Introduction

The basis for this chapter is a seminar series, 'Queering ESOL'[1], which ran from 2013-2015 and in which academics, practitioners and some students explored the cultural politics of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)[2] issues in the ESOL classroom. The immediate context for the series was the climate created by a major piece of legislation covering England, Wales and Scotland – the 2010 Equality Act. The Act identified a variety of public settings, including further and adult education, in which discrimination on the basis of nine 'protected characteristics' was deemed illegal. Three of these directly referenced sexual and gender diversity: sexual orientation, being in a civil partnership and gender reassignment. In response, Ofsted[3], the government inspection body in England updated its *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills* (2012: 38) by identifying – for the first time – LGBT learners as a group whose 'needs, dispositions, aptitudes or circumstances' may mean that they 'require particularly perceptive and expert teaching and, in some cases, additional support.' As with other state interventions described in this book, most notably the citizenship testing regime, but also the Prevent strategy and 'employability' (see Simpson, this volume), teachers in adult and further education were thus required be seen to enact official policy and mediate – or broker – the political and public discourses informing it. Unlike Prevent and to some extent the citizenship testing regime, however, the Equality Act and Ofsted's response to it was seen by many practitioners as a positive development, although many felt either unprepared to address sexual and gender diversity in their classrooms or unsupported when they did so. The Queering ESOL series emerged from

a sometimes heated debate around these concerns on an ESOL practitioners' online platform in 2013. This chapter offers an insight into the complexity of the issues which were aired when, during the seminars, teachers were given the chance to explore the challenges – and opportunities – presented by their brokering roles.

We open the chapter with a brief discussion about the notion of 'sexual citizenship' and the challenges presented to traditional heteronormative understandings of citizenship by the inclusion in the public sphere – in Britain and elsewhere – of sexual and gender minorities, the rights claims made by them in the last few decades and the legislation which has been put in place to protect these rights. We then describe in more detail the serious questions raised by teachers in the ESOL sector about how to address the challenges presented by the Equality Act and Ofsted's response to it. These relate specifically to issues around visibility, representation, inclusion, disclosure, solidarity and the dilemma posed for many ESOL teachers by the problem of how to balance the rights of LGBT students (and teachers) with the rights of those who are members of faith groups, many of whom are uncritically assumed to be antagonistic to sexual diversity. Finally, as with all the other chapters in *Brokering Britain*, questions are raised about pedagogy and the roles of students and teachers in democratic education. We debate the merits of various approaches to sexual identity in the classroom – identified as therapeutic/counselling, social justice and discourse inquiry approaches (Nelson 2009, 2016; Macdonald 2015), and we ask whether the responsibility for inclusion should lie with individual teachers and students or with further and adult education institutions as a whole.

Sexual citizenship and sexual migration

According to Diane Richardson (2004: 107) 'sexual citizenship' refers to 'a status entailing a number of different rights claims, some of which are recognized by the state and some of

which are sanctioned'. According to Richardson there are three types of rights claims within sexual rights discourses: a) conduct based claims, i.e. the right to engage in certain practices; b) identity-based claims i.e. the right to self-definition and recognition; and c) relationship based claims, e.g. the right to enter a civil partnership or marriage with someone of the same sex. In England and Wales, legal reform since the 1960s has ranged across all three types of rights (Scotland and Northern Ireland have a different history with regard to legislation in this area). For example, the 1967 Sexual Offences Act decriminalised homosexual acts between consenting males over the age of 21; the age of consent was eventually equalised in 2000. This was followed in 2003 by the repeal of the infamous Section 28 of the Local Government Act, which outlawed teaching which promoted 'the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship' (Local Government Act 1988: 27). The following year, the Gender Recognition Act allowed transgender people to legally acquire a new birth certificate recording their sex in accordance with their gender identity, as well as allowing them to marry. Also in 2004, the Civil Partnership Act gave same sex couples virtually the same rights as heterosexuals, apart from the right to label their relationships as 'marriages'; this right was finally brought about with the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act introduced in 2013.

Most commentators (e.g. Weeks 1997) associate sexual citizenship principally with the gradual expansion of civil and social rights to LGBT-identified citizens. As Tommaso Milani (2015) reminds us, sexual citizenship needs also to be defined as the *ongoing* struggle for rights and representation, a struggle which requires transgressive dissent, or in Engin Isin's (2008) terms, the performance of 'acts of citizenship' which carve out the space and recognition for potential new rights claims (see also Peutrell, this volume, Callaghan *et al*, this volume). Other scholars (e.g. Richardson 2005; Volpp 2017) have suggested that because much contemporary LGBT campaigning is rights-focused and overwhelmingly framed within

government endorsed discourses of citizenship, there is a risk that the increasingly recognised legitimacy of same-sex orientation is linked with normative models of good citizenship and restrictive, homonormative (Duggan 2002) notions of the 'good gay'. The concept of homonormativity and related terms such as homocapitalism (Rao 2015) and homonationalism (Puar 2007) seek to draw attention to the ways in which increased LGBT rights and visibility have gone hand-in-hand with discourses of contemporary neoliberal citizenship (Richardson 2005); critics suggest that states, multinational corporations and organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank strategically deploy LGBT-friendly policies in order to ensure increased co-operation with their economic and political aims (Franke 2012). Critics in the UK have also noted a tendency in political discourse to promote LGBT inclusion as a 'British value'; at least one cabinet minister is on record as suggesting that one of the signs of (Muslim) extremism is the expression of homophobic views[4]. Thus, the emergence of a sexual politics based on the quest for equal rights within existing social structures is seen by some as the co-optation of LGBT people into the neoliberal project more generally. From this perspective, the notion of 'sexual citizenship' is considerably more complex than a mere gradual winning of equality with heterosexuals; educators wishing to support their LGBT students while at the same time helping them to critically question prevailing ideologies are thus faced with a particular set of challenges.

However, despite these debates and despite a rapid liberalisation in many countries, recent reports (Carroll and Mendos 2017) show that state-sponsored homophobia in the form of legislation designed to persecute those perceived to be LGB or T is currently on the increase in some parts of the world; this is one of the reasons why at least a few of the individuals finding their way into ESOL classrooms in the UK will have migrated for motives connected with their sexual (or gender) identity. This does not mean, of course, that all of them are

fleeing illiberal regimes. In his description of 'sexual migration', Hector Carrillo (2004, see also Baynham and Gray forthcoming) defines the phenomenon as:

> international migration that is motivated, fully or partially, by the sexuality of those who migrate, including motivations connected to sexual desires and pleasures, the pursuit of romantic relations with foreign partners, the exploration of new self-definitions of sexual identity, the need to distance oneself from experiences of discrimination or oppression caused by sexual difference, or the search for greater sexuality and rights (p. 59).

More recently, Carrillo (2017: 5) has suggested that this original definition needs to be expanded to include the ways in which 'sexual motivations for migration intertwine with economic and family-related motivations that are more typically considered in migration studies'. The rise of sexual migration clearly has implications for several areas of policy, e.g. immigration and asylum law, health and – the main focus of this chapter – adult migrant language education. Despite notable exceptions (Nelson 2009), however, sexual diversity has largely been invisible not only in ESOL, but in language teaching generally (Burke 2000; Dumas 2010; Gray 2013; Pennycook 2001), with potentially negative consequences for LGBT language learners (Liddicote 2009). Writing in 2001, Alistair Pennycook observed that:

> one of the major silences in TESOL has been sexual orientation… there remain many basic attitudes in TESOL that need to be shifted, including a general assumed heterosexuality; a belief that questions of sexual preference have no place in ESL; a belief that students from other countries would find questions of sexual orientation too controversial … a tendency for straight teachers to assume

gay and lesbian issues are not their concern and should be addressed by gay and

lesbian teachers themselves. (Pennycook 2001:158)

As we explain in the next section, research carried out more recently in the UK has shown

that the situation in 2013 (when Queering ESOL started) was not dissimilar to that described

by Pennycook in 2001 – with the difference that in 2013 some UK ESOL teachers were

motivated to consider the reasons for this 'major silence' in the profession and what, if

anything, they could do to address it.

Queering ESOL seminar series: (1) the origins

In 2012, in light of the announcement from Ofsted that it would be inspecting the

effectiveness of institutional responses to the Equality Act, NATECLA[5], the UK professional

body for ESOL teachers, held a well-attended half-day conference, 'Breaking the Ice: LGBT

issues in the ESOL classroom' – the first of its kind in the sector – which generated a huge

amount of interest. A post-conference survey, however, indicated that most of the attendees

felt they lacked the confidence to introduce LGBT themes in class, were concerned about the

feelings and views of their students, and were unable to locate appropriate resources or

support. Similar views were evident in an online debate which took place just after the

Breaking the Ice conference and in research reported by Sheila Macdonald and colleagues

(2014) which employed an online survey and face-to-face interviews to investigate the

experiences and attitudes of around 100 teachers and managers. In Macdonald *et al*'s research

and in the online debate many teachers reported that, for various reasons, they did not feel

able to incorporate themes of sexual diversity into their teaching. Some had simply never

considered it relevant and said that it never emerged as a topic for discussion in class. Others

– admittedly a very small minority – were directly hostile, claiming that sexual diversity

issues had no place in ESOL teaching and learning at all. Much of the online debate centred

on the fact that ESOL classes were likely to contain at least some devoutly religious students who would be uncomfortable with sexual diversity; some teachers were anxious not to cause offence to these students whilst others wished to protect LGBT students from discrimination and were perhaps unsure about how to contest homophobic remarks. There were also teachers who, although perhaps out as LGB or T in their personal lives, felt that addressing sexual diversity in class would make them particularly vulnerable, as this participant in the online debate illustrates:

> …it is much harder to tackle this 'material' if you yourself are personally implicated in it. As an LGBT teacher you can be afraid that it will lead to a change or even breakdown in your relationship with the students and possible further ramifications for you within your organisation. Although you know there is legislation to back you up, it doesn't get rid of the feeling that you are putting your neck on the line in some way (Teacher comment)

Such a comment neatly underlines the limits of legislation in the absence of more profound social change. At the same time, however, it was very clear from the online discussion and some of the remarks made by teachers in Macdonald *et al* (2014) that there was a critical mass who believed that remaining silent on sexual diversity issues in ESOL was not a feasible option and most seemed willing to at least explore ways in which to address the gap – not just because of Ofsted's requirement but for their personal development, for their students' learning and for the enrichment of the profession. In light of this backdrop, then, the rationale for the focus in our seminars on LGBT issues in ESOL were: a) there was a high level of interest amongst practitioners and a desire to explore and change current practice and b) ESOL provided a rich context for exploring and teasing out some of the complexities created by the heightened intersection of sexual diversity with other forms of diversity such

as religion and cultural difference. In designing the series we sought to invite academic and practitioners from fields outside of ESOL – as well as from the fields of L2 pedagogy and applied linguistics – to talk to the questions raised by teachers themselves. The outline of the series was as follows:

Seminar 1: Institutional and legal frameworks

Seminar 2: Sexual migration and the ESOL classroom

Seminar 3: Voices from the classroom: LGBT learners and teachers

Seminar 4: Religion and sexual diversity

Seminar 5: LGBT Representations: media, literature, pedagogic materials

Conference: Implications for ESOL policy and practice

For reasons of space we are not able to do justice in this chapter to the complexity and richness of the presentations, debates and ideas which came out of each seminar (for details go to www.queeringesol.wordpress.com). However, we would like to offer some reflections on several over-arching themes which recurred in some shape or form across all the seminars: the theme of erasure and how best to make LGBT lives and experiences visible in ESOL and the theme of representation and how to avoid essentialising and stereotyping ESOL students – both those who are from sexual and gender *and other* minorities and those who are not.

Queering ESOL seminar series: (2) Overarching themes - representation, invisibility and intersectionality

Representat*i*on

By 'representation', we are referring here to the process of making understandings or constructions of the world concrete through language and images. As Stuart Hall (1996)

pointed out, it is through identifying with representations in art, literature, the media, advertising, textbooks, political discourse and so on that we achieve a sense of self; representation thus plays a major part in the construction of identity. However, these constructions of the world are overwhelmingly politically, ideologically and commercially motivated and all too frequently we find either no representation of ourselves at all – i.e. we are invisible – or the representations available to us are not those we wish to identify with. On the one hand, then, there is the phenomenon of *erasure* i.e. the systematic editing out of certain groups or identities from officially endorsed versions of social reality and the resulting denial of recognition, and on the other hand there is *misrecognition*, i.e. demeaning, partial or stereotypical representations, such as the sexist representation of women, or the representation of colonised or indigenous peoples in history or geography books as subservient, feckless, lazy or otherwise lacking in agency.

Such invisibilities and misrepresentations are not without consequences for citizenship. As Andrew Sayer (2005: 52) explains, '[r]epeated refusal of recognition to an individual can produce serious psychological damage and refusal of recognition to a group also damages its well-being and ability to function in wider society'. With regard to misrecognition, Nancy Fraser (1998: 141) has argued that it 'is not simply to be thought ill of, looked down on, or devalued in others' conscious attitudes or mental beliefs. It is rather to be denied the status of a *full partner* in social interaction and prevented from *participating as a peer* in social life'. These phenomena are particularly relevant to certain categories of people, such as women, workers, ethnic minorities, religious minorities, and obviously those identifying as LGBT. The history of citizenship is in part the history of the struggles of these groups for recognition and inclusion. LGBT people have fought for decades not only for equal rights under the law but for positive representations in the public, social and aesthetic realm; in organising the

seminar series, then, teachers and academics were extending the struggle for positive representation to ESOL, a field in which LGBT students and teachers have traditionally been almost entirely invisible and inaudible. Perhaps inevitably, the themes of invisibility, representation and misrecognition recurred across all of the seminars in some shape or form; we discuss some of the most salient of these in the next five sections.

Invisibility

The problem of invisibility became particularly pressing for us when questions were raised about the representations which were missing from the series itself. The programme tended towards an over-representation of gay male experience compared to that of lesbians, for example, and it was pointed out several times that transgender issues had not been addressed in any depth. One presenter in particular pointed out the omission of the experience of intersex people, not just in Queering ESOL but in lesbian and gay circles in general (King 2016). In this way, as we discussed erasure and representation we were made aware of our own blind spots and gaps and were able – to a limited extent – to attempt to address them by additions to our programme.

Secondly, and importantly, there was the recognition that depriving students of exposure to sexual diversity was detrimental to their learning and development as full participants in society. Some teachers expressed the view – presumably influenced by the existing requirement for 'citizenship' to be embedded into their ESOL instruction – that teaching their students about the UK's cultural and legal frameworks was part of their responsibility as ESOL teachers. Others took the position that, by ignoring issues of sexual diversity, they were doing a disservice to students who might be LGB or T; as one teacher wrote:

If I'm not open to discussion about being gay in any context, including an ESOL

setting, I am surely not supporting the process of language socialisation, my job

as an ESOL teacher. For those learners who have fled persecution for who they

are, I have a duty to show them that they have a right to be open and free in the

UK and I need to help them find the language tools they need to stand up to

prejudice and fear. (Teacher comment)

What this teacher calls 'language socialisation' is discussed in depth by the US scholar and

educationalist, Cynthia Nelson, who has written extensively about sexual diversity and

language education (Nelson 2009, 2010, 2015, 2016). She maintains that sexual diversity

themes should be an integral part of language and culture learning for all students, not just

those who are LGB or T. According to Nelson (2016: 373), sexual identity is *already* part of

ESOL in the form of heterosexually oriented materials about weddings, family trees, in-laws

and so on, but is rarely perceived as such by teachers. Migrant language learners need to have

the space to critically explore themes of sexual diversity in their new environments; in one

paper, for example, Nelson describes how students in a US city who have their classes next to

a downtown gay bar are prohibited from talking about it in class. More importantly, perhaps,

she argues that all students need to develop their ability to 'analyse linguistic and cultural acts

of sexual identity by engaging in activities that involve unpacking socio-sexual identities and

inequities in everyday discourses and public life' (Nelson 2016: 361). According to Nelson,

not only do students need this kind of instruction, they actively appreciate and enjoy it: in an

article entitled 'LGBT content: why teachers fear it, why learners like it' (Nelson 2015), for

example, she reports on a 'disconnect' between teachers who are reluctant to include sexual

diversity in their classrooms and their students who – for many and various reasons – desire

it. Similarly, Macdonald *et al* (2014) found that the UK students they interviewed were far

more informed about, and had more personal experience of, LGBT issues than their teacher had imagined. During the series, then, one of the main focuses were ways in which LGBT themes could be brought into the classroom and made visible. Ideas we discussed were: introducing materials with an overt LGB or T related theme adapted from popular culture e.g. songs, videos, books and film (Merse 2015); bringing along LGBT topics (e.g. same-sex marriage) for debate and discussion; and using 'guerrilla tactics' to create 'queer moments' such as modifying language learning tasks and activities to include same sex couples, lesbian and gay characters and so on.

Intersectionality

Another issue which arose during our discussions was the problem of the types of representations found in textbooks, teacher-produced materials and pedagogic activities, including those listed above; as the quote from Fraser cited earlier suggests, misrepresentation can be as misleading and harmful as erasure. Here it was useful to bring to bear a perspective from feminist scholarship, intersectionality. The critic Sirma Bilge (2012: 23) has argued that in light of the racial, gender and class habitus in many representations of current LGBT life there is a pressing need 'for a critical project – for a queer intersectionality and solidarities'. 'Intersectionality' as a theoretical lens first emerged from the struggle of working-class black lesbians – most particularly those in the Combahee River Collective (1977) in the USA – against 'racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression' and the crucial insight that the interlocking 'synthesis' of these oppressions created the conditions of their lives. More recently, to the original nexus of sex, class, race and sexuality, other categories have been added, e.g. age, (dis)ability, religion, language and migration status (see Cashman 2018, Gray 2018). Thus, any research on, or discussion about, the life experiences of, say, gay men needs to take race, class and other sources of oppression into account, to

consider how and when these categories intersect with each other and the material effect this intersection has on an individual gay man's life. Similarly, it could be argued, research on and discussion about 'ESOL students' should ideally consider the effects of the class, race, gender and sexuality of people who fall into this broad category. Three categories in particular became the focus of attention in Queering ESOL: sexuality, religion and migration trajectories/status, all of which we discuss briefly next.

Queering ESOL seminar series: (3) individual seminars

The Representations of LGBT people

In the first seminar, Daniel Monk (see seminar website) pointed out that many of the representations used to combat problems in schools such as bullying, self-harm and suicide amongst young LGBT people are themselves stereotypes: poster images of 'the tragic gay', for example, misrepresent young peoples' positive experiences of sex and sexuality, whilst images which depict gay teens as 'just the same as everyone else' exclude those who are noticeably different in some way, e.g. those who are non-binary, butch, effeminate or camp. In other areas, e.g. the media, the arts and public discourse, i.e. the very sources teachers draw on to design their pedagogic materials, gay people tend to be portrayed as white, middle class (or even wealthy), able-bodied, out, legal citizens. This is clearly not a true representation of many LGBT people and would not be recognisable either to LGBT ESOL students or their classmates who may come from countries where the very notion of 'coming out' would be culturally unfamiliar. It became clear during our discussions about these issues that if ESOL teachers are to avoid misrecognition and to accurately represent the diversity which exists in the LGBT 'community' (or 'communities') – and in the communities of their students – there are challenges to be met in their choice of material and themes. In terms of pedagogic approaches, some ideas which were put forward during the seminars to address the

issues raised by misrepresentation were: being open to students who raise LGBT-related issues from their own experiences and observations and going with these 'teachable' or critical moments; encouraging queer and/or critical readings of texts; and using methods such as drama to generate discussion and foster empathy. An exciting example of the latter was the performance during the third seminar of *Queer as a Second Language*, a play written by Nelson based on research interviews carried out with ESOL students and teachers. In this, people from various countries and walks of life come together in an ESOL classroom and work through several problems and dilemmas, i.e. about coming out, disclosure, dealing with discrimination and about cultural differences in the recognition and portrayal of sexual identity.

Migrant identities

The aim of the second seminar – and of some of the speakers in the final conference (e.g. Nick Mai, Francesca Stella) – was to explore the experiences of migration with a view to arriving at a better understanding of the trajectories and experiences of LGBT ESOL students and to challenge what Mike Baynham, one of the organisers of Queering ESOL, called the 'heroic myth of male migration'. From this perspective, the migrant is most frequently constructed as a heterosexual male who ventures forth ahead of his family in search of greater economic security and, on finding employment, settles abroad and is joined by his family at a later date. But as the speakers pointed out, there are other migrants and other migrations which conform less comfortably with this largely celebratory and overwhelmingly heteronormative narrative.

One vivid example of 'other migrations' was given by Holly Cashman (2018) in her talk *Queer Latinidad in the U.S.: Identities, communities and language practices*. In the talk Cashman described the story of Susana to illustrate the erasure of queer Latinx[6] experience.

Susana's story was one of multiple migrations, initially involving a painful migration *within* Mexico from her village (where the family was a place of violence) to Tijuana, Guadalajara and finally to Phoenix, Arizona. Cashman showed how as a trans woman and as a Latina, Susana's experience within the Phoenix LGBT community was one of marginalisation. A telling extract from 'Latin night' in a Country and Western bar which Susana was hosting, showed how language could be used to exclude and marginalise trans migrants such as Susana in ways which were a powerful reminder of their multiply inferior status. This was exemplified in Cashman's data by the linguistic alignment of an English-speaking drag queen and an English speaking non-trans woman during the show – what Cashman called 'monolingual bonding', and which had the effect of side-lining Susana. The fact that this took place in a supposedly queer-friendly setting, where a greater demonstration of solidarity might have been expected, served to underline the ongoing relevance of intersectionality as a theoretical lens in exploring the lives of LGBT migrants.

By way of contrast, Richard Mole (seminar 2) discussed the experiences of Russian LGBT migrants in Berlin and the notion of a 'queer diaspora'. He made the point that *queer* was a particularly useful term as non-western migrants' sexual orientations do not always map neatly onto western LGBT categories and because queer allows for the problematisation of existing (often stereotypical ideas) about migration itself. For example, he suggested that economic circumstances are *not* always the prime mover for migration, explaining that in the case of many of his Russian informants, they would have in fact been better off financially had they remained in Russia. In queering the concept of migration, Mole argued that we can allow for the inclusion of affective factors, sense of self-worth and the desire to live one's life more openly elsewhere as potentially key propellers of migration. In wanting to create queer spaces outside the existing Russian diasporic ethnoscape – and significantly in being able to create such spaces in Berlin – Mole's informants demonstrated a high degree of personal and

collective agency not always associated with stereotypical views of migrants. Although the experience of migration can frequently result in migrants losing the class position they held in their countries of origin, the experience of Mole's informants suggested that this was not necessarily always the case. Through their own diasporic support network, his informants were able to support each other and new arrivals, to avoid marginalisation by established Russian diasporic communities *and* by German queer activist groups who they felt patronised them and positioned them negatively as 'eastern' – thereby reproducing prevailing western/eastern hierarchies and the prejudices flowing from this. The fact that this group of migrants was able to establish a vibrant ethno-national and linguistic queer space *in exile* was doubtlessly a testament to the reserves of cultural capital they were able to draw on as a very particular kind of highly agentive migrant group – and, it should be said, very unlike many of the LGBT migrants described by Cashman in her work in Arizona.

Religion

The lesson to be learned for ESOL from the two case studies in seminar 2 is that to talk of 'LGBT' migrants as a homogeneous group is to flatten out – and erase – enormous differences in the life experiences and material possibilities of people from different backgrounds. Similarly, the same applies to our discussions about ESOL students identified as 'religious'. Although ESOL classrooms are highly diverse, students are often positioned as more conservative, traditional or religious than their British peers; indeed, since 2001 the government has promoted the belief that it is this which causes a lack of integration and cohesion in migrant communities. Research (Nelson 2015; Macdonald 2015; Valentine and Waite 2012) shows, however, that the reality is more complex and there is a range of stances on sexuality (and other social issues) amongst ESOL students, including religious ones, in the

same way as in other sections of society – and of course, some students are religious *and* LGB or T.

In seminar 4, Gill Valentine and Louise Waite looked at how sexual orientation and religious belief intersect and at how 'difference' is negotiated in everyday encounters. According to Valentine and Waite, difference is under-researched in oppressed groups, partly because 'protected categories' are frequently researched as if they were a homogeneous group. The presenters argued, however, that there is a need to be more attentive to the tensions that lie within and between these groups in everyday encounters and to this end they conducted a number of focus groups and compared opinions obtained from Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish faith groups about the theme of sexual diversity. They hypothesised that the recent normalisation of LGBT lives would be a challenge for many heterosexual people of faith and that tensions would emerge in everyday contact between religious people and those from sexual and gender minorities. They found, however, that many individuals were creating strategies which allowed them to separate off from particular religious orthodoxies when in contact with LGBT people, thus avoiding tensions in everyday interaction between individuals. Although some had difficulties with the notion of group rights in the public sphere, many of the religious informants considered sexuality as essentially a private concern, meaning that they were able to 'turn a blind eye' to it or to view it through the ethical lens of care and compassion. Valentine and Waite suggest that the impact of the changing socio-legal landscape of sexuality, in which same sex couples can have civil partnerships and marriages, appears to have had an effect on the perspectives of some people of faith; since some homosexual couples are appearing to embrace the traditional heteronormative values of 'marriage', such as commitment, monogamy and family, this means that for many religious people, married and partnered gays and lesbians are becoming less of a threat to the orthodox teachings of their faiths. Valentine and Waite's research highlighted a different area of

conflict, however, between LGBT people of faith and those with no faith. They found a certain degree of what they called 'religiophobia' within the LGBT community as some secular individuals see LGBT members of faith groups as being complicit in creating negative feelings towards homosexuality. On the other hand, LGBT people of faith adopted strategies which allowed them to carve out a space for themselves within religious communities which may have been traditionally hostile to them, either through seeking out liberal faith communities, or through prioritising their personal experience/relationship with their faith rather than the institution itself.

Queering the classroom?

So what, then, does all this mean for the classroom itself? As we have explained in our discussion so far, the seminar series gave teachers a chance to explore some of the complex issues arising from their positioning as brokers between their students and government legislation in the form of the Equality Act. Unsurprisingly, much of the interest of practitioners was focused not just on the philosophical and political debates underlying their brokering role but on how best to introduce LGBT themes into their teaching.

In seminar 3, Cynthia Nelson (2009, 2016) and Sheila Macdonald (2015) identified three broad – but of course overlapping – approaches taken by teachers to the inclusion of sexual diversity in their teaching. The first is the 'counselling' approach: this tends to view sexual identities as inner essences (Nelson 2016) and is concerned with addressing homophobia and cultivating personal growth and tolerance. In this approach, positive LGBT representations such as those described earlier would be included in the curriculum, LGBT lives would be 'normalised' by being added to classroom materials and activities and ground rules might be established to foster respectful behaviour in the group. The second approach is the 'controversies' or anti-discrimination approach: this views sexual identities as sociohistorical

constructs (Nelson 2016) and is concerned with the ideology of heterosexism and how to combat it. In such an approach teachers would focus students' attentions on discrimination, social justice, legal frameworks and civil rights and would engage them in debates and activities around LGBT politics.

These two approaches, whilst useful and laudable in many ways, have been critiqued by teachers who advocate a more participatory approach to learning, i.e. one which emerges from the life experiences and concerns of the students themselves (see Bryers, Winstanley and Cooke, this volume; Moon, this volume), and by scholars such as Pennycook (2001: 159) who comments:

> […] this issue [LBGT/sexuality] tends to operate from a mixture of liberalism and emancipatory modernism, suggesting that by rational discussion of questions of difference, we will arrive at greater tolerance or understanding. ... [but] to develop anti-homophobic or antiracist education requires much more than simply some rational, intellectual explanation of what is wrong with racism or homophobia. Rather, we need an engagement with people's investment in particular discourses […].

The third approach, then, is a discourse inquiry or participatory approach. This views sexual identities as performative (Nelson 2016) and focuses on the linguistic/cultural acts associated with sexual identities e.g. how people in a given society, community or group 'come out'; how people achieve 'partial disclosure'; how sexual minorities are discussed; what people do if they wish to be seen or not seen as gay/straight/lesbian; and so on. This approach analyses

how discursive acts and cultural practices manage to make heterosexuality seem normal or natural – including in highly heteronormative fields such as ELT – and aims to improve students' ability to comprehend, critique and contribute to discourse practice (Nelson 2009: 209). The approach shifts the focus from the LGB or T individual onto the whole community: as queer theorists propose, 'it is not just people who are lesbian or gay who are engaged in producing and interpreting sexual identities' (Nelson 2006); like gender binaries, the defining binaries of homo/heterosexual are potentially relevant to anyone and everyone. On a practical level, inquiry might in fact be more doable than other approaches; rather than having to be the all-knowing expert with all the answers, teachers frame questions and problem-pose, facilitate investigations and explore new knowledge along with their students.

Conclusion

At the time of writing (2018), eight years have passed since the introduction of the Equality Act and almost three years since Queering ESOL. Anecdotal evidence from the field suggests that Ofsted's intention to check on the implementation of the act as it applied to LGBT people did not in fact result in a top-down regime in which reluctant and anxious teachers were expected to teach about sexual diversity and the law despite feeling ill-prepared and unsupported. What emerged from Queering ESOL was, in our opinion, something much better: teachers had the chance to engage in discussions about their practice and the relationship of ESOL to broader society, ending up with a greater level of awareness of the complexities of issues such as erasure, representation and intersectionality and feeling more able to support each other as they introduce LGBT material and themes into their classrooms. Queering ESOL – and the work which was done to pave the way for it – can claim to have placed LGBT firmly on the ESOL map and as such to have expanded sexual citizenship into a hitherto neglected field. Contributors to the seminar series have taken forward many of the

themes explored in subsequent publications, a sample of which provides a powerful indicator of the vibrancy of current research (e.g. Baynham and Gray, forthcoming; Gray and Cooke 2018; Macdonald 2015; Merse 2015, 2017 *inter al.*) Perhaps one of the most innovative contributions to the literature and crucially to pedagogical practice has been *Engaging with LGBT and migrant inequalities: activities for the ESOL* classroom by Francesca Stella, Jennifer MacDougall, Minna Linpää and Jenny Speirs (2018). This is a learning resource which emerged from a research project on LGBT migration to Scotland (Stella 2015; Stella, Gawlewicz and Flynn 2017) and is based on interviews with LGBT migrants and interviews with ESOL teachers. As the authors, one of whom is an experienced teacher, conclude:

> Making sexual and gender diversity visible in the ESOL classroom is not only a challenge, but also an opportunity for teachers inspired by principles of social justice and person-centred learning. It can make a real difference to LGBT learners, in terms of making them feel safe, respected and visible, enabling them to talk more openly about themselves in the ESOL classroom, if they wish. […] If presented as part of a broader dialogue around equality and diversity, exploring LGBT issues need not amount to an imposition of 'British' values, and is not necessarily at odds with respect for learners' culture or faith (Stella et al. 2018: 3).

The resource is full of ideas for classroom activities and accompanied by visual materials which can easily be customised by teachers in settings other than those in which they were developed. Overall, it represents an important step in the direction of helping to make the ESOL classroom a potential site for the development and promotion of sexual citizenship – and in ways which second language teachers more generally have much to learn from.

Notes

[1]The seminar series was funded by the ESRC (Grant Reference ES/L001012/1)

[2]We are using this acronym here to reflect the original used in the title of the series, i.e. Queering ESOL: towards a cultural politics of LGBT issues in the ESOL classroom www.queeringesol.wordpress.com. We were made aware during the series that other elements of the acronym were missing, i.e. Q (queer) and I (intersex). We have decided to keep to the original in most cases in this chapter because we feel that the rights afforded to LGB and T people have not yet been extended to Intersex people and that Queer, by its nature, tends to fall outside of a rights based discourse.

[3] The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) is the government inspection agency England. Wales, Scotland and N. Ireland have their own inspectorates.

[4] In 2013 Conservative MP Nicky Morgan was repored by the BBC as making this link – see shttp://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-33325654, accessed 04/05/2018

[5] National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults

[6] Latinx is a gender neutral alternative to latino/a

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