argued that LGBTQ studies in school settings may be difficult to implement as they encounter numerous hurdles from the establishment and may be "forbidden, discouraged, and taboo" (p. 27). Moreover, potential participants who feel vulnerable about exposure of their sexualities may not participate. Consequently, all data was collected outside of workplaces as a conscious design feature of the research in order to recruit as many respondents as possible and ensure their comfort.

Outcome Measures and Statistical Analyses

The main outcome measures were from questions regarding the respondents' (i) interactions with colleagues, students, and parents and (ii) experiences and perceptions of

harassment or homophobia in the workplace; and whether these responses differed by a) school type (that is, public or secular-independent, or religious independent or Catholic school); and b) whether school policies or practises related to sexual diversity were in place. Responses to questions were measured as Likert scales with all options provided (e.g., all, most, unsure, some, none) however due to small cell sizes, responses were aggregated into positive (e.g., most/all) and negative (e.g., none/some) replies. Responses of "I don't know" or "unsure" were treated as missing values.

Comparisons between school type or policy and the outcome variables were examined using $\chi2$ (likelihood ratio) analyses or Fisher's exact test (where expected cell size is <5). Multivariable logistic regression (with statistical significance reported at the $P<0.05$ level) to examine the factors associated with positive responses for each outcome were also undertaken. Covariates included in the regression models included sexuality identity, whether a school policy regarding homophobia existed, whether professional development related to sexual diversity or lesbian/gay issues was provided, whether students had been educated about gay issues, the number of years teaching at their school (arbitrarily aggregated into 2 years or less, 3–5 years, and 6 years or more; these categories were chosen to describe the duration of experience at the school and hence the comfort level in discussing sexuality identity and related issues within the school), the jurisdiction in which they taught, and education level of school (aggregated into early childhood/primary and secondary school settings). Due to the limited number of respondents (and cell sizes when comparisons were made), sexuality identity was included in all analyses as a covariate rather than results being reported separately for each classification which would have been the preference of the authors, as it was thought gay males and lesbians would have potentially different experiences and interactions as a result of the discursive gendered

power differentials (Khayatt, 1992). Quantitative data were analysed using SAS Enterprise Guide v61.

Given that the cohort was not chosen to show any statistical power, *interest* significance was taken at a minimal 15% difference between comparative groups. This was considered high enough in an *interest-to-note* context, regardless of whether statistical significance was attained.

The total number of respondents across Australia who replied to the survey with a minimum of 90% completed data was 160. As this was an opt-in survey, comparison between respondents and non-respondents could not be examined. Further, data representativeness to state and federal proportions of gay men and lesbians in the education field was not possible due to these figures being unknown or not reported. Despite these limitations and that fewer responses were received from some jurisdictions, this survey is thought to be the largest survey in Australia to date that specifically targets L/G teachers.

Results and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

Of the 160 respondents, just over half were female (56%), 37% taught in New South Wales (NSW), 35% in Victoria, 13% in Queensland, and the remainder in other states or territories. The majority had been teaching at their current school for either less than 3 years (44%) or between 3 to 5 years (29%). Sixty percent taught in a secondary school and 77% taught in a public school or a secular-independent school.

The Appendix shows the characteristics of the respondents and the questions of interest by the school type in which they taught. Variation existed in the school level taught (85% of

Catholic school respondents taught at secondary level compared with 58% teaching in the public school system) and whether students in the respondent's school had been provided with training in sexual diversity (13% in public school versus 6% in Catholic; p=0.04).

Sexuality Policy

Only 15% (n=24) of all respondents taught in a school which had a policy in place regarding sexual diversity, 10% (n=16) in which professional development had been provided, and 12% (n=18) where the school had delivered sexual diversity training (such as anti-homophobia education) to students (Appendix). These findings are of concern. Despite large-scale, Australian-based research that points to the prevalence of LGBTQ discrimination and homophobia in Australian schools generally (Hillier et al., 2010; Robinson, Bansel, Denson, Ovenden, & Davies, 2014; Ullman, 2014), and the invisibility and identity "management" strategies employed by L/G teachers, the few teachers who reported the existence of policy, professional development, or student training illustrates a serious shortcoming. Policy invisibility means that many teachers, including those who wish to be proactive about these issues, have little guidance or support from the schooling institution. To broach LGBTQ content or address homophobia is thus perceived to be undertaken at their own risk of potential negative consequences from students, colleagues, management, and parents, although the potential for en masse complaint about such educational content may be assumption rather than fact. A school devoid of sexual diversity policy or clear and specific articulation in related policy limits the basis from which such work can be done in a way that is easily legitimised by teachers as an institutional requirement (rather than a personal "agenda"). Generic equity or anti-discrimination policy approaches in schools are historically vague and omit sexuality; a lack of specificity does

not encourage either fearful or progressive teachers to address these issues (Ullman & Ferfolja, 2014). Hence, specific policy vacuums may be a critical factor in the perpetuation of the cycle of LGBTQ silencing and the perpetuation of homo/transphobia (see the Figure below).

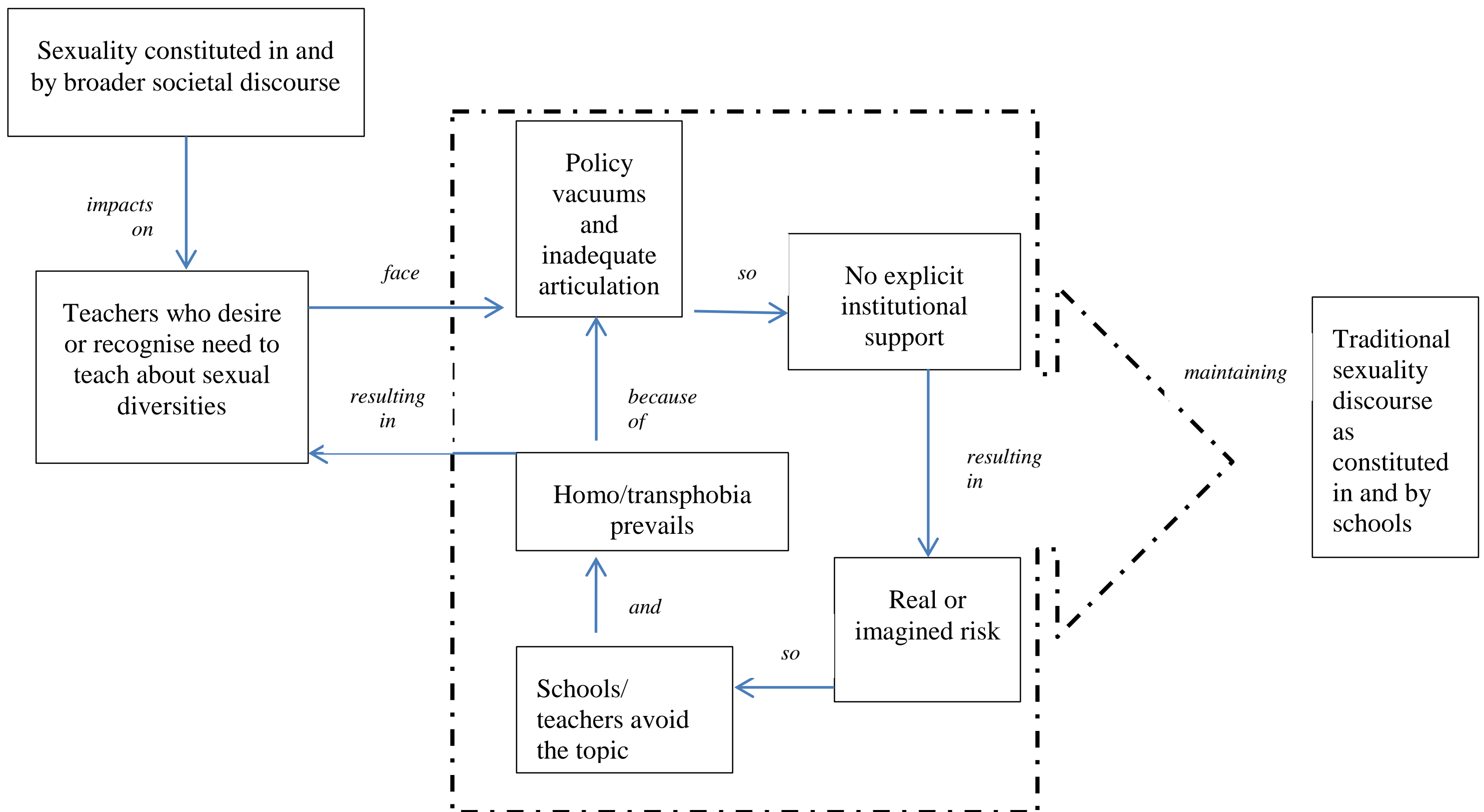

Figure: Ferfolja's proposed cycle of LGBTQ silencing and perpetuation of homo/transphobia.

Descriptive analyses showed that the existence of sexual diversity policy in schools according to respondents varied by state (29% in Victoria, 10% NSW, 4% Queensland, and 4% other; χ^2=17.8, p=0.007) but not with the school type (no policy in place: Catholic or religious-independent 66%, public or secular-independent 60%). Professional development opportunity was also related to state (with opportunity more available in Victoria [16%] compared with NSW

[5%] χ^2=16.6, p=0.01) and with increasing years of teaching (χ^2=16.0, p=0.003) in their current school. It is little wonder that Victorian respondents report working in a state with the highest number of schools with a sexual diversity policy, considering the substantial political work undertaken over the last decade and a half in relation to these issues in that state including the development of the Safe Schools Coalition Victoria[2] and the resultant institutional mandates now in position. This developing positive culture is also reflected in teachers' access to sexual diversity professional development.

Student training in sexual diversity was also associated with education level (16% at the secondary level compared with 4% at the primary level; χ^2=9.6, p=0.008) and with increasing years of teaching experience at the participant's current school (χ^2=9.5, p=0.05). The fact that student training occurred more in secondary than in primary education in the respondents' schools is likely to be indicative of adult discomforts and anxieties in relation to young people's access to knowledge about sexual diversity, a discomfort reinforced by discourses that socially construct children as naïve, innocent, and unknowing (Kane, 2013). Discourses related to adolescent development have traditionally located sexual knowledge as of relevance at puberty and beyond; however, teaching about sexual diversities entails issues of family, friendships, and relationships and respecting differences among people. This knowledge should begin early. However, it was not just LGBTQ content that was omitted from the early years; some open-ended responses demonstrated how teachers were reportedly advised by principals to keep their sexual subjectivity from students and parents, in effect, to hide who they are.

[2] The Safe Schools Coalition Victoria, funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Department of Health, is a national coalition that provides resources and training to teachers and schools to reduce homophobia and transphobia and to create a more inclusive and safe environment for students and teachers (see http://safeschoolscoalitionvictoria.org.au/about/). The model is now being rolled out nationally.

Being Out and Managing One's Sexual Subjectivity

Questions related to school type which included positive interactions with colleagues (i.e., sexuality being known to colleagues and talking about gay issues with colleagues) and not hiding one's sexuality in the workplace were higher in public schools compared with Catholic schools (Appendix). The fact that respondents were more open with colleagues and less likely to hide their sexuality at work in public schools may be a reflection of the impact of broader legislation as described earlier in this paper: that is, that religious schools may legally discriminate against lesbian and gay-identified individuals. Interesting, however, was the finding that personally experiencing homophobia in the workplace was higher in public schools (Appendix). When adjusted for other factors, sexuality being known to colleagues remained significantly higher in public schools (aOR[3]=4.46; 95%CI 1.50-13.3, p=0.007), but so too did personally experiencing homophobia in the workplace (aOR=3.18; 95%CI 1.13-8.93, p=0.03). It could be speculated that greater reporting of homophobia in schools where teachers felt more able to be out with colleagues than in religious institutions may reflect an increased visibility, whereas in Catholic schools, diverse sexualities are generally less visible and often explicitly forbidden, providing fewer opportunities for discussion but also observable harassment.

Sexual diversity policy in schools appeared to be related with a positive response to students knowing the respondent's sexuality (29% versus 14% for negative response; χ^2=3.0, p=0.2), talking about gay issues with students (32% versus 11%, χ^2=7.0, p=0.03), and having to hide sexuality at work (affirmative 8%, negative 21%; χ^2=6.1, p=0.05). Further, when adjusted for all other factors, teachers in schools with a sexual diversity policy in place were significantly

[3] aOR=adjusted Odds Ratio; greater than 1.00 indicates more likely associated, less than 1.00 indicates less likely associated.

less likely to personally experience homophobic behaviour or language in the workplace (aOR=0.33; 95%CI 0.11-0.99, p=0.05).

Professional development opportunities for staff regarding sexual diversity also appeared to show a relationship with sexuality being known to colleagues (most/all colleagues 15% versus none/some colleagues 3%; χ^2=11.3, p=0.004), talking about gay issues with students (most/all students 22% versus none/some students 7%; χ^2=8.9, p=0.01) and (not) needing to hide one's sexuality at work (never/sometimes 15% versus often/always 3%; χ^2=7.4, p=0.03). Despite these positive indicators, when adjusted for all factors, the presence of professional development for staff resulted in an increased association with homophobic language or behaviour being experienced (aOR 3.90; 95%CI 1.01-15.1, p=0.05). This finding is somewhat unexpected; however, it may be speculated that with professional development comes increases in awareness and knowledge about what encompasses homophobic language and behaviour. This is in fact a positive response; in many ways addressing prejudice is only possible if one recognises it and if one is aware of one's rights to address it.

Finally, student training on sexual diversity appeared to be positively associated with teachers' sexuality being known to colleagues (15% positive response versus 7% negative; χ^2=5.9, p=0.05), students (27% versus 10%; χ^2=5.0 p=0.08), and parents (27% versus 9%; χ^2=6.8 p=0.03); talking with parents about gay issues (most/all of the time 40% versus none/some of the time 10%, χ^2=3.4 p=0.18); not needing to hide one's sexuality (19% positive versus 2% negative response; χ^2=13.5 p=0.001); and not personally experiencing homophobia in the workplace (not experiencing 12.5% versus experiencing 0%; χ^2=7.9 p=0.02). Of these outcomes, only not hiding one's sexuality retained its statistical significance once adjustment had been made for other factors (aOR 1.58; 95%CI 1.23-90.9, p=0.03). Considering L/G teachers' felt compulsion to hide

their sexuality at work, this is a critical outcome suggesting that educating students about sexuality diversity is an important and worthwhile factor in developing a workplace culture for lesbian and gay teachers where they feel comfortable to "be who they are." As Gray (2013, p. 712) found, teachers able to come out and be open about their sexuality and relationships felt more a part of their school community, and also "articulated greater job satisfaction and smoother interconnections between their private and professional selves."

Implications and Recommendations

The implications of the survey's findings suggest that although some schools are moving towards creating a more positive culture and climate for L/G teachers, there is still much to be done at the structural level; legislation exists but more is required of state departments of education and schools. For example, site-based sexual diversity policy provides positive outcomes for teachers' work, but it only existed in 15% of the teachers' schools in this sample. Moreover, the vast majority of these schools were in Victoria and most of these policies were in secondary schools.

Unsurprisingly, it would be beneficial if all schools developed explicit policy to promote cultural change and better climates for sexuality diversity. Some participants reported inclusion of sexual and gender diversity as part of broader anti-discrimination policies or under umbrella terms such as bullying. Although such approaches may lessen perceived possibilities for controversy because they lack terminological specificity, their ambiguity provides opportunity to avoid or ignore the issues. Explicit policy that is carefully constructed for meaning is required and all students and teachers should be educated about its existence and importance. However, policy may be detrimental if it constructs LGBTQ subjects in outdated

discourses of risk management and victimization (Ferfolja, 2013). Similarly, when institutions are legally permitted to discriminate, as is the case for religious institutions in Australia, the ramifications for sexuality-diverse teachers are unconscionable. Even if the legal exemptions were removed, history informs us that their legacy will remain for many years (Edwards et al., 2014).

The provision and effect of student training was found to be positive. Yet, the proportion of schools that provide student training is very low. Perhaps more explicit policy in some state departments would encourage school leaders to ensure that young people received appropriate education about this social justice issue. Greater understanding would undoubtedly engender more supportive schooling cultures and create climates in which queer teachers could engage as themselves.

References

Ball, S., Maguire, M., & Braun, A. (2012). *How schools do policy: Policy enactments in secondary schools.* London: Routledge.

Callaghan, T. (2007). *That's so gay! Homophobia in Canadian Catholic schools.* Saarbrücken, Ger.: Verlag Dr. Muller.

Clarke, G. (1996). Conforming and contesting with (a) difference: How lesbian students and teachers manage their identities. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *6*, 191–209.

DeJean, W. (2007). Out gay and lesbian K–12 educators: A study in radical honesty, *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education*, *4*(4), 59–72.

Donahue, D. M. (2007). Rethinking silence as support: Normalizing lesbian and gay teacher identities through models and conversations in student teaching. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education*, *4*(4), 73–95.

Duke, T. S. (2007). Hidden, invisible, marginalized, ignored: A critical review of the professional and empirical literature (or lack thereof) on gay and lesbian teachers in the United States. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education*, *4*(4) 19–38.

Edwards, L. L., Brown, D. H. K., & Smith, L. (2014). "We are getting there slowly": Lesbian teacher experiences in the post-Section 28 environment. *Sport, Education and Society*. doi: 10.1080/13573322.2014.935317

Epstein, D., & Johnson, R. (1998). *Schooling sexualities*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Evans, C., & Ujvari, L. (2009). Non-discrimination laws and religious schools in Australia. *Adelaide Law Review*, *30*(1), 31–56.

Ferfolja, T. (2014a). Lesbian and gay teachers: Negotiating subjectivities in Sydney schools. In M.-P. Moreau (Ed.), *(In)equalities in the teaching profession: A global perspective* (pp.139–156). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Ferfolja, T. (2014b). Reframing queer teacher subjects: Neither in nor out but present. In A. Harris & E. M. Gray (Eds.), *Queer teachers, identity and performativity.* (pp. 29-44). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Ferfolja, T., & Hopkins, L. (2013). The complexities of workplace experience for lesbian and gay teachers. *Critical Studies in Education*, *54*, 311–324.

Ferfolja, T. (2013). Students as policy actors: The TDSB equity foundation statement and commitments to equity policy. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 149, 1–24.

Ferfolja, T. (2013). Sexual diversity, discrimination and “homosexuality policy” in New South Wales' government schools. *Sex Education*, *13*(2), 159–171.

Ferfolja, T. (2009). Lesbian teachers, harassment and the workplace. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*, 408–414.

Ferfolja, T. (1998). Australian lesbian teachers—A reflection of harassment in NSW government high schools, *Gender and Education*, *10*, 401–15.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality. Vol. 1: An introduction* (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: Vintage.

Gray, E. M. (2013). Coming out as a lesbian, gay or bisexual teacher: Negotiating private and professional worlds. *Sex Education*, *13*, 702–714.

Griffin, P. (1991). Identity management strategies among lesbian and gay educators. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, *4*, 189–202.

Hardie, A. (2012). Lesbian teachers and students: Issues and dilemmas of being “out” in primary school. *Sex Education*, *12*, 273–282.

Harris, A., & Jones, T. (2014).Trans teacher experiences and the failure of visibility. In A. Harris & E. M. Gray (Eds.). *Queer teachers, identity and performativity*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Hillier, L., Jones, T., Monagle, M., Overton, N., Gahan, L., Blackman, J., & Mitchell, A. (2010). *Writing themselves in 3: The third national report on the sexuality, health and well-being of same sex attracted young people.* Victoria, Australia: La Trobe University, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society.

Irwin, J. (1999). *The pink ceiling is too low: Workplace experiences of lesbians, gay men and transgender people.* Sydney: University of Sydney, Australian Centre for Lesbian and Gay Research.

Irwin, J. (2002). Discrimination against gay men, lesbians, and transgender people working in education. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, *14*(2), 65–77.

Jackson, J. (2006). Removing the masks: Considerations by gay and lesbian teachers when negotiating the closet door. *Journal of Poverty*, *10*(2), 27–52.

Jones, T., Gray, E., & Harris, A. (2014). GLBTIQ teachers in Australian education policy: Protections, suspicions, and restrictions. *Sex Education*, *14*, 338–353.

Kane, E. (2013). *Rethinking gender and sexuality in childhood*. London: Bloomsbury.

Khayatt, M. D. (1992). *Lesbian teachers: An invisible presence*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Meyer, E. (2010). Teachers, sexual orientation, and the law in Canada: A human rights perspective. *The Clearing House*, *83*, 89–95.

Neary, A. (2013). Lesbian and gay teachers' experiences of "coming out" in Irish schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *34*, 583–602.

Parliament of Australia. (n.d.). *The Federal Parliament and the protection of human rights*. Retrieved from http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp9899/99rp20

Rasmussen, M. L. (2004). The problem of coming out. *Theory Into Practice*, *43*, 144–150.

Robinson, K. H., Bansel, P., Denson, N., Ovenden, G., & Davies, C. (2014). *Growing up queer: Issues facing young Australians who are gender variant and sexuality diverse.* Melbourne: Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre.

Rudoe, N. (2010). Lesbian teachers' identity, power and the public/private boundary. *Sex Education*, *10*, 23–36.

Rudoe, N. (2014). Out in Britain: The politics of sexuality education and lesbian and gay teachers in schools. In A. Harris & E. M. Gray (Eds.), *Queer teachers, identity and performativity*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Rumens, N., & Kerfoot, D. (2009). Gay men at work: (Re)constructing the self as professional. *Human Relations*, *62*, 763–786.

Smith, I. P., Oades, L., & McCarthy, G. (2013). The Australian corporate closet, why it's still so full: A review of incidence rates for sexual orientation discrimination and gender identity discrimination in the workplace. *Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review*, *9*(1), 51–63.

Smith, N. J., Wright, T., Reilly, C., & Esposito, J. (2008, March). *A national study of LGBT educators' perceptions of their workplace climate.* Paper presented at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, New York.

Ullman J. (2014) Ladylike/butch, sporty/dapper: Exploring "gender climate" with Australian LGBTQ students using stage-environment fit theory. *Sex Education*, *14*, 430–443.

Ullman, J., & Ferfolja, T. (2014). Bureaucratic constructions of sexual diversity: "Sensitive,' "controversial" and silencing. *Teaching Education*, *26*, 145–159.

Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Williams, C., & Giuffre, P. (2011). From organizational sexuality to queer organizations: Research on homosexuality and the workplace. *Sociology Compass*, *5*, 551–563.

Willis, P. (2009). It really is water off our backs: Young LGBQ people's strategies for resisting and refuting homonegative practices in Australian workplaces. *Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology review*, *5*(3), 134–145.

Appendix:

Respondent Characteristics and Outcome Questions by School Type*

Question	*Catholic/religious-independent (N=35)* *n (%)*	*Public/secular-independent (N=123)* *n (%)*	*Likelihood ratio χ^2 (p-value)*
Do you identify as:			
Gay male	18 (51%)	51 (42%)	1.1 (0.30)
Lesbian	17 (49%)	72 (58%)	
In which state or territory do you currently work?			0.4 (0.90)
NSW	12 (34%)	47 (38%)	
QLD	4 (11%)	16 (13%)	
Victoria	14 (40%)	42 (34%)	
Other	5 (14%)	18 (15%)	
Number of years teaching			4.7 (0.09)
2 years or less	11 (31%)	60 (49%)	
3–5 years	15 (43%)	31 (25%)	
6 or more years	9 (26%)	31 (25%)	
Which best describes the educational context in which you work?			8.4 *(0.002)*
Early childhood/primary	5 (15%)	48 (42%)	
Secondary	29 (85%)	67 (58%)	
Does your school have policies/programmes related to sexual diversity?			2.7 (0.26)
No	23 (66%)	72 (60%)	
Unsure	5 (14%)	32 (26%)	
Yes	7 (20%)	17 (14%)	

* Two respondents did not reply to this question regarding school type.

Question	***Catholic/religious-independent (N=35)*** ***n (%)***	***Public/secular-independent (N=123)*** ***n (%)***	***Likelihood ratio χ^2 (p-value)***
Has there been professional development of staff available in relation to lesbian/gay issues or sexual diversity more broadly?			2.2 (0.33)
No	26 (74%)	100 (81%)	
Unsure	6 (17%)	10 (8%)	
Yes	3 (9%)	13 (11%)	
Have students been provided with training in relation to lesbian/gay issues or sexual diversity more broadly?			6.3 (*0.04*)
No	23 (66%)	91 (75%)	
Unsure	10 (29%)	14 (12%)	
Yes	2 (6%)	16 (13%)	
Outcome questions			
Which of the following best describes you in relation to your interactions with colleagues? My sexuality is known to:			6.7 (*0.009*)
Most/all of colleagues	14 (41%)	80 (66%)	
None/some of colleagues	20 (59%)	41 (34%)	
Which of the following best describes you in relation to your interactions with colleagues? I talk about lesbian and gay issues with:			3.6 (0.03 Fischer's)
Most/all of colleagues	5 (14%)	36 (30%)	
None/some of colleagues	30 (86%)	86 (70%)	

Question	***Catholic/religious-independent (N=35)*** ***n (%)***	***Public/secular-independent (N=123)*** ***n (%)***	***Likelihood ratio χ^2 (p-value)***
Which of the following best describes you in relation to your interactions with students? My sexuality is known to:			0.13 (0.80)
Most/all students	5 (15%)	19 (18%)	
None/some students	28 (85%)	87 (82%)	
Which of the following best describes you in relation to your interactions with students? I talk about gay and lesbian issues with:			0.82 (0.14 Fischer's)
Most/all students	5 (15%)	27 (22%)	
None/some students	28 (85%)	95 (78%)	
Which of the following best describes you in relation to your interactions with parents? My sexuality is known to:			0.53 (0.59 Fischer's)
Most/all parents	4 (14%)	19 (20%)	
None/some parents	25 (86%)	78 (80%)	
Which of the following best describes you in relation to your interactions with parents? I talk about lesbian and gay issues with:			0.00 (1.00)
Most/all parents	1 (3%)	4 (3%)	
None/some parents	33 (97%)	115 (97%)	

Question	***Catholic/religious-independent (N=35)*** ***n (%)***	***Public/secular-independent (N=123)*** ***n (%)***	***Likelihood ratio χ^2 (p-value)***
Which of the following best describes you in relation to your work? I feel that I need to hide my sexuality at work:			3.4 (0.07)
Often/always	19 (54%)	45 (37%)	
Never/sometimes	16 (46%)	77 (63%)	
Which of the following best describes your perceptions and/or experiences of harassment or homophobia in your current workplace? I personally experience harassment/homophobia:			6.3 (0.07)
Often/always	0 (0%)	12 (10%)	
Never/sometimes	35 (100%)	111 (90%)	
Which of the following best describes your perceptions and/or experiences of harassment or homophobia in your current workplace? I hear/see homophobic languages and behaviours:			2.8 (0.10 Fischer's)
Often/always	8 (23%)	46 (38%)	
Never/sometimes	27 (77%)	76 (62%)	
Which of the following best describes your perceptions and/or experiences of homophobia in relation to staff in your current workplace? At my workplace, homophobia is:			0.48 (0.55)
Never/rarely accepted	18 (55%)	52 (48%)	
Sometimes/generally accepted	15 (45%)	57 (52%)	

Question	***Catholic/religious-independent (N=35)*** ***n (%)***	***Public/secular-independent (N=123)*** ***n (%)***	***Likelihood ratio χ^2 (p-value)***
Which of the following best describes your perceptions and/or experiences of harassment/homophobia in relation to students at your current workplace? At my workplace homophobia is:			0.00 (1.00)
Never/rarely accepted	6 (18%)	20 (18%)	
Sometimes/generally accepted	27 (82%)	91 (82%)	