

**TRAINEE TEACHERS AND  
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND  
TRANSGENDER ISSUES IN  
EDUCATION**

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## **Abstract**

This research explores the attitudes of a group of Postgraduate Certificate in Education citizenship student teachers in London in 2012 towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues in education; their own perceptions of their abilities to deal with LGBT education within schools; the training they have received from their teacher training institutions in this area; and how this training may be improved in the future.

The research was carried out using a written response questionnaire and five vignette scenarios to which the trainees had to respond. The findings are discussed under themes including the awareness of LGBT legislation in education; preparedness for, confidence in and the importance of LGBT education; and teacher training in this area. References to legislation from 1967 to 2013, including the Equality Act 2010, are made, and Banks's (2004) Dimensions of Multicultural Education model is drawn upon to suggest possible developments in teacher training in this area.

The research finds that the trainee teachers have a strong sense of commitment and genuine determination towards addressing issues of homophobia and they express the importance of equality within schools on this issue. However, many also feel unprepared in regard to their knowledge and the strategies they can use when approaching some LGBT issues, expressing anxieties in certain situations, especially those which cannot be easily planned for, such as delivering the topic within lessons. The research therefore argues for improvements in LGBT training for postgraduate students as they prepare to enter the profession.

## **Declaration and Word Length**

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Word count (exclusive of appendices and the list of references): 48, 242.

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This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance, help and support of several individuals who in one way or another contributed their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this study.

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I have been fortunate to have Professor Hugh Starkey as my supervisor throughout the Doctor in Education course. Hugh was a great support to me during my Masters of Arts degree at the Institute of Education in 2007 and I knew as I embarked on the Doctor in Education programme that he was the supervisor I required. His support, guidance, experience and knowledge have been invaluable during this process. There is no doubt I would not have reached the end of the process without him. Hugh's calm, methodical approach along with his eye for detail and refusal to accept anything less than the best has given me great assistance during the completion of this thesis and for that I will be forever grateful.

There have been a number of other people who have supported me throughout this process, none more so than my mother Dr Lesley Laxton. She has always encouraged me to better myself, and during the most difficult stages of this thesis, has offered words of wisdom and encouragement, demonstrating a never ending belief that her daughter could also become a doctor.

Finally, this thesis has been inspired by and is dedicated to the young people I have taught both in the past and present. Over eighteen years of teaching I have met many who have astounded me with their resilience and who have encouraged me in the completion of my studies, whilst continuing to struggle with their own. It is my hope that this work goes some way to show so many of them my gratitude.

## **Abbreviations**

AIDS	–	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ATL	–	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
DCSF	–	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DES	–	Department of Education and Science
DfE	–	Department for Education
DfEE	–	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	–	Department for Education and Skills
GCSE	–	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GIRES	–	Gender Identity Research and Education Society
GLF	–	Gay Liberation Front
LGB	–	Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual
LGBT	–	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LGF	–	Lesbian and Gay Foundation
MP	–	Member of Parliament
NfER	–	National Foundation for Educational Research
Ofsted	–	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	–	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PSHCE	–	Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education
PSHE	–	Personal, Social and Health Education
PSHEE	–	Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
QCA	–	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
TUC	–	Trades Union Congress

# Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	i
<b>Declaration and Word Length</b>	ii
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	iii
<b>Abbreviations</b>	iv
<b>Contents</b>	v
<b>Reflective statement</b>	ix

## Chapter 1: **Introduction**

1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Professional biography	1
1.3 Introduction to the research topic	2
1.4 Recognition of diversity and equality in schools	6
1.5 The extent and impact of homophobic bullying in schools	11
1.6 Citizenship education in England	13
1.7 Research questions	15
1.8 A note on terminology	15
1.9 Thesis structure	16

## Chapter 2: **Literature Review – LGBT**

2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 A brief history of LGBT issues since the Education Act 1944	19
2.3 Heteronormativity within schools	26
2.4 Homophobia and homophobic bullying	30
2.4.1 Definitions and types of homophobic bullying	30
2.4.2 The extent of homophobic bullying in schools	33
2.4.3 The impact of homophobic bullying	35
2.4.4 Addressing homophobic bullying in schools	36
2.5 Transgender issues	39

2.6 Teacher training and LGBT issues.....	40
2.7 A multicultural model solution.....	43
2.8 Chapter summary.....	46

### Chapter 3: **Literature Review – Citizenship Education**

3.1 Introduction.....	48
3.2 The history of citizenship education in England.....	48
3.3 Citizenship education and human rights.....	52
3.4 The difficulties facing citizenship education.....	54
3.4.1 Assessment in citizenship education.....	56
3.4.2 The teaching of citizenship education in schools.....	57
3.5 The lack of specialist citizenship education teachers.....	58
3.6 Teaching citizenship education within PSHE.....	61
3.7 Chapter summary.....	66

### Chapter 4: **Research Methodology**

4.1 Introduction.....	67
4.2 Theoretical framework.....	67
4.3 Research approach.....	71
4.4 Research questions.....	71
4.5 Research methods.....	72
4.5.1 Sampling.....	72
4.5.2 Data collection.....	74
4.5.3 Questionnaires.....	74
4.5.4 Vignettes.....	77
4.6 Data analysis.....	81
4.7 Ethical considerations.....	82
4.8 Considerations of rigour.....	84
4.9 Evaluation of methods.....	85

4.10 Chapter summary .....	86
----------------------------	----

## Chapter 5: **Results**

5.1 Introduction .....	87
5.2 Knowledge of past and present legislation .....	87
5.3 Preparation for addressing LGBT issues in schools .....	88
5.4 Confidence in different areas of LGBT education .....	90
5.5 The importance of addressing LGBT issues in schools .....	91
5.6 Improvements in training for LGBT within the PGCE programmes .....	93
5.7 Chapter summary .....	94

## Chapter 6: **Discussion of results**

6.1 Introduction .....	95
6.2 Knowledge of past and present legislation .....	95
6.2.1 The Equality Act 2010 .....	95
6.2.2 Section 28 .....	97
6.3 Preparation for addressing LGBT issues in schools .....	99
6.4 Confidence in different areas of LGBT education .....	101
6.4.1 Areas of most confidence .....	101
6.4.2 Areas of least confidence .....	103
<i>Transgender education</i> .....	103
<i>Religion and LGBT</i> .....	104
<i>A pupil disclosing their sexual orientation to a teacher</i> .....	105
6.5 The importance of addressing LGBT in schools .....	108
6.5.1 Homophobia and heteronormativity .....	108
6.5.2 Homophobic bullying .....	110
<i>Using the word 'gay'</i> .....	113
6.6 Improvements in training for LGBT within PGCE programmes .....	116
6.7 Limitations of the research .....	119



6.8 Chapter summary.....	121
--------------------------	-----

## Chapter 7: **Conclusions**

7.1 Introduction.....	123
7.2 Suggested solutions.....	123
7.2.1 Knowledge of past and present legislation.....	123
7.2.2 Homophobia and homophobic bullying.....	124
7.2.3 Teacher training and LGBT.....	127
7.3 Identifying the gaps.....	131
7.4 Addressing the gaps.....	134

<b>References</b>	136
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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 The questionnaire.....	150
Appendix 2 The vignettes.....	153
Appendix 3 The letter of consent.....	154
Appendix 4 The script used in data collection.....	155
Appendix 5 Tabulation of questionnaire responses.....	156
Appendix 6 Tabulation of vignette responses.....	168
Appendix 7 Examples of coding process in questionnaires and vignettes.....	179

## **Reflective Statement**

It is a very different person finishing this course than the one who started it. I vividly remember sitting in Logan Hall in October 2008 listening to three successful doctoral students describing their journey towards their qualification. All three explained their motivations for embarking on such an undertaking, the challenges and changes in their academic, professional and personal lives during the process and the pride they felt having finally completed. My first thoughts involved predicting the various life changes I may experience in the forthcoming five years, but these soon gave way to a fear of failure, confusion and a lack of confidence in regard to my capabilities to complete this qualification. In fact there were no dramatic personal or professional life changes to note. However, there have been substantial academic changes throughout the course, resulting in my final thesis being something I not only believe in, but am also proud of.

Throughout my doctoral work, I have remained focused on the field which interested me during my Master's studies: citizenship education. Within that subject, I have continuously been interested in the status of citizenship education within schools. My Master's dissertation focused on whether studying the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) short course in Citizenship Studies raised the status of the subject in the eyes of secondary school students. The status of citizenship education remained the focus for the initial stages of my doctoral work. I focused on the professional status of citizenship teachers in secondary schools in England during the Foundations of Professionalism module, and carried out some relatively basic empirical research with a small sample of citizenship teachers in secondary schools. Whilst most of the sample felt that citizenship teachers were deemed as being of lower professional status than teachers of other subjects (as a result of not necessarily needing to be a specialist citizenship education teacher, only the short course GCSE being available at the time, lack of timetable space and assessment in citizenship education arriving two years after its introduction), there was also a feeling of the status rising as a result of the full course GCSE arriving in 2009, despite the potential deprofessionalisation of the teaching profession as a whole.

During the Methods of Enquiry One course, I was introduced to a number of different theories and theoretical discussions and discourses. Still feeling a novice and becoming regularly lost within these debates, I focused strongly on what I wished to gain from the Doctorate in Education for myself and my area of interest, settling on accepting I was a pragmatic doer rather than a philosophical thinker. It was important to me that my research made a difference in the future to the teaching profession, so I concentrated on becoming an expert in my area, rather than trying to be one in every area. I wrote a research proposal for this module which I hoped to carry out during Methods of Enquiry Two, broadly around the same area: the status of citizenship education in schools. It was my first doctoral attempt at linking theories and methods and helped to categorise my own beliefs on research methods as well as experiment with methods I had not previously used – focus groups. At this point of the course I was still lacking in confidence and struggling to find my own voice and place within the academic world. I continued to feel that I was writing in response to criteria set by others rather than believing in what I had to input.

It was the Leadership and Learning module which was the first turning point during the course as a whole. The array of remarkable speakers, the scope for the essay and studying an entirely different area were refreshing and allowed me to focus on a new area of interest. I related to the area of distributed leadership almost immediately. The idea of the super-head becoming a diminishing concept and a school needing to expand leadership opportunities in order to help professional development, foster talent and motivate the staff is engaging in any profession. However, I was not entirely convinced that what the literature described as distributed leadership was necessarily the same as the understanding within schools. Once again, I took the opportunity to carry out some empirical research, interviewing teachers, including two deputies and one head teacher, on their understanding of distributed leadership. The findings confirmed my suspicions and although the sample was again very small, I felt I had followed an initial hunch, and had been proved somewhat correct. This gave me quite a confidence boost and also allowed me to use some of my doctoral work practically within schools.

Methods of Enquiry Two saw a return to the status of citizenship education and gave me the opportunity to carry out some research within a case study school. I

used questionnaires to try to establish the value students placed on the different subjects they studied, both to them and the school. Within this I could place citizenship education against other subjects taught. It became clear that those students studying the GCSE in Citizenship Studies ranked citizenship education far higher than those who merely covered citizenship as part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme. Whilst the results were not surprising, carrying out this process enabled me to try out some methods I had not experienced before, for example group interviews, and this taught me a valuable lesson about how much data is required for 5000 words. Much of the data I collected had to go into the appendices as I had far too much. These were, however, valuable lessons which helped me to prepare for the Institution Focused Study, knowing which mistakes I had made on the way during the initial taught modules.

Determined for my research to make a difference to schools, I decided for the Institution Focused Study to carry out a piece of evaluation research within a case study school. The school was of great interest to me as it had, at the time, gained 'outstanding' Ofsted judgements in many areas related to citizenship, yet the subject itself was barely visible in the curriculum, and only taught within the PSHE programme. Through my reading around the subject I had discovered three tools which could be useful in determining how successful the school was in delivering citizenship education and how this could be improved. I used criteria from Ofsted reports along with citizenship typologies of schools offered by the Citizenship Educational Longitudinal Study in 2004 and 2007 to gain an overall view of how citizenship was being delivered. I also used a self-evaluation form produced by the Association for Citizenship Teaching with staff (both PSHE and non-PSHE teachers) in order to gauge their perspective of the delivery of citizenship education within the school. Fifty pupils also participated in a card sort activity in order to show their recall of topics they had studied in PSHE and their knowledge and justifications in regard to which topics are mainly citizenship, compared to PSHE. The results were as expected, showing the school only in the early stages of citizenship education development within the curriculum, but with strong community involvement, pupil voice and participation outside curriculum time. Following my recommendations, the school employed a new PSHE and Citizenship Co-ordinator. The PSHE programme was re-written, with assessment being brought in in key stage 3,

including levelling of pupil work and central tracking of pupil progress in line with every other subject. Professional development is now offered to a designated team of teachers and recently the citizenship full course GCSE became compulsory for all key stage 4 pupils. The difference my research has made to this school has been inspiring and I found real enjoyment in carrying out the study. The Doctorate in Education was really beginning to affect my professional life and I felt I was becoming able to make real changes within educational establishments.

When deciding which area I was going to study for my final thesis, I encountered a dilemma. I had studied the status of citizenship education for five years and, pragmatically, this would have been the path forward of least resistance. However, I felt I needed a change of direction and a further challenge. Although it would have been more straightforward to continue examining citizenship education status, I have always felt a passion for equality in regard to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. With the Equality Act (2010), schools have a duty to protect many more groups in society, LGBT included. Along with working with Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) citizenship education students for many years at a number of universities, and a passion for improving the experiences of LGBT young people in schools, I decided to travel the path of slightly more resistance for the final thesis and examine citizenship trainee teachers and LGBT education. I am so glad I did. I have learnt so much about the struggles of the LGBT community, especially of LGBT youth, through my reading. Where I regarded myself as very open-minded about situations, I have discovered my own stereotypes and faux pas in relation to some of the areas I have studied. Through learning so much more about this area, I have also found substantial inner peace and a quiet confidence to believe that what I have found out, proposed and discovered holds real worth for the educational arena. I have been challenged to defend my research in a number of undergraduate and postgraduate lectures along with equality conferences. Each time my arguments are stronger and my belief in my research is deeper. The thesis started as another hunch and developed into my discovery of a real and urgent need for training in the LGBT area, particularly during the initial teacher training stages. What started as observations of how some people react to homophobia has been developed into an explanation, with its own name. I revealed

a real will on the part of the PGCE students to examine this area more, not just in regard to citizenship education, but for all subjects.

During the thesis lectures, successful Doctorate in Education students have returned to describe their experiences of the course, the viva and ultimately how it feels to pass. All have said that towards the end you begin to feel differently about your work and about yourself as a researcher. I have always listened to these statements with disbelief, as I have never imagined I would feel like that. However, during the past six months, I have been proved wrong. I now have a much firmer belief in what I have studied. I have developed LGBT education within different establishments and have seen it work. The taught courses and Institution Focused Study have been invaluable in preparing me for the final thesis. One of the differences in the person that sat in Logan Hall in 2008 is that I didn't believe I could finish this. However, the biggest difference has come within the last six months of this research: that this thesis is the beginning, not the end.

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the thesis. It will also provide the background and scope, as well as highlighting the rationale for this research. Chapter 1 presents the main research questions, aims and objectives that will be addressed in the thesis. The research draws on the experiences of thirty-nine citizenship education Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students in London, in order to explore their perceptions about how their course prepares students to address lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues in schools.

## **1.2 Professional biography**

An early interest in LGBT equality developed through my undergraduate course during a seminar on Section 28 and the implications for teachers. Until then I was unaware of homophobia, especially in regard to homophobic bullying in schools, mainly due to the school I attended. After my training and during my initial years of teaching from 1995, Section 28 still existed in legislation and I was now more than aware that the area of homosexuality was a potentially precarious topic and not to be discussed with pupils. Even after its repeal in 2003, I remained nervous about addressing anything to do with homosexuality due to fear of reprisal or parental complaint in regard to indoctrination. Whilst I could not comprehend what the perceived danger was in regard to the LGBT community, I was not confident enough to address such issues myself in the classroom. It appears I was not alone. Colleagues at the time behaved in a similarly cautious manner around LGBT education.

My interest in this area grew when I began to witness elements of homophobia amongst the pupils I taught, including the growing frequency of the use of the word 'gay' as an expression to mean something rubbish. Despite the school I was working in being very supportive of its LGBT students and staff, the growing unease of society's latest use of this word began to concern me. At the same time, I also experienced what I later refer to as heteronormative recuperation through witnessing teachers and students, many times, ignoring homophobic behaviour,

when they had clearly seen it. Their explanations involved a fear of having their own sexuality challenged as a result of their intervention; something they genuinely appeared terrified of. Furthermore, I also observed what I suggest is heteronormative self-recuperation, where individuals (including LGBT individuals) express a heterosexual orientation, either through behaviour or by fabricating heterosexual partners, or occasionally joining in with homophobic behaviour in order to convince others of their heterosexual status. I suggest both heteronormative recuperation and heteronormative self-recuperation could be powerful barriers to combatting homophobia in schools, despite the Equality Act 2010 requiring the public sector to protect against discrimination against the LGBT community.

My interest in this area is both personal and professional. I argue that teacher training is vital in order to address LGBT equality, homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools. If our teachers are not comfortable with or do not have the necessary skills and training to tackle this area, it is unlikely this will be achieved.

### **1.3 Introduction to the research topic**

Globally there are great variances in regard to the experiences of the LGBT community in different countries. In many countries of the western world, LGBT individuals enjoy the same human rights experienced by their non-LGBT counterparts, including equal age of consent, adoption rights and same-sex marriage, for example, The Netherlands, Canada and England. However, in some countries, such as Sudan, Afghanistan and Iran, homosexual acts are punishable by death, and in many others, for example Sierra Leone, by life imprisonment. Whilst some of the world is showing greater tolerance towards LGBT people, including the recognition of LGBT rights by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2011, some countries have adopted a more regressive approach. In 2013, for example, India overturned a historic court decision, resulting in gay sex becoming illegal once more, and in 2014 the president of Nigeria agreed to sign a law making homosexuality illegal and punishable with ten years' imprisonment.

Within the United Kingdom, London's size and diversity have made it a more accepting place for many lesbian and gay people. The city, with the large central



area of Soho, has a great number and variety of LGBT venues and social events and has provided opportunities for LGBT individuals to live their lives with relative tolerance and the freedom to explore their own sexualities.

Prior to 1967, sex between men was illegal in England. Religious intolerance and discrimination caused lesbian and gay communities to be hidden within the wider society until the late twentieth century. The situation only changed with the introduction of the Sexual Offences Act 1967, which decriminalised consensual sex between two men in private. Since the 1960s, various organisations supporting LGBT rights have been established not only in London but also across the United Kingdom. The history of the LGBT community in England mirrors the experiences of LGBT in much of the western world. As a result, the findings of this study can indicate a common context for LGBT communities, and therefore possibilities for common reactions and issues for the entire LGBT communities, as well as provide useful recommendations.

With the increasing cultural tolerance and awareness of human rights, the move towards LGBT equality in England has seen some significant progress in recent years. This is a relatively modern shift and stands in sharp contrast to prevailing societal attitudes held during the 1980s and early 1990s when cultural homophobia reached its peak, partly as a result of a moral panic over the AIDS epidemic.

In effect, rather than gaining sympathy in regard to the spread of AIDS, a wave of anti-gay bigotry was experienced by homosexuals (Yang, 1997). At the same time the gay rights movement was gathering momentum and strength, leading to a fear of the erosion of family values. Current society, however, appears to be demonstrating a greater acceptance of homosexuality, as part of a larger shift in cultural ideology. Within most western cultures, the LGBT community currently has more protection and rights than ever before.

Although prejudice against the LGBT community remains widespread, public attitudes towards LGBT individuals have become increasingly liberal over the past forty years. In recent years, there has been a rising acceptance of the belief that homosexuality represents a valid alternative lifestyle. To illustrate, between 1978 and

1997, Yang (1997) found that there was a 20 per cent decrease in the number of American citizens who agreed that sexual relations between same-sex partners was wrong. This demonstrated a strong liberalisation in attitudes towards homosexuals' civil liberties. Other high income countries such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and many western European countries support equal rights in areas such as adoption, military service and same-sex marriage. Even some lower income countries have shown a greater tolerance towards LGBT communities, one example of which is Brazil, which since the end of military dictatorship in 1985 has become one of the most progressive countries for LGBT rights, including hosting the most attended gay pride festival in the world in Sao Paulo. In the United Kingdom, indications of support towards the outlawing of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation have strengthened. In 2009, research carried out during the Populus Gay Britain Survey claimed 61 per cent of respondents agreed to a statement referring to gay couples having equal marriage rights, rather than just civil partnerships. In 2012, a year before the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act received Royal Assent, 71 per cent of people were reported to be in favour of same-sex marriage, with 55 per cent supporting its introduction (YouGov, 2012). This could suggest more support for equality for the LGBT community.

Loftus (2001) has argued that the more liberal attitude towards homosexuality is partly due to changing demographics and rising levels of education. But this explanation cannot account for all of the change in attitude. It is notable that the decrease in cultural homophobia has occurred at the same time as a rise in the visibility of homosexuality (Weeks, 2007). Media influences such as openly gay television presenters, well-known athletes coming out, gay characters in soap operas, bisexual and transgender individuals taking part in reality television and the Internet could also have played a role in the increasing equality of the LGBT community.

Substantial legislative changes have also empowered LGBT individuals and helped to increase equality, some of which are shown in the table below.

The Human Rights Act 1998	This aimed to ensure equal rights for everyone in the United Kingdom. It required the European Convention on Human Rights to be taken into account in all legal proceedings in the United Kingdom. Article 14 specifically required that there would be no discrimination in the application of the Act on
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	any grounds, although it does not specifically include sexual orientation.
The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999	This was developed to clarify the United Kingdom law relating to gender reassignment, specifically to prevent discrimination on the grounds of pay and treatment in employment and training. Inserted into the pre-existing Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, it extended the Act to ensure that no individual would be treated unfairly compared to any other individual due to any gender reassignment a person had undertaken, intended to undertake, or was currently undertaking.
The Sexual Offences Bill 2001	This allowed the age of consent to be equalised at sixteen years for everyone, including gay men, lesbians and heterosexual individuals, from January 2001. This represented a reduction in the age of consent for gay men by five years. In 1967, when gay sex was partially decriminalised, the age of consent had been established at twenty-one. The legislative inequality may have reflected the prevailing societal attitude of the time, namely a disapproval of homosexuality.
The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003	These regulations made it an offence to deny employment, training or promotion to people on the basis of their sexual orientation and ensured that all reports of harassment are appropriately investigated.
The Gender Recognition Act 2004	This Act was specifically designed to reduce discrimination against transsexual individuals and ensure that people are recognised as their true (and not birth) gender. Specialist panels were established to determine applications for legal recognition of acquired gender, with successful applicants gaining the right to marry as their acquired gender and obtain reissued birth certificates.
The repeal in 2003 of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988	This enabled local authorities to freely discuss, acknowledge and validate LGBT issues, therefore supporting LGBT young people more readily both in and out of school.
The Civil Partnership Act 2004	This Act gave LGBT individuals the right to a new civil status as 'registered civil partners', affording them the same legal rights as opposite-sex couples who enter a civil partnership. This Act emerged directly from the Human Rights Act. Whilst many have applauded the symbolic step taken by Parliament to recognise formalised same-sex relationships, others contest the creation of a new civil status, rather than permitting same-sex couples into the institution of marriage. In 2007, this was challenged in the High Court under the Human Rights Act, and although ruled as discriminatory, was

	upheld on the basis of 'the protection of family life' (Culley, 2008). Same-sex marriage legislation was approved in July 2013 and was brought in across England and Wales in March 2014, despite resistance from coalition marriage pressure groups.
The Equality Act 2010	Under this Act, there is a requirement for equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation. The Act was primarily produced as a single Act to embellish the many other Acts originally produced to encourage equality, for example the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Race Relations Act (1976).
Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013	This Act allows same-sex couples to have equal marriage rights to opposite-sex couples, rather than only civil partnership rights.

#### 1.4 Recognition of diversity and equality in schools

The journey towards equality and diversity in schools can be traced back as far as the post-World War Two era when a labour shortage required migrant workers to enter the United Kingdom and take up (mainly manual) work. By the 1960s, the education system saw many of the children of the original immigrants within schools. Over the next twenty years hostility grew between white British communities and ethnic minorities, fuelled by some specific issues including some white working class communities believing immigrants were taking their jobs, and lowering their wages by working for less money. During the late 1970s some concern was raised by educators that the curriculum in schools did not reflect the multicultural nature of society and initial elements of anti-racist education began to appear (Tomlinson, 2008). However, with education becoming a vehicle of marketization in the 1980s and with the Education Reform Act 1988, emphasis was placed on competition and driving up standards, with multicultural and equal opportunities deprioritised.

As a result of the Treaty on European Union (1992), European Union citizens were able to move more freely within Europe, choosing to live or work in any European country. This led to a number of Europeans moving to the United Kingdom for employment and refugees from war-stricken countries seeking asylum. Negative connotations expressed by the media helped to increase tensions between ethnic

and religious groups, including within schools. Following the change of government in 1997, the Labour Government enacted some significant equalities legislation that impacted on schools, for example the Human Rights Act (1998) which came into force in 2000. Another example was the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which included a statutory requirement for public bodies to promote race equality and prevent race discrimination. Citizenship education became compulsory in schools in 2002, but it wasn't until the Ajebo review (2007) that 'Identity and Diversity: Living together in the UK' became a compulsory element of the citizenship national curriculum.

Efforts in equality have also developed since 2000; most relevant to this research are those focused on promoting LGBT equality and tolerance in United Kingdom schools and bringing LGBT issues into the political arena. The repeal of Section 28 (2001-2003) and the 2010 Equality Act are of particular importance for the LGBT movement in the United Kingdom.

The repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 may have been a turning point for LGBT issues within the United Kingdom educational system. Prior to this, local authorities were forbidden from 'promoting homosexuality, or material with the intention of promoting homosexuality...or the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship'. Section 28 was therefore described by the chairman of Stonewall as being deliberately designed to stigmatise and demean three million people (Gillian, 2003).

Although the Local Government Act was aimed at local education authorities and did not directly apply to schools, the Act was deeply symbolic and many teachers feared they would face legal consequences if they challenged homosexual bullying in schools or even referred to sexual orientation.

The repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government Act should have empowered teachers to acknowledge and validate the feelings of their gay, lesbian and bisexual students (through open and frank discussions of homosexuality with older students) and prevent homophobic bullying. However, whether this has been completely achieved is debatable. According to the Ofsted report 'Sex and Relationships Advice in School', written three years after the abolition of Section 28

of the Act, in too many secondary schools, homophobic attitudes amongst pupils often go unchallenged. The problem is compounded when derogatory terms about homosexuality are used in everyday language in school and their use is unchallenged by staff (Ofsted, 2006, p.10, para 21).

Despite the clear message given by the repeal of Section 28 and the Labour Government's own stance on the unacceptability of homophobic bullying in schools (DfEE, 2000), teachers and schools seem to need greater support in applying these principles to the classroom. In November 2004, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published *Stand Up For Us: Challenging Homophobia in Schools*, a resource aimed at tackling homophobia within the school setting. This was a significant publication as it was produced jointly by the DfES and the Department of Health, therefore carrying official recognition.

Both the Ofsted report and the DfES publication relate only to sexual orientation. The promulgation of the 2010 Equality Act helped to promote equality for the whole LGBT community by specifically addressing both sexual orientation and gender reassignment. The Act is aimed at helping the LGBT community to secure improved access to key public services, including healthcare and policing. One of the most crucial aspects of the Equality Act is that it supports the transgender community because it does not require an individual to be under medical supervision. It thereby protected anyone who had made the choice to live under a different gender, regardless of whether they had consulted a doctor or undergone medical procedures. It also ensured that members of the LGBT community were protected from discrimination or harassment by anyone exercising a public function.

One of the early successes which resulted from the implementation of the Equality Act was that a transgender teenager named Ashlyn Parram was able to gain her right to sit her Maths General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) dressed in female clothing in May 2012. This is not to say that the legislation had been completely successful. In the case of Ashlyn Parram, she was instructed to return home and change. Ashlyn had to produce a copy of the Equality Act, which detailed the provision regarding non-discrimination on the basis of gender identity, before being allowed to take the exam. However, the teenager was further

stigmatised because of being segregated from other students by taking the exam alone.

In February 2012, the Education Secretary Michael Gove was strongly criticised by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) for failing to uphold his legal duty to the Act due to his declaration that ‘any material used in sex and relationship education lessons...will not be subject to the discrimination provisions of the Act’. This was due to the complaint that homophobic material had been distributed by an American preacher to pupils at a Roman Catholic boys’ school in Lancashire (Doward, 2012).

It is clear that certain sectors of education are still lagging behind in terms of moving towards LGBT equality. In this context, schools may be still considered heterosexist – biased towards an expected norm of heterosexuality. Therefore, anything outside of this orientation is implicitly second class, making LGBT students vulnerable to victimisation.

According to Nixon and Givens (2004), heterosexism is pervasive throughout the school system, demonstrated both overtly (as evidenced by the two examples discussed above) and through more nuanced and insidious means, such as implied promotion of different-sex marriage and the continued lack of attention to same-sex relationships in the national curriculum. They refer to the dominant culture of the classroom, playground and staff room as one of “hegemonic machismo” (Nixon and Givens, 2004, p.2), which dictates populist expressions of masculinity and femininity. Boys who align themselves with such dominant masculinity position themselves in opposition to females, non-macho men, and gay or bisexual men. For girls, femininity is also based on a presumption of heterosexuality, and a markedly feminine appearance. Deviations for both sexes are perceived as examples of a ‘distorted sexuality’ and are expressed with the use of pejorative language (ATL, 2008). Moreover, both homophobia and heterosexism are considered as “one side of the coin” that pathologises homosexuality and transgenderism. The other side is a subtler form of stigmatisation, usually perpetrated by those who would describe themselves as inclusive and open-minded, and treats members of the LGBT community as a homogeneous group of victims (Nixon, 2006).

Despite the apparent liberalisation of attitudes towards the LGBT community as evidenced by legislation, government education initiatives and depictions in the media, it is clear that teachers and schools still require more support in order to achieve LGBT equality within the educational system. Such support is usually delivered as training, but emerging literature points to a lack of appropriate training and advocates more instruction in relation to LGBT issues (see Adams et al., 2004; Guasp, 2008; Robinson & Ferfolja, 2001, 2002; Warwick et al., 2004).

This research will identify the extent to which LGBT issues are covered as part of the citizenship education PGCE qualification in three London universities. Moreover, this thesis will assess how prepared PGCE students are in terms of their ability to address LGBT issues when they begin their work in schools. The PGCE in citizenship education was selected because it represents the curriculum area where LGBT issues are usually included. Its programme of study provides lessons and discussions in equality, diversity and human rights. It is also an area in which I have a specific research interest, due to the fact that I gained a Master of Arts in citizenship education in 2007 and have focused on this area throughout the Doctorate in Education so far.

This thesis was also inspired by research that was previously carried out in relation to social and political attitudes of PGCE students (Wilkins, 1999), and further research carried out by the same author two years later in relation to student teachers' attitudes towards race and the role of citizenship education in addressing racism (Wilkins, 2001). The second of these pieces of research in particular was highly useful, both in theoretical approach and structure, and a similar approach and theory have been applied in this study.

Results of the research by Wilkins uncovered a number of issues relevant to this thesis, particularly regarding concerns raised by student teachers about discussing sensitive issues (in this case race), due to the fear of offending parents or other teachers. Student teachers felt that these topics were too "hot to handle" so avoidance was seen as the safer option. Students also claimed that they would not know how to approach such topics in the classroom (Wilkins, 1999).



These concerns were similar to those uncovered during the Institution Focused Study which I carried out in 2010. Zamorski (1992) had previously discovered similar results suggesting that PGCE students may be under pressure to avoid controversial issues (although I will argue later that LGBT issues are not in fact controversial). Perceptions of controversy have a substantial impact on what teachers are confident about covering in schools, therefore also having an impact on their pupils' education about certain topics. In a sense, this prevailing fear about discussing controversial issues in the classroom is one of the considerations for this research's focus on LGBT equality.

## **1.5 The extent and impact of homophobic bullying in schools**

Bullying in schools is a major concern for many school pupils. In a survey of over 250,000 young people, almost half reported they had been bullied whilst at school (Chamberlain et al., 2010), with over half of those students having been bullied within the last year. Hackett and Tiger (2013) report different types of bullying on the basis of the young person's interests, their household income, sexuality, race, disability and religion. However, the most frequent reason for being bullied was appearance, with verbal bullying being the most common. Online bullying and physical bullying were also experienced by almost one in five young people. The impact of bullying on young people can be devastating and can include self-harm, low self-esteem, truancy, anti-social behaviour and suicidal thoughts and actions.

Research has revealed that homophobic bullying is highly prevalent in schools. In a survey conducted in 2004 by DfES, 82 per cent of teachers indicated an awareness of incidents of verbal bullying, whilst twenty-six per cent reported an awareness of physical incidents. Retrospective research conducted by Rivers (2000) demonstrated that a high proportion of lesbian and gay individuals reported having been bullied whilst at school. This included name calling, physical assault, isolation and sexual assault. More importantly, such bullying was more likely to occur in relatively open areas of the school such as classrooms and corridors than in more secluded areas (Rivers, 2000). *The School Report* by Stonewall (2012), commissioned by YouGov, indicates that homophobia continues to be widespread in

schools, with 55 per cent of lesbian, gay or bisexual individuals having experienced bullying, and 99 per cent reporting hearing the use of homophobic language. Youth Chances (2014) reports that 73 per cent of LGB and 90 per cent of transgender individuals have experienced discrimination at school, with 65 per cent claiming the schools had little in place to support this community (Youth Chances, 2014). Additionally, 60 per cent of young people reported that teachers who witness homophobic bullying never intervene (Stonewall, 2012). Bullying in general may be difficult to identify due to a reluctance to come forward as a result of fear or embarrassment, which could indicate the figures offered by research are lower than in reality. The extent of homophobic bullying is likely to be even harder to identify as victims may not only be scared of the perpetrators or embarrassed about the bullying in general, but they may also be nervous about the reaction from the person they choose to inform. If 60 per cent of teachers are not intervening when homophobic bullying is witnessed, this could lead to victims believing there is little point in reporting similar incidents. Victims of homophobic bullying may also not feel comfortable speaking to their parents or friends about the issue for fear of reprisal or rejection, which is less likely to be the case in religious or racial bullying.

Bullying can have serious ramifications. Previous research has identified several serious difficulties experienced by young gay, bisexual and lesbian individuals, arising directly from feelings of shame, self-loathing and worthlessness. These include difficulties in forming and maintaining meaningful intimate relationships, adoption of unsafe sexual practises and, in some cases, suicide (Friedman, 1991; Pilkington & D'Augelli, 1995; Shidlo, 1994).

The combined effect of bullying and difficulties in accepting one's orientation is correlated with a number of mental health outcomes for LGBT individuals. In the US, Hershberger and D'Augelli (1995) found that in a sample of 194 lesbian, bisexual and gay teenagers, forty-two per cent had made at least one suicide attempt as a result of being victimised or isolated by their families, peers or community. Furthermore, they found a positive correlation between self-acceptance and family support only for those who had experienced low levels of bullying. For young people who had experienced high levels of bullying, family support could not mitigate the onset of mental health problems or suicidal tendencies.

Rivers (2004) surveyed a sample of 119 lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) individuals to investigate possible links between bullying experiences in school, current levels of effect, and behaviour and symptoms of post-traumatic stress. It was found that seventeen per cent of those who experienced bullying displayed symptoms of post-traumatic stress. They were also significantly more likely to display symptoms of depression and have more casual sexual partners.

## **1.6 Citizenship education in England**

Following the recommendations by QCA (1998), citizenship education became a compulsory subject in the national curriculum in 2002 for pupils aged 11 to 16. The idea is that children should develop into confident individuals and responsible citizens, who make a positive contribution to society. The curriculum includes modules on democracy, justice, rights and responsibilities, identity and diversity. It is currently offered as both a GCSE and Advanced Level subject, but is still non-statutory in primary schools.

Citizenship education has been somewhat controversial. Initially, citizenship education itself was a contested area (Heater, 2001); had 'minimal direction' (Crick, 2000, p.109); and was difficult to define (Kerr et al., 2004). Other criticisms included an overt link to nationalist agendas and a detrimental lack of focus given to human rights (Osler & Starkey, 2005). This is supported by Kiwan (2008), who found that human rights education was ranked tenth out of ten in terms of the aims and outcomes of citizenship education by key players in the development of citizenship education. Political literacy ranked the highest.

It has also been debated whether moral education should even feature within citizenship education. Haydon (2000) claimed that there are two opposing sides to this debate: (a) citizenship education and moral education should be joined; and (b) citizenship education should only be concerned with the public political realm, and not with moral education. This research supports the principle that moral education is an integral part of citizenship education. This is based on the belief that the child should be educated in every respect, which includes fostering skills, knowledge and values (Halstead & Pike, 2006). I also know from experience as a citizenship and

PSHE teacher that pupils are often not satisfied with gaining the dry facts about situations, and want to discuss opinions, values and morals in addition to gaining knowledge.

In 2007, the House of Commons Select Committee published a review of citizenship education in England and Wales and concluded:

*It is too early to say with any degree of confidence whether citizenship education is producing the wide range of impacts originally hoped for. Initial evidence from small-scale studies and the experience of individual institutions is promising but on its own not enough...The imperative now is to ensure that patchiness [in the provision of citizenship teaching] is not allowed to remain, that high quality provision becomes the norm, and that progress is accelerated. This will require action from those on the ground, but also needs strong support from the DfES and Ministers. (HC 147; para 21)*

There are a number of criticisms faced by citizenship education that are particularly relevant to this research. These are: citizenship education being given a low priority in schools (Calvert & Clemitshaw, 2005); a lack of specialist teachers (Kerr et al., 2003); and difficulties surrounding its assessment (Richardson, 2007). As a result of these issues, citizenship education has often struggled to find a secure place in schools.

In an environment where citizenship education may already struggle for equal status in the curriculum, to what extent are LGBT issues regarded as important within the subject? In the 2014 national curriculum for citizenship education, at key stages 3 and 4 there is no specific mention of LGBT issues within the subject content documents for the 2014 programmes of study, whilst there is clear reference to the 'diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom' (DfES, 2014). There are aspects of LGBT issues covered in the GCSE Citizenship Studies course within the area of discrimination. However, if students are not studying the GCSE in citizenship studies, then they may well never receive LGBT education within citizenship classes.

As citizenship is often taught alongside PSHE, it is important to note that in the PSHE programmes of study for key stages 3 and 4 (QCA, 2000b) an

appreciation of different sexual orientations is included. However, the PSHE national curriculum programmes of study are not statutory within schools.

Research by Rivers & Duncan (2002) suggested that approximately 3.2 per cent of young people state they are attracted to members of the same sex. This would mean that there are potentially around 125, 000 young people in the United Kingdom who are attracted to the same sex. Reports indicate that between 30 and 50 percent of LGB youth experience homophobic bullying or harassment in educational settings (Rivers & Duncan, 2002). This could mean that between approximately 37,000 to 62,000 of young LGB people are being bullied as a result of their sexuality (Warwick et al., 2004). With specialised training for teachers in LGBT awareness, it may be possible to reduce these numbers. It is, therefore, useful to assess current trainee teachers' preparation for this area in order to identify gaps and improve training.

## **1.7 Research questions**

This thesis was guided by the following research questions:

- i) To what extent do the current citizenship PGCE courses in London address issues of equality and diversity in a way that includes LGBT perspectives?
- ii) To what extent do citizenship PGCE students in London feel prepared to address these issues when they enter the classroom?
- iii) What suggestions do the sample of PGCE citizenship students have for improving their training in this respect?

## **1.8 A note on terminology**

Throughout this thesis the abbreviation 'LGBT' has been adopted to collectively refer to individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. This abbreviation was selected as some historical research, policy development and statistical analysis have dealt with the issues pertaining to these individuals

collectively. However, it is crucial at this point to make the distinction between the terms 'lesbian', gay and 'bisexual' which refer to sexual orientation, and the term 'transgender' which refers to gender identity only, and makes no reference to sexuality. This important distinction is often overlooked due to stereotypical views of the perceived masculinity of lesbians, and femininity of gay men (Mitchell & Howarth, 2009).

This thesis does not aim to further cloud this distinction and I recognise that each group has different dynamics. However, as stated above, research has tended to aggregate these four groups, so for the purposes of comparative analysis with existing research, this thesis will follow such a format. Furthermore, although I recognise that treating LGBT individuals as a wholly homogeneous group does not afford such individuals the dignity and respect of their identity as deserved, it is recognised that all four groups share some common vulnerabilities. LGBT individuals may not be viewed by society as the norm in regard to their relationships or gender identity. They are often victims of derogatory language and suffer bullying, discrimination and prejudice based on their nonconformity to traditional heterosexual assumptions. LGB individuals may be perceived as challenging gender boundaries in the same way as transgendered individuals. Both groups may suffer abuse as a result of their gender presentation.

## **1.9 Thesis structure**

This research falls within the wider scope of educational research and therefore follows the four phases suggested by Kirk and Miller (1986): Invention, Discovery, Interpretation and Explanation. During the first phase, named Invention, the design and planning of the research took place, including consideration of ethical, validity and reliability issues (discussed in the Methodology chapter). Data collection and methodology contributed to the Discovery phase, followed by the Interpretation phase within which the data was analysed and a greater understanding was gained about teacher training and LGBT. Finally, there is the Explanation phase, whereby this thesis is completed and the resulting message communicated to an audience.

The thesis comprises six chapters. The introduction provides an overview of the topic area and research. The literature review is divided into two chapters. The first examines the current issues concerning LGBT individuals within the educational context, and concludes that trainee teachers require additional training, guidance and support to be equipped to support LGBT students throughout the difficulties they may experience in school. It charts changes in the area of LGBT issues in recent history, before introducing the presence of heterosexism and heteronormativity in schools. A discussion of homophobic bullying is followed by an analysis of homophobic language use in schools, with specific reference to the use of the word gay as an insult. Finally, this chapter of the literature review addresses the relative absence of transgender education and a lack of teacher training in LGBT issues.

Within the second section of the literature review (Chapter 3), the history of citizenship education is briefly outlined, followed by a discussion of the issues which have surrounded citizenship education since its introduction into the national curriculum in 2002. This includes delivery methods, specialist teachers, a lack of initial assessment and citizenship education's links with PSHE.

The fourth chapter, the methodology section, outlines the theoretical research approach, providing a brief explanation of Transformative Learning Theory and why it was regarded as most appropriate in this context. A discussion of sample selection, data collection and analysis methods, and research ethics is also provided.

The fifth chapter provides the results of the research and draws upon the data gathered from the sample as a whole, briefly outlining the responses from the questionnaire and vignette data collections. These follow the themes of the questionnaire, with the vignette scenario responses adding depth to the questionnaires.

The discussion chapter looks closely at the responses provided by the students included in the sample and interprets these with reference to relevant literature in the field. Themes, including LGBT legislation in education, and preparedness for, confidence in and the importance of LGBT education, are explored. Finally, LGBT knowledge in trainee teachers is drawn out within this section and explained with the use of relevant concepts and previous research.

The final chapter provides the conclusion. It summarises the findings of the research, and offers possible solutions for addressing the identified gaps. It justifies an argument for increased teacher training in LGBT issues, and offers an adaption to Banks's (2004) model of the Dimensions of Multicultural Education, which offers possible methods for delivering multicultural education within schools. The model has five broad dimensions: content integration; knowledge construction; prejudice reduction; an empowering school culture; and an equity pedagogy. Each of the separate dimensions is required to successfully deliver multicultural education. I suggest an adaption of this model could be useful for LGBT education. An expansion on Banks's model can be found in Chapter Two.

It is hoped that whilst this research identifies gaps within the area of LGBT education within the universities visited, a practical solution is also offered through a workable model.



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review – LGBT**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of a literature review is not only to access and assess the previous research so as to identify gaps, but also to provide a theoretical underpinning to the area under discussion by critically examining the existing literature surrounding the topic under investigation. Following this rationale, the next chapter will provide a critical report of the subject area, going beyond the descriptive to identify the questions that remain unanswered in the current literature, and provide a theoretical framework to approach the research questions under study.

The first section of the review will focus on both historical and contemporary LGBT issues, including difficulties faced by schools and the legislation used to both hinder and encourage progress in LGBT education. The chapter then moves on to the presence of heteronormativity within schools, and its potential of alienating individuals who are not of this orientation. I then argue that the presence of heteronormativity in schools can increase homophobia and homophobic bullying, and there have been inadequate responses to this by many teachers and schools. The chapter finally argues that more training and guidance are needed in order to address some of the difficulties LGBT young people may experience in school, and suggests a possible solution for trainee citizenship teachers based on a multicultural education model.

There is a large amount of research which documents the struggles of LGBT young people in modern secondary schools; see section 2.4 on homophobia and homophobic bullying. More recently, however, other researchers (Jones & Clarke, 2008; McCormack, 2012) have argued that there is a decline in homophobia within British schools.

### **2.2 A brief history of LGBT issues since the Education Act 1944**

Before the twentieth century, same-sex relationships and cross-dressing were regarded in many contexts as socially unacceptable, and were punishable by law.

Although the first known argument for homosexual law reform in England was written during the 1780s, because the author's fears of reprisal were so great, the work remained unpublished until 1978 (Bentham & Crompton, 1978).

From the 1870s onwards, social reformers around the world began campaigns defending homosexuality, although their identities were kept hidden. For example, in 1897, a German doctor, Magnus Hirschfeld, began to campaign publicly against legislation that ruled sex between men illegal, and formed the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft in 1901. He then dedicated his life to the social progress of transsexual, transgender and homosexual individuals (Fone, 2000).

World War Two curtailed some of the progress seen throughout the early twentieth century; for example, in America the military regarded homosexual sex as a crime, imprisoning army officers for up to five years (ten years in the navy). However, after the war ended many gay and lesbian groups settled in larger cities in America and this resulted in the beginnings of gay communities (Kuhn, 2011). A number of gay rights groups were also established across the western world after the war, including the Mattachine Society formed in 1951 by Harry Hay, a gay man living in Los Angeles at the time. This society set up discussion groups and offered support and a sense of belonging to its members. However, it was the 1960s in America which marked the beginning of the modern gay rights movement, including pickets such as The Annual Reminder held in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia from 1964 onwards (Kuhn, 2011).

The rapidly changing social climate of the 1960s urged LGBT activists to become more radical, and was marked by the emergence of the Gay Liberation Movement. Such radicalism has been attributed to the Stonewall Riots of 1969 in New York, which thrust the LGBT community into the political limelight. As a result of these riots, the gay rights movement gathered strength, both in America and in Great Britain, as the LGBT community demanded more equal rights through marches and protests (Kuhn, 2011). The first activist group formed in Great Britain was the Campaign for Homosexual Equality in 1969, followed quickly by the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) in 1970. The GLF, motivated by the Stonewall Riots the previous year in America, was formed at the London School of Economics and campaigned for equality for lesbians and gay men. This was followed by the first gay pride march in

1972, albeit with only 1000 attendees. In 1974, School's Out, an organisation working towards equality in education for LGBT people, was formed and in 1977 the TUC hosted a gay and lesbian conference to discuss equal workplace rights.

During the early 1980s the campaign for equality continued to gather strength in the United Kingdom. In 1980, homosexuality was decriminalised in Scotland and followed by Northern Ireland in 1982. This aligned them with England, where same-sex acts between individuals over the age of twenty-one had been decriminalised since 1967. In 1981, the Greater London Council began to fund grants for various initiatives, including the London Gay Switchboard and later the London Lesbian and Gay Centre.

However, by the mid 1980s evidence of a backlash against these movements was emerging, due to the widespread fear associated with the AIDS epidemic, and much of it became directed at homosexual and bisexual individuals. Since homosexual men were the first identified victims of AIDS (Gottlieb, 2006), they became scapegoats within the media which encouraged the stigmatisation of LGB lifestyles. This was occurring at the same time as certain school policies being developed to support and include sexual minorities were being branded as promoting homosexuality.

Although the dominant political ideology of the time was conservative, the Labour Party was actively campaigning to raise equality. Consequently, Conservative members of parliament (MPs) grew concerned over what they considered to be attempts to indoctrinate young children with homosexual propaganda. In March 1981, a booklet entitled 'The School Curriculum' was published by the Department of Education and Science to advise Local Education Authorities on curriculum development in schools. Within it, the teaching of heterosexual sex only was recommended (DES, 1981). Despite this, gay rights activists in the other two main political parties, Labour and Liberal Democrats, were highlighting the need for LGBT anti-discrimination to be written into their own policies and at the same time a number of gay support groups were being set up, for example, as mentioned above, the London Lesbian and Gay Community Centre based in Islington. In 1983 a book depicting a story about a young girl who lives with two men as a family was found in a school library and reported by the *Daily Mail*

newspaper. As a result, many Conservative backbenchers became concerned about children being exposed to homosexual promotional materials, arguing that it was morally wrong. In 1986, after the Labour Party annual conference called for all discrimination against homosexuals to end and after a number of protests held by the GLF, Lord Hasbury put forward a Private Members' Bill with the intention of restraining local authorities from promoting homosexuality. This was adopted by then Conservative MP Jill Knight and it successfully passed the first stage in the House of Commons (Hansard, 1987). However, it was ultimately deemed too risky and misleading to be prioritised so close to the 1987 general election, and thus was not given precedence.

However, shortly after the election, in which the Conservative Government retained power, a highly similar amendment to the proposed 1988 Local Government Bill was introduced by David Wilshire; it was entitled Clause 28. The Bill was presented to the House of Commons in 1987, and passed as law on 24th May 1988. Although some elements of the Bill did not receive support, two aspects of particular relevance to issues of LGBT equality were supported. These were the 'prohibition of promoting homosexuality by teaching or publishing material' and Section 1.b, the ruling that local authorities shall not 'promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a preferred family relationship' (Sanders & Spraggs, 1989, p.109).

There was some debate about whether Section 28 actually applied in schools or just local authorities. Head teachers and Boards of Governors were specifically exempt, but schools and teachers became confused, and were reluctant to discuss homosexuality in the classroom. Research carried out at the time indicated that a large proportion of teachers (57 per cent) incorrectly believed that the prohibition of discussion of homosexuality in schools was a decision made by the governors (Douglas et al, 1997). This may have been due to much of the sex education curriculum content being under the control of the governors at the time; however, it also indicates a confusion over the notion of responsibility in regard to Section 28. Many teachers at the time also wrongly believed that Section 28 prohibited them from discussing homosexuality or advising LGBT pupils (44 per cent in the same

study), thus putting fear of prosecution above pastoral care or professional responsibility.

Conflicting information was also given from government sources, despite a will from teachers to have further and clearer clarification on Section 28 (Douglas et al., 1997). In 1988 the DfES issued a statement claiming that Section 28 should not affect teachers, and that objective discussions about homosexuality and the counselling of children about their sexuality was permitted (Deer, 1988). However, Jill Knight, the original advocate of the Bill, publically argued that the whole point of Section 28 was to prevent children from having homosexuality thrust upon them. She then pledged a new campaign to stop educating children about homosexuality.

Twelve years later, speaking in 1999, Jill Knight described her motivation for the adoption of the Bill:

*Why did I bother to go on with it and run such a dangerous gauntlet? I was then Chairman of the Child and Family Protection Group. I was contacted by parents who strongly objected to their children at school being encouraged into homosexuality and being taught that a normal family with mummy and daddy was outdated. To add insult to their injury, they were infuriated that it was their money, paid over as council tax, which was being used for this. This all happened after pressure from the Gay Liberation Front. At that time I took the trouble to refer to their manifesto, which clearly stated: 'We fight for something more than reform. We must aim for the abolition of the family...'*

*That was the motivation for what was going on, and was precisely what Section 28 stopped...Parents certainly came to me and told me what was going on. They gave me some of the books with which little children as young as five and six were being taught. There was The Playbook for Kids about Sex, in which brightly coloured pictures of little stick men showed all about homosexuality and how it was done. That book was for children as young as five. I should be surprised if anybody supports that.*

(Hansard, 1999, c.1102)

There is little doubt that the presence of Section 28 drove fear into many teachers' thoughts about addressing LGBT issues in schools. Although Section 28 was not directly applied to schools, it succeeded in silencing discussion of

homosexuality as teachers found themselves self-censoring an already problematic and sensitive topic (Epstein & Johnson, 1994; Harris, 1990; Smith, 1990). It also caused many LGBT students to be ignored, invisible and withdrawn due to a lack of support (Watkins, 2008).

Although Section 28 was only used to bring one case, unsuccessfully, to court against a local authority (by the Christian Institute against Glasgow City Council for financially supporting an AIDS charity), it symbolically signalled the official and legal disapproval of homosexuality, which both reflected and produced inequality (Epstein, 2000) and served to reinforce the silence surrounding homosexuality (Adams et al., 2004).

The introduction of Section 28 prompted further action from the gay rights movement (for example, the establishment of the LGB charity Stonewall in 1989 and Outrage!) and began to divide the Conservative Government. A campaign was also led from within the House of Lords itself by the openly gay peer, Waheed Alli in 1998. Arguments against the legislation included a lack of support for vulnerable young people as support for homosexual youth groups had been withdrawn, the inference that if homosexuality could be promoted then it was a conscious choice rather than a biological feature, and that it gave the impression that homosexuality (therefore the homosexual person) was a danger to children.

Following the Labour Party's return to power 1997, an attempt was made to repeal Section 28 in February 2000, but was defeated in the House of Lords following a defence campaign by Baroness Young. A subsequent defeat occurred in July 2000. However, despite defeats in the House of Lords, Labour passed legislation that repealed Section 28 of the Local Government Act in 2003 via a vote by MPs. This finally resulted in the repeal being passed by the House of Lords and becoming law from 18th November 2003.

The repeal of Section 28 in 2003 was welcomed by LGBT pressure groups. However, the lasting effects of the legislation continued to hamper progress in supporting LGBT young people. Adams, Cox and Dunstan (2004) found through their research in nineteen secondary schools that a major requirement highlighted by the staff was a need for clarification of Section 28. Moreover, the staff in six out of

the nineteen researched schools still felt uncomfortable teaching about homosexuality. Epstein et al. (1994) also reported that four out of five teachers required further explanation in regard to Section 28. More recent research carried out by Nixon and Givens (2007) suggests a more positive picture since the repeal of Section 28, with the possibilities of school policies encouraging new thinking in regard to LGBT issues. Yet an acknowledgement is made that the implementation of such policies was not guaranteed.

Seven years later, the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 significantly strengthened the position of the LGBT community against discrimination, with sexual orientation and transgender both explicitly included within the wording. As a result of a social climate more accepting of a range of sexualities within society, McCormack (2012) suggests that there has been a significant decline in homophobia in schools, arguing that much of the research evidence suggesting otherwise is methodologically and analytically weak. McCormack's sociological study of three schools in the United Kingdom studied the attitudes of young people aged 16-18, and concluded that pro-gay attitudes are held in high regard; homophobia is as unacceptable as racism; and the adoption of the word gay to signify rubbish has no homophobic connotations for those that adopt it.

In his book, McCormack credits the decline of homophobic attitudes to the successes of the gay rights movement, a decline in the significance of religion, improving coverage of LGBT individuals in the media and the increasing role and influence of the Internet. This is based on his findings wherein he witnessed little homophobia during each six-month period of fieldwork in each school researched. However, despite it being a recent publication, McCormack's work could be criticised, most notably in his selection of supporting material for his arguments. Inspired by Anderson's (2005) theories of softening masculinity, McCormack focused on Anderson's descriptions of homophobia in the 1980s and 1990s almost exclusively, dismissing other writers on the basis that they approach the issue from a poststructuralist perspective.

McCormack's work may also be of limited applicability due to methodological issues. For example, all of the participants in the research were aged between 16 and 18; research shows that younger students are generally more homophobic

(McCormack, 2012). The extent to which such results are generalisable to all secondary education students beyond those in post-16 education is therefore debatable. Perhaps more worryingly, McCormack's work focused almost exclusively on attitudes towards gay students, with only a small number of young men identifying as bisexual, and only one as transgender. Lesbian students were not represented at all. Despite referring to the LGBT community throughout his work, it is questionable whether his findings can truly be applied beyond attitudes towards gay men aged 16 to 18.

### **2.3 Heteronormativity within schools**

It has been argued that schools are predominantly heteronormative (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Nixon, 2010; van Dijk & van Driel, 2007), not only amongst students but also within the staffroom. It is normal to be heterosexual within the school environment and those who fall outside the 'norm' are at a disadvantage. Heteronormativity in education is not exclusive to schools, with many adult and higher education institutions being subject to entrenched heteronormativity (Hill, 2006; Nixon & Givens 2007). This may lead to discrimination which can be overt, such as bullying, or covert, such as social exclusion. When this is challenged, whether by a teacher (or pupil) challenging the use of homophobic language or by a teacher challenging the beliefs of some members of a class, this may well lead to a process of re-instatement or recuperation (Nixon, 2010) on behalf of the dominant group, where they assert their authority once more. The process of recuperation originates from the idea that politically radical ideas were somewhat twisted or modified by various processes, for example the media, and on behalf of the more privileged classes, in order that they were regarded as more appropriate and socially conventional. In the context of this study, the recuperation involves the dominant heterosexual group (the privileged norm) reinstating their authority over the homosexual groups (the minority). An example of this could be a teacher hearing the use of homophobic language, challenging the pupil about this and the pupil questioning the teacher's reasons for why the challenge took place, attempting to make the teacher feel unreasonable for questioning the action at all. The recuperation could take a number of forms, one of which would be questioning the



teacher's own sexuality as a reason for their challenge against homophobia and therefore perceived protection of the gay community. This may result in that particular teacher feeling that their own position is threatened and therefore deciding not to challenge the homophobic language in the future, for fear of a repeat of the recuperation. This process may help to prevent many homophobic instances from being challenged and dealt with, for a teacher's (and pupil's) fear of what I will refer to as heteronormative recuperation.

Heteronormative recuperation may offer one explanation as to why very few teachers always challenge homophobic language every time they hear it (Hunt & Jensen, 2007), and one-fifth never respond (Guasp, 2008). In this process, the dominant group (heterosexuals) reassert their authority within that particular situation (Nixon, 2010). Recuperation can also occur by LGBT teachers themselves, by managing their own identities (Sparkes, 1994) in the form of self-recuperation. Nixon (2010) reports one lesbian trainee teacher's experience on her school placement of denying being a lesbian, an experience which many LGBT colleagues working in schools can relate to. It could be argued that the fear of heteronormative recuperation is so strong within schools that teachers may not only decide against addressing homophobia, but also that LGBT teachers fear the recuperation of being 'found out'.

The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, therefore making heterosexism the norm, can also result in LGBT individuals being regarded as second class citizens. Nixon and Givens (2004) have commented on a "hegemonic machismo" (2004, p.2), which dominates the school system, both overtly and covertly, influencing the culture of the school system. This culture dictates expected expressions of masculinity and femininity, and deviations for both sexes are perceived as examples of a 'distorted sexuality'. According to Nixon (2006), homophobia and heterosexism both represent "one side of the coin" that pathologises homosexuality and transgenderism. The other side is a subtler form of stigmatisation, usually perpetrated by those who would describe themselves as inclusive and open-minded, and treats members of the LGBT community as a homogeneous group of victims.

Sedgwick (1990) describes a similar taxonomy; the heterosexual/homosexual binary, where, in similar heteronormative cultures, homosexuals are regarded as 'others', which could lead to discrimination and bullying. Robinson and Ferfolja (2002) also suggest that heterosexism (along with homophobia) can often result in discrimination, inequality and violence. This may result in a negative impact on educational achievements, social development, relationships and health (Irwin et al., 1997), and an increase in suicide rates (Denborough, 1996; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Statistics from the Lesbian and Gay Foundation (LGF) show that LGBT people continue to be at greater risk of suicide, in fact up to three times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual youth. Similar claims have been made by Stonewall in the 2012 School Report, which suggests that 16 per cent of gay and bisexual boys have attempted suicide and over half have considered it. These findings are in direct contrast to McCormack's (2012) claim that there is a decline of homophobia in schools, although it should be stated that McCormack does not argue that the fight against homophobia has been won. Instead, he points to a changing culture amongst young men in schools, where being gay no longer affects popularity, but expressing homophobic views does.

As Nixon (2006) postulated, heterosexism is not limited to an overt culture of expected heterosexuality within a group of people. It can also manifest itself in more covert ways, such as institutionalised heterosexism, where resources, the curriculum, text books and even displays can show an assumed heterosexual presumption. In fact, Epstein & Johnson (1994) suggest that heterosexuality is the norm in every area of the formal curriculum, examples of which are the focus on contraception, penetrative sex, heterosexual relationships and marriage during personal and social education lessons, and with the exception of William Shakespeare, few 'out' homosexual authors are studied in English at key stage 3 (Epstein & Johnson, 1994, p.223). It can be argued that the mere presence of LGBT issues within the PSHE national curriculum shows that the formal curriculum is not entirely heterosexist. However, this is of limited reassurance as the PSHE national curriculum is non-statutory. Additionally, whilst diversity, race, disability and gender were mentioned throughout key stages 1 to 4 in the citizenship national curriculum 2007-2013, LGBT issues were only mentioned in key stage 4 under the theme of human rights. In the 2014 national curriculum programmes of study, there is no reference to LGBT issues

within the subject content outline, despite it specifically mentioning the 'diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities of the United Kingdom' and human rights (DfES, 2014). In key stage 3, the 'precious liberties enjoyed by citizens of the United Kingdom' (DfES, 2014) are to be covered, omitting any specific reference to LGBT education.

It is possible that the situation has improved since the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 and the focus on this area from Ofsted. Schools are now under more pressure than ever to include the LGBT community within the school, with Ofsted enquiring about the welfare of LGBT pupils during inspections. Advice has been provided by Ofsted (2012a) in the form of a good practice guide, focusing on Stoke Newington School and Sixth Form College, London which trains staff and students in diversity, including an understanding of LGBT. Full commitment from the governors, senior team and the majority of staff helped the designated diversity leader to raise awareness of LGBT issues and challenge homophobia. The use of external role models and the wider community, including LGBT history month and an LGBT evening for parents and pupils at the school, further strengthened the school's diverse ethos. A further school was highlighted in the 2013 Citizenship consolidated document, a survey focusing on citizenship education in schools. Rossett School, Yorkshire was presented as a good practice example of celebrating diversity in response to high levels of homophobic bullying amongst the boys. The school approached this by promoting understanding, tolerance and respect for sexual diversity, including background work on different forms of prejudice and discrimination. Outside speakers from Stonewall and the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIREs) helped to inform and educate teachers, pupils and staff about different LGBT issues and, as a result, the school is a safe and caring community where diversity is celebrated (Ofsted, 2013).

However, the diversity awareness work carried out in Stoke Newington and in Rossett School may not be indicative of every school in England. A report published by Ofsted in June 2012 included key findings such as all pupils hearing a range of disparaging language, with homophobic language frequently mentioned, and half of the pupils surveyed reporting an incident where they had felt picked on or bullied in school, due to a number of factors, sexuality being one of them (Ofsted, 2012b). If

institutionalised heterosexism still exists in schools, it could lead to feelings of isolation for an individual if they do not personally relate to the messages presented by the school, as well as enforcing the heteronormative nature of the school itself.

Heterosexism may also result in homosexuals feeling 'branded', resulting in them gaining a stigmatised identity (Rosario et al., 2002). The term stigma has its origins in ancient Greek, referring to a mark or brand on the body that identified individuals as morally diminished. In Goffman's seminal theory of stigma (Goffman, 1963) he argued that stigmatisation occurs when an individual possesses an attribute that is deeply discredited by his or her society, and is rejected as a result. Stigma is not inherent to the attribute itself; instead it is a characteristic imputed by society to the attribute in question. Bestowing such a characteristic upon a person, however, influences both their self-concept and interactions with others. In effect, stigma shapes self-identity. Societal rejection can induce negative or punitive responses from others, leading to victimisation and bullying (Almeida et al., 2009).

Whilst some writers would not link heteronormativity and heterosexism to homophobia (McCormack, 2012), I would align with other researchers that homophobia is more likely to exist where there is the availability for discrimination against the non-dominant group. In educational institutions, where hegemonic heteronormative dominance exists, the likelihood of homophobia is increased.

## **2.4 Homophobia and homophobic bullying**

Given that I place myself within the discourse that heteronormativity and heterosexism are likely to increase homophobia within schools, it is appropriate to discuss some of the considerable body of research that focuses on homophobia and homophobic bullying in the education system.

### **2.4.1 Definitions and types of homophobic bullying**

Homophobic bullying can be described as any form of physical, emotional or social aggression perpetrated against an individual because of his or her actual or perceived sexual orientation, or because that individual's behaviour is not typical of

his or her sex (Rivers et al., 2007). This definition is particularly useful for this study as it includes atypical behaviour for one's sex, thus including the transgender dynamic, rather than being solely dependent on sexual orientation.

There are a number of types of homophobic bullying, as there are with other types of bullying. They can include physical, verbal, sexual harassment and online bullying with different frequencies of attacks. Rivers and D'Augelli (2001) carried out research involving 350 LGB youths and discovered over half had experienced verbal bullying and 11 per cent had been physically assaulted. During 2007, Hunt and Jensen reported that 97 per cent of the 1145 respondents to their survey had heard homophobic insults. The 2014 Youth Chances survey of over 6,500 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) young people reported that physical attacks were less frequent than verbal attacks and threats, yet almost a quarter of respondents stated they had been the victim of a physical assault as a result of their LGBTQ identity. Three-quarters reported verbal bullying in the form of name calling. The most serious cases of homophobic bullying, including rape, being set on fire or being urinated on were reported by Rivers (1996). This does not include incidents of the most extreme form of homophobic bullying: being murdered as a direct result of one's sexuality. For example the death of Matthew Shepard in 1998 resulted from being tortured in Wyoming, United States, and Steven Simpson in 2012 had homophobic slurs written on his body before being set on fire in Yorkshire, United Kingdom.

One aspect linked to homophobic verbal bullying is the use of the word 'gay' to describe objects, events or activities as rubbish, sad, or sometimes broken. Research by Epstein (1994), Nayak and Kehily (1996) and Swain (2002) confirms the concerns about the use of the word in this way. It appears that using the word 'gay' in a derogatory sense has increased since the year 2000 and is now very common. A report by the ATL in 2008 found that the term 'gay' had become the most frequently used insult in British schools, with 83 per cent of teachers reporting hearing it regularly. Hunt and Jensen (2007) report that 98 per cent of young gay people in Britain's schools hear pupils say 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' and Guasp (2008) reports that one in five teachers admit they never challenge students' use of this phrase. This may be due to the frequency of the use of the term, the

belief that it is harmless name calling (Drake et al., 2003), the fear of recuperation, or the lack of confidence in dealing with such situations.

However, the word 'gay' may simply just be evolving in the English language and its use may have changed over the years. When challenged about their use of the term 'gay', some pupils explain that they do not mean that an object was homosexual, but that 'gay' simply means rubbish. This would suggest that the pupil is not being homophobic in their use of this term, but is simply using it in its new, independent and different connotation.

McCormack (2012), during his ethnographic study into masculinities in three sixth form colleges, reported a significant lack of homophobia amongst the boys he observed. Especially pertinent to this study was the use of the word 'gay'. McCormack argues that for this term to be homophobic there must be pernicious intent and a homophobic environment and that the language has a negative social effect. Without these factors, such a term would not be regarded as homophobic. McCormack goes on to suggest that in a gay-friendly culture, such language could even be described as pro-gay, as it encourages bonding between boys. McCormack continues by suggesting that a 'gay discourse' exists, whereby the use of homosexually themed language is not homophobic. He also suggests a cultural lag (Ogburn, 1950), whereby language used by individuals lags behind their actual beliefs. In this instance, someone who is not homophobic can use homophobic language, simply because that use of this language lags behind his or her belief.

There are a number of McCormack's claims that do not convince me in regard to 'gay discourse'. First (and this is a point McCormack also comments on) is that in a culture of homophobia, language such as 'gay' can be viewed differently (homophobic). Whilst I accept that homophobia does not necessarily exist in secondary schools, heteronormativity and heterosexism do. I argue there is a thin line between the intention of this term as suggested by McCormack (pro-gay and bonding) and the use of the word 'gay' in a derogatory sense, which I argue is much more common. My second point of contention with this proposed model lies within the cultural lag explanation. Whilst I can appreciate that the meaning of the word 'gay' may well have changed for some people, I question whether cultural lag could be used to explain other offensive language once used against particular minority

groups in the same way. Finally, I would argue that language such as 'gay', when used as an insult (which it often is in schools), is damaging to the group of people it is aimed at, in the same way that it would be offensive for a word used to describe a racial or cultural group to now be used to describe something as rubbish.

#### **2.4.2 The extent of homophobic bullying in schools**

The struggles of LGBT young people in modern secondary schools are now well documented. Nayak and Kehily (1996) carried out ethnographic research into how homophobia was expressed by young men, linking it to masculinities and the fusing of homophobic practices and the struggle for masculinity, making it difficult to challenge homophobia. Rivers et al. (2007) sought to provide an insight into the short- and long-term effects of bullying in the United Kingdom, suggesting that homophobic bullying happens in all schools, the results of which can be devastating.

The level and extent of homophobic bullying has an increasing body of research. Drake et al. (2003), in a small-scale project with the aim of ensuring all schools in the county of Northamptonshire have the necessary means to combat homophobic bullying, found that 64 per cent of pupils researched had witnessed other students being victims of homophobic bullying, with over a quarter of the pupils claiming to have been bullied themselves. Although 65 per cent of the pupils reported that they thought homophobic bullying was wrong, only 13 per cent said they were aware of policies or rules in relation to homophobic bullying within their schools. This study's weakness is that it is small in scale. However, more recent larger studies have found similar results (Guasp, 2008). Over 60,000 same-sex-attracted young people in England may have received some form of direct experience of homophobic harassment (Warwick et al., 2004). These numbers, whilst already vast, must be considered conservative estimates as research into this topic often suffers from under-reporting of homophobic incidents. As such, the numbers could potentially be much higher.

Hunt and Jensen (2007), in conjunction with Stonewall, invited all LGB youths in Great Britain to complete a survey about their experiences at school. They received 1145 responses from secondary school pupils, roughly equal girls and boys. Their results indicated continuing homophobia and homophobic bullying within

schools, with almost all pupils hearing homophobic insults and more than two-thirds reporting they heard them frequently. Hunt and Jensen (2007) also revealed disturbing results from their research of young gay people, claiming that homophobic bullying has reached almost epidemic levels in Britain's schools. They report that 65 per cent of young LGB pupils have experienced direct bullying, a figure which increases to 75 per cent in faith schools. A total of 97 per cent of the pupils researched reported hearing insulting homophobic remarks such as 'poof', 'dyke' or 'bender', yet only 23 per cent have been told that homophobic bullying is wrong. As many as 35 per cent of the pupils felt unsafe and unaccepted at school and, sadly, 30 per cent of the pupils reported that it was adults who were responsible for the bullying. The higher prevalence of homophobic bullying in faith schools could be due to the fact that these schools have integrated religion into their curriculum and ethos. As such, they are more critical of homosexuality, which often results in homophobic treatment towards LGBT pupils.

Research conducted by Guasp (2008) also indicates a prevalence of homophobic bullying in schools, with 91 per cent of secondary school teachers reporting that pupils within their schools are bullied, harassed or called names for either being LGBT or perceived as being LGBT. The same research reported that homophobic bullying was the second most common type of bullying after weight, and three times more common than religion or ethnicity (Guasp, 2008). There is a possibility of bias in this particular piece of research, given that it was commissioned by Stonewall (an LGBT advocacy group), which could have led to exaggerated perceptions of bullying. However, the body of evidence towards the presence of homophobia and homophobic bullying in school is undeniable, and continues to increase.

Research has indicated a positive correlation between LGBT young people becoming more open about their sexuality and rates of bullying. If no one is 'out' as gay, then there may be no target for homophobic abuse, and heterosexism dominates with little challenge. Ryan and Rivers (2003) argued that 'during the past decade, high rates of victimisation particularly in school and community settings have paralleled the increased visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people' (Ryan & Rivers, 2003, p.103).



Anderson (2005) has challenged this theory and suggested more men are openly identifying themselves as gay, due to an increased level of cultural tolerance. However, Anderson's research was rooted within the world of athletics, and included adult male participants only. As it has been established that levels of homophobia are higher amongst younger members of the community (McCormack, 2012), Anderson's research has less applicability to the school environment. Indeed, Kian & Anderson (2009) concede that players of the four most popular professional team sports in the US continue to exhibit high levels of intolerance towards the LGBT community. I suggest that it is not only openly gay young people who are targets of homophobia or homophobic bullying; instead it is often a person's perceived sexual orientation which can lead to bullying.

### **2.4.3 The impact of homophobic bullying**

The impact of homophobic bullying on the individuals involved can be long term and devastating. Examples of the devastation that homophobic bullying can cause are not difficult to find, one of the most poignant being the suicide in England of Dominic Crouch in 2010 after suffering homophobic bullying following an incident where he kissed a boy as a dare on a school trip. After campaigning for strategies to be put into place to deal with incidents of this nature seriously within school, and winning the Stonewall Award, Dominic's father, Roger Crouch, also committed suicide, in 2011. Both lives were destroyed by homophobia, despite neither being homosexual.

Research carried out in this area shows some concerning similarities. Most LGBT young people bullied at school were unlikely to report the homophobic bullying (Rivers, 2001a), possibly due to embarrassment or fear. This could mean that the studies carried out within this area underestimate both the extent and impact of homophobic bullying. Nevertheless, studies show a link between an individual's sexuality, bullying and a number of psychological difficulties, which could be short term and/or long term. LGBT individuals who had been bullied were more likely to self-harm or commit suicide (Rivers, 2001b). In some cases, and as a direct response to difficulties they faced whilst growing up, as many as 20 per cent of over 400 young gay people researched claimed they had attempted suicide (Trenchard & Warren, 1984). Whilst this research was carried out during the moral panic associated with

the recently discovered AIDS epidemic and young gay people may not react this way exclusively due to homophobic bullying, later research by Ryan and Rivers (2003) discovered that 39 per cent of LGBT youth had experienced harassment from peers at school in the United States. O'Shaughnessy et al. (2004) also reported that school climates were unsafe for LGBT pupils, from surveys carried out in the United States. In Australia research by Dyson et al. (2003) shows a further link between a young person's sexuality and suicide.

Aside from an increase in suicide risk, other psychological issues have been shown to affect young LGBT people who have experienced harassment or bullying. These can be similar to those who have experienced post-traumatic stress, with respondents experiencing distress when discussing their school days, one in ten having flashbacks, and regular use of alcohol and drugs as a result of their trauma (Rivers, 2004). Further studies in this area revealed similar results, showing, for example, that gay men and lesbians were more likely to have consulted a mental health professional, self-harmed or used recreational drugs than their heterosexual counterparts (King et al., 2003).

Many other results of harassment of LGBT youth have been documented, including lack of sleep, loss of appetite, isolation, attempted suicide, actual suicide, self-harm, low attendance at school, and under achievement (Dyson et al., 2003; Fineran, 2002; O'Shaughnessy et al., 2004, Rivers, 2001a; Ryan, 2003; Warwick et al., 2000). Whilst these studies are clearly based on real experiences, many of them are retrospective accounts, which may be distorted by memory. It could well be the experiences were worse than remembered, particularly since few studies involve current or contemporary experiences of LGBT youth.

#### **2.4.4 Addressing homophobic bullying in schools**

The body of evidence for the presence of homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools is compelling. Given that such evidence is an accurate portrayal of modern school life for LGBT students, to what extent are teachers dealing with these issues successfully? It has been suggested that 97 per cent of teachers are aware of general homophobic verbal or physical bullying in schools, with 82 per cent

having witnessed verbal bullying and 26 per cent having witnessed physical bullying (Douglas et al., 1997).

Yet many studies suggest that this bullying is not being addressed or dealt with. Despite two-thirds of teachers reporting in 2003 that they had witnessed incidents of homophobic bullying, with most of them claiming they had intervened, some teachers cited the frequency of these incidents as a valid reason not to intervene. This was due the fact that the teachers believed the number of low-level incidents such as name calling were regarded as not harmful by the students themselves, instead viewing them as merely 'an unpleasant part of teen culture' (Drake et al., 2003, p.3).

In other studies, as few as 5 per cent of teachers respond to hearing homophobic language every time they hear it, according to young gay pupils questioned (Hunt & Jensen, 2007). This research is supported by reports that two in three teachers don't always respond to the use of the word 'gay', and 20 per cent say they never respond to this. Over a third of schools reported that they have not addressed homophobic bullying within their establishment or sexual orientation within lessons (Guasp, 2008). This research indicates that despite widespread bullying of LGBT students, which teachers are aware of, many teachers do not respond to the bullying or fail to adequately deal with it.

A research-based model, Factors Influencing Teachers' Non-intervention may aid in understanding why some teachers do not respond to hearing or witnessing homophobic behaviour. The model was based on teachers' reactions to and perceptions of what the author termed 'gendered harassment' (Meyer, 2009, p.62), defined as any behaviour that reinforces traditional heterosexual norms, including harassment for homosexuality and nonconformity of gender.

The model has four components: (a) external influences, (b) internal influences, (c) perceptions, and (d) responses. These factors interact with each other to exert an impact on the propensity to intervene. The interactions between external and internal influences shape how a teacher perceives behaviours amongst students, and guide how the teacher responds.

- The internal influences relate to the specific set of experiences and identity that a teacher brings to their teaching.
- The external influences can be described as the school culture, and are created by both social and institutional influences.
- The social influences represent the more informal aspects of culture, and include perceptions on the morals and principles of managers, interpersonal relationships with management (including feeling supported), colleagues and parents, and community values.
- The institutional influences are the formal aspects of the school culture, and include administrative arrangements, curriculum and workload demands, written policies, and teacher training and education. They can influence the propensity to intervene in various ways. Workload burden may mean a teacher simply does not have the time to challenge discriminatory language. (Meyer, 2009)

A lack of clarity regarding official policies and processes for dealing with harassment may inhibit intervention. It is Meyer's final aspect of institutional influence, the role of education and training in the propensity to intervene, which has particular resonance with this research. Most of the teachers in her research felt that their training had left them ill-equipped to challenge incidents of bullying, especially if they related to gender and sexual orientation. Furthermore, teachers did not feel they had the opportunity to access further training in these areas. Inadequate training reduced the teachers' confidence to intervene in bullying or harassment, and left them unlikely to do so.

Teachers in research carried out by Drake et al. (2003) may well have cited the reason for not dealing with homophobic incidents as due to the sheer frequency of incidents. However, I would argue that a lack of confidence on the part of the teachers in knowing how to deal with these incidents effectively may also play a part. It should be noted that the fear of heteronormative recuperation may also be a barrier to teachers challenging homophobic incidents, especially considering Stonewall's suggestion that the teaching profession is amongst the hardest to be openly LGBT in the workplace. If heteronormativity stretches as far as the teachers within a school, the extent to which they may challenge homophobia may be limited.

Although it could be suggested that homophobia may be decreasing in schools, due to the new Ofsted requirements, the Equality Act and the visibility of more LGBT individuals in the media, there remains a convincing picture that homophobia and homophobic bullying are still an issue in some secondary schools, and one which not all teachers are addressing for a variety of reasons.

## **2.5 Transgender issues**

Having encompassed transgender with LGB within this research, it is often the transgender part of the abbreviation which is ignored and yet it is also the area which is least understood, as shown by the numerous stories in the media of pupils who have, or more commonly have not, been accepted within their school when they wish to be recognised based on their true gender, rather than their biological one (GIRES, 2008)

Young transgender individuals experience a high level of bullying from peers and sometimes staff; feel too scared to report it as they are not confident that it will be dealt with appropriately; get lower than expected results; and often are not appropriately provided for in terms of facilities (Rands, 2009).

Amongst the plethora of privilege and oppression systems within schools is a model focusing on gender oppression. The gender oppression matrix (Rands, 2009) suggests there are two forms of gender oppression: gender category oppression, based on which category an individual is placed in (women being the oppressed), and gender transgression oppression, relating to how well that individual fits into that category. In this model, a feminine woman would be oppressed in the first form, yet would be privileged in the second form as she fits the expected gender expectations. A masculine man would be privileged in both forms, yet a woman who does not fit into the feminine expectations would appear to be oppressed in each form according to this model. This model was valuable when trying to understand some of the gender oppression issues present in schools. The added inclusion of a heteronormative culture within schools accentuates this oppression and helps to keep the privileged heterosexual gender-conforming males in social power.

The oppression of the non-gender-conforming nature of transgender individuals may also lead to discrimination and bullying in the same way that heterosexism can lead to homophobia. In order to counteract gender oppression, schools should adopt a more gender-complex approach to education (Rands, 2009), by not only questioning gender category oppression (for example, equality for males and females), but also by challenging the gender transgression oppression, by encouraging girls to select traditionally 'male' subjects and not align themselves with gender norms. However, it is understood that this requires training, not only of the individual themselves, as most of us will have been brought up in a gender-oppressed school, but also in how to address this in schools. At the time of writing, I am unaware of any such programme in teacher training institutions.

## **2.6 Teacher training and LGBT issues**

Since as far back as 1984, research has reported a lack of provision for LGBT youth, through a lack of acknowledgement of the specific needs of this group (Trenchard & Warren, 1984), and this remains the case today (Douglas et al., 1997; Ofsted, 2002; Ryan & Rivers, 2003). The call for more training in LGBT issues continues to be well documented in more recent years. The DfES (2004) recommended training and support, and suggested training sessions, team teaching and observation as possible methods of tackling homophobia in schools. It provided a framework to guide teachers in handling direct action in the classroom that could also be used as a self-assessment tool to assess a school's current competency in addressing homosexual bullying. The policy development section of the resource guide includes thirty-three criteria which will help to address homophobia in schools. It also provides real-life examples to be challenged. Moreover, it provides schools with a sample incident log to track homophobic bullying, as well as an advice guide on how to support pupils who disclose information regarding their sexuality.

Drake et al. (2003) developed a tool kit of resources and training opportunities for teachers, including case studies, scenarios and policies based on research which they carried out in Northamptonshire. Szlachta (2003) also identified three key factors which could lead to improvements in sexual diversity in schools. These are: (a) staff

training, (b) a clear school policy, and (c) a student gay-straight alliance. Similarly, Adams et al. (2004) continued to highlight a need for training regarding issues surrounding sexuality and homophobic bullying, as only two of the nineteen schools that they researched had received any equal opportunity training in the past two years, and only one of those two courses had any direct advice on how to deal with homophobia.

Warwick et al. (2004) also advocate training of teachers and professional development in schools as a way forward in the battle against homophobic bullying and behaviour in schools. They state that training for teachers and other staff on sexuality was inadequate, which left homophobia ignored. Other recommendations include clear leadership from the government and a whole school approach. The authors also state that there is a need to improve both initial teacher training courses and continued professional development, with the message that preventing homophobic incidents is within the role of being a teacher.

Another suggestion is for universities to employ external agencies to support training around LGBT issues, with the aim of helping teachers to be more effective at dealing with sexuality issues in the classroom. However, with the current budget cuts in universities, priorities may not allow money to be spent on this sort of training, especially if it takes time and money away from other areas.

Watkins (2008) advocates that the training of teachers in LGBT issues should occur within teacher training colleges, arguing that newly qualified teachers who have entered the profession since the abolition of Section 28 are better placed to deliver LGBT education and awareness. However, these recommendations could be more difficult in practice because they rely on government support and senior management support, and resources such as time and money. The same limitations may apply to the suggestions made by Rivers et al. (2007), calling for more staff training regarding homophobia.

In 2008, *The Teachers' Report*, commissioned by Stonewall, found that more than a quarter of secondary school staff do not feel confident in supporting a student who decides to 'come out' and 40 per cent would not feel confident in providing pupils with information and guidance on LGBT issues. This collection of research

indicates that despite some progress, for example the repeal of Section 28, there still seems to be a lack of knowledge within the teaching body on how to best provide guidance and service for LGBT youth.

The solution to the problem could potentially lie within initial teacher training programmes. An LGBT training module within all teacher training programmes would ensure that all PGCE students would be aware of LGBT issues at the start of their careers, something Comely recommended in 1993. However, by 2009, teachers were still reporting that they did not feel sufficiently prepared by their teacher training programmes to deal with gender harassment or bullying (Meyer, 2009). Some 40 per cent of teachers felt they could not provide children with advice on LGBT issues (Guasp, 2008), and transgender issues were completely missing from teacher training programmes in 2009 (Rands, 2009).

There is growing support for the need for better training in teacher education programmes (Wyatt et al., 2008). However, many programmes are challenged due to a number of barriers. Some trainee teachers in Australia felt the subject irrelevant (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2001), assuming that there is a compulsory heterosexuality in schools. Other barriers reported are misconceptions around the LGBT community; a belief that issues of morality are best addressed by the family; fear of parental complaints; fear that one may also be perceived as gay (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2002); and the greater value placed on the mechanics of teaching, such as class management and successful delivery of lessons (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2001).

Some British universities cover some LGBT issues briefly within the wider area of controversial issues. However, the appropriateness of placing LGBT issues within the area of controversial issues is something to be challenged. A subject that people merely have different opinions on cannot be seen as truly controversial because this argument is based on behavioural criteria. For a topic to be seen as genuinely controversial, it is important to judge it based on epistemic criteria, involving reasoned arguments and facts (Hand, 2007). Homosexuality lacks reasoned arguments against it, therefore Hand contends it should not be taught as a moral wrong. Despite concurring with Hand about the moral nature of LGBT issues, this is not the opinion other pressure groups hold in regard to this issue. Members of the Christian Institute, for example, speak openly about their disapproval of LGBT



equality, campaigning to have Section 28 and the higher age of consent retained, as well as opposing the Equality Act and more recently the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act, legalising gay marriage. Basing their arguments on an individual's beliefs rather than reasonable and rational arguments, they state that 70 per cent of men believe that sex between two men is mostly or always wrong and that homosexuals are not equally moral (Christian Institute, 2000), that 'gay and straight relationships should not be equal in the eyes of the law' and voice their concerns about the damaging effects of legalising gay marriage could have on civil liberties (Christian Institute, 2013)

Homosexuality, if using epistemic criteria to judge its controversial nature, cannot be viewed as truly controversial because all reasoned arguments fail to prove that it encompasses any moral wrong. As a result, I advocate placing LGBT issues within the area of equality or as a stand-alone module. This could involve including LGBT training within other equality and diversity coverage, or potentially as a specific training module in order to explore the specific nature of LGBT, how to deal with homophobic issues within schools and the awareness of heteronormativity in and around the wider school life.

There is evidence to suggest that once programmes about LGBT have been covered there is an increased awareness of LGBT concerns; a greater appreciation of the challenges that LGBT youth face (Athanasios & Larrabee, 2003); a reduced number of name calling incidents; and pupils feel more safe in schools (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004). It could be argued that following anti-bullying initiatives there is an initial increase in reported cases of bullying before the desired decrease occurs. This could be due to a raised awareness of bullying occurring, or an increase in the reporting of bullying rather than more frequent bullying actually taking place. It is therefore recommended that all teachers should have training in LGBT equality education and that teacher training institutions should be at the forefront of this training.

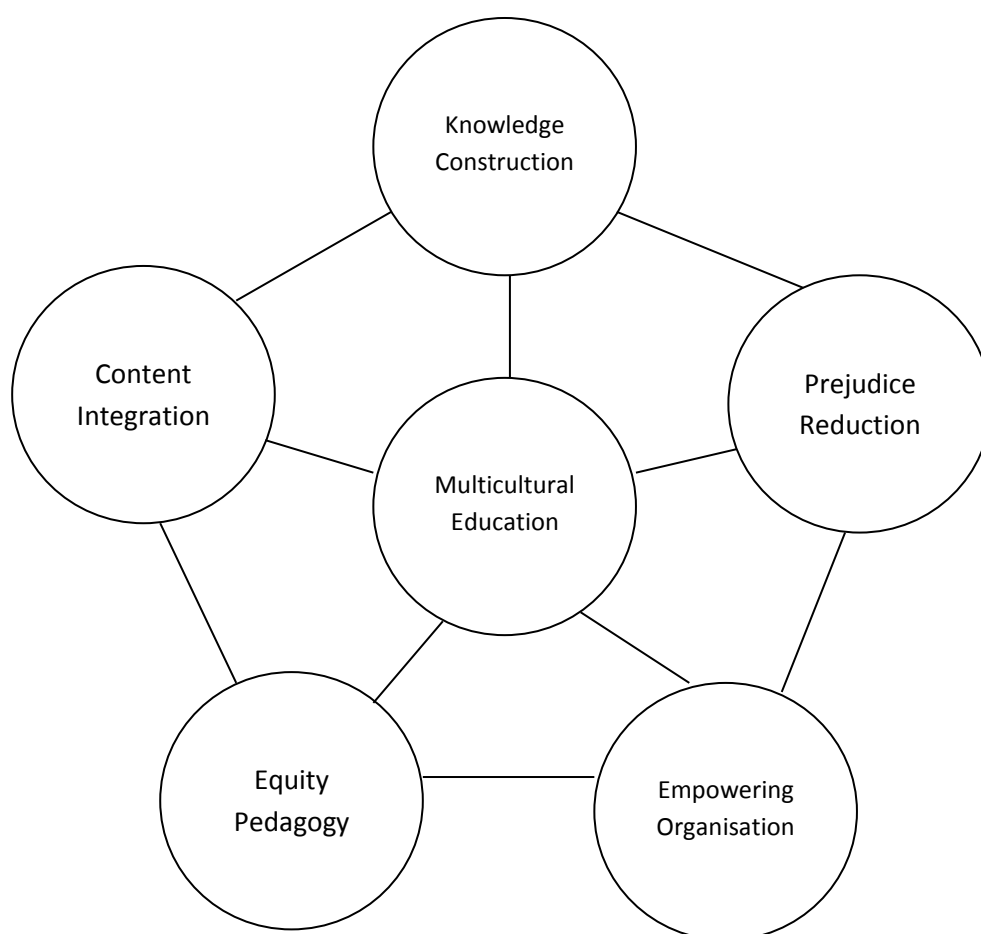
## **2.7 A multicultural model solution**

In order to suggest possible methods of addressing gaps in equality and diversity with regard to LGBT education within schools, I have found it useful to refer to Banks's model of the Dimensions of Multicultural Education (2004). This model also addresses training in the area of equality and diversity. Multicultural education is an issue which teachers feel unconfident and ill-prepared to deal with. Additionally there are social pressures to be cautious of when dealing with multicultural education (Wilkins, 2001), in a similar way to LGBT education. Therefore this model is a useful starting block from which to develop ideas about what LGBT education should look like.

The model comprises five broad dimensions: (a) content integration; (b) knowledge construction; (c) prejudice reduction; (d) an empowering school culture; and (e) an equity pedagogy. Each of these is essential to successful multicultural education. Within these dimensions are suggestions on how educators can develop practices in the field of multicultural education.

- Content integration involves including a variety of content from different cultures in education programmes.
- Knowledge construction can be explored by helping students to understand how implicit cultural perspectives and biases can influence how knowledge is constructed; for example, a classroom examination of how the media can influence gender stereotypes.
- Prejudice reduction is achieved when a curriculum develops positive attitudes towards different societal groups, and can be accomplished by educational programmes that encourage collaborative work between diverse groups.
- An empowering organisational culture reduces the barriers to integration between groups.
- Equity pedagogy is concerned with a curriculum that delivers teaching on a wide range of culturally diverse issues and facilitates the achievement of students from minority groups.

## Banks's (2004) Dimensions of Multicultural Education model



The overall aim of multicultural education is simple – to transform society to better meet the needs of all individuals, especially those who are marginalised in society. Specifically, it aims to develop an equal society with empowerment for all groups; improve academic achievement of students; help equip students with the skills to function more effectively within their own micro and macro communities; and provide opportunities to develop cultural competency (Banks, 2004).

Although designed as a model to foster ethnic and cultural inclusion, the core aims of this model can be applied directly to improve awareness and understanding of LGBT issues. Each of the dimensions can be adapted to include LGBT concepts instead of (or alongside) multicultural ones. For example, within the content of the integration dimension, teachers could refer to the diverse mix of family structures in the United Kingdom, including same-sex relationships or relationships where one partner has redefined their gender. Within the prejudice reduction dimension,

teachers could include LGBT examples within their materials and focus on students' attitudes towards the LGBT community.

Within the knowledge construction and prejudice reduction dimensions, Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1996) can be applied. This theory, in addition to reducing inequality and injustice, argues that the process of using prior interpretation can construct new meaning and guide future action. Through self-examination and critical assessment, and planning, knowledge or skill acquisition, it is possible that a change in perception or frame of reference can occur, leading to a shift in paradigm.

Transformative learning may occur when an individual's frame of reference changes, which is feasible with regard to LGBT education, as some LGBT issues can challenge culturally and socially assimilated beliefs. Within the knowledge construction dimension, there are opportunities for transformative learning to occur. For example, understanding and investigating how cultural assumptions influence the ways in which knowledge is created could result in a change in perspective. This could also be applied to how assumptions about the LGBT community can influence the ways in which knowledge is created. Another example could be within the prejudice reduction dimension, wherein attitudes towards LGBT could be modified by teaching methods and materials.

I also suggest the inclusion of another dimension, namely teacher training. Addressing LGBT education before teachers start their careers could lead the way in the prevention of homophobia and homophobic bullying, and promote equality in schools (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2001). The elements of a teacher training dimension will be discussed in the conclusion of this thesis.

## **2.8 Chapter summary**

This chapter has provided a comprehensive and critical account of the literature relevant to the current research. The first section of the review provided an overview of LGBT issues in schools, including homophobic bullying, and issues

specific to transgender individuals. It concluded that teachers require more training and guidance in order to address the difficulties encountered by LGBT students.

The next chapter focuses specifically on citizenship education and the challenges it faces, including purpose, assessment and specialism. More specifically, the issues relating to the inclusion of LGBT issues into the curriculum are carefully examined.

## **Chapter 3: Literature Review – Citizenship Education**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter focuses on citizenship education and teacher training specifically with regard to LGBT, including the examination of concepts relevant to this research within the educational context. Throughout the chapter, arguments are offered as to why LGBT issues could be especially relevant for citizenship education teachers.

### **3.2. The history of citizenship education in England**

This section discusses the history of citizenship education in England. It is within this element of the national curriculum that issues pertaining to the LGBT community can be discussed and within this element that the potential for transformative learning reaches a peak. It is for this very reason that students of the citizenship education PGCE were included in this research. This section of the review will provide a brief history of citizenship education in England, including the accompanying increased attention paid to human rights, before discussing some of the problems that the citizenship education component of the national curriculum faces.

In Victorian England, citizenship education took place in the context of civics education and was only taught to the elite members of society (Kisby, 2012). During this period, political indoctrination was feared if citizenship education was provided for the wider society, and even the education which was provided was geared towards producing obedient and passive subjects (Mycock, 2004). Despite a number of organisations, for example the Association for Education in Citizenship, arguing for political literacy to be included in children's education, this did not occur until the 1940s, when civics education became available to the more academic students. However, this still consisted of mainly learning facts about government and laws, rather than fostering independent democratically informed thinkers. By the early 1970s, and due to a number of factors including the opportunity for sixth formers to vote and concern surrounding the political naivety of young people (Davies, 1999),

there became a more general acceptance that some sort of political education was necessary in schools (Kisby, 2012). As Crick and Porter state:

*A person who has a fair knowledge of what are the issues of contemporary politics, is equipped to be of some influence, whether in school, factory, voluntary body or party, and can understand and respect, while not sharing, the values of others, can reasonably be called 'politically literate'. (Crick & Porter, 1978, p.7)*

However, political indoctrination of young people by teachers returned to the government's concerns during the Thatcher-led Conservative rule from 1979 and political education was prevented from progressing.

As a possible reaction to anti-social behaviour and hooliganism in the late 1980s, and after strong support from the Speaker of the House of Commons at the time, Bernard Weatherill, who considered that citizenship had to be learnt, citizenship education gained a place within the national curriculum in 1990 as one of the five cross-curricular themes (along with economic understanding, careers, health education and environmental education) and resulted in varying success (Whitty et al., 1995). A report by Dearing (1995), which evaluated the efficacy of the national curriculum, concluded that it was overloaded, thus resulting in cross-curricular themes being withdrawn. Concurrently, there was concern within the government and society regarding the demise of the morality of young people, accentuated by cases such as the murder of James Bulger, a 2-year-old boy who was lured away from his mother then murdered by two 10-year-old boys in Liverpool, and the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence, whose death and the subsequent trial of his killers was to unearth not only racism on behalf of the accused, but also, as a result of the Macpherson Inquiry, suggested institutional racism within the police.

In 1997, following a change from a Conservative to a Labour Government, the then Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett, published a white paper titled 'Excellence in Schools', which led to the establishment of a cross-party advisory group in order to address citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools. The advisory group was led by Sir Bernard Crick.

The scope of the advisory group, including the definition of citizenship education, remained broad, in order to incorporate the three dimensions of citizenship: (a) social responsibility; (b) community involvement; and (c) political literacy (DfEE, 1997). The broad definition for citizenship education was not initially viewed as problematic, as it was deemed that citizenship education 'must not be centrally directed in detail, only in broad clear principles' (Crick, 2000, p.9). To fulfil this broad definition, former Secretary of State for Education Blunkett expressed the need for programmes of study to be light and flexible.

However, despite social responsibility and community involvement being two-thirds of the three dimensions of citizenship, research by Kiwan (2008), which involved interviewing key players in the development of citizenship education, discovered that when deciding the aims of citizenship education, political literacy featured as the most important aim, whilst race equality and human rights appeared in last place (tenth out of ten). Furthermore, political apathy was the number one reason offered as the influence behind the citizenship education initiative, with diversity and immigration placed fifth out seven. This indicates that the driving force behind the citizenship education initiative may have been one of political literacy.

Kiwan (2008) goes on to suggest that a specific group of individuals may have been selected for the advisory group, representing non-diversity, in order to make decision making run more smoothly and to aid in the minimisation of contentiousness in regard to the subject itself. This could cause difficulties when trying to approach topics such as LGBT issues in citizenship education, as the agenda behind the introduction of citizenship education into the curriculum was more towards political literacy rather than issues of morality.

It could, however, also be argued that LGBT issues, despite heavily involving an individual's beliefs, experiences and issues of right or wrong and therefore based on morality, may also be a political issue in regard to policies and laws currently in place or changing. An example of this could be the Marriage (same Sex Couples) Bill in 2013, which was agreed by the House of Lords during the time of writing this thesis. However, I would argue that the political literacy proposed by the advisory group was more concentrated on political apathy and low voter numbers than on



LGBT rights, as the following national curriculum guidelines were focused more heavily on the former.

By 1998, the citizenship advisory group had recommended that citizenship education become a new and statutory national curriculum subject, requiring no more than five per cent of curriculum time. In May 1999, draft proposals for the national curriculum in citizenship education were produced. These were accepted during the 2000 curriculum review. By September 2002, citizenship education was a new statutory subject in the national curriculum for students aged eleven to sixteen in mainstream schools in England.

In 2008, the secondary curriculum was modified, situating citizenship at its centre, aligning the curriculum with further initiatives including the 'Every Child Matters' agenda (DfES, 2003), as well as personal, learning and thinking skills. Further changes included the need to foster responsible citizens as one of the three main aims of the national curriculum, along with changes to the assessment of citizenship education by using the eight-level scale, thus bringing assessment of citizenship education in line with other curriculum subjects. Furthermore, primarily due to the events of 9/11 in 2001 and 7/7 in 2005, combined with result of the Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review (Ajegbo et al., 2007), identity and diversity were promoted within the curriculum. This helped to secure a stronger place for citizenship education in the curriculum and in schools and a greater possibility to address LGBT areas within citizenship education.

Despite concern that citizenship education may have been dropped from the national curriculum as a result of the 2013 curriculum review, in fact the Education Secretary at the time of writing, Michael Gove, supported citizenship education in the curriculum as statutory at key stages 3 and 4. The national curriculum also supports a strengthening of citizenship education in schools by stating it 'provides pupils with an introduction to the core knowledge that they need to be educated citizens' (DfE, 2013, p.6). However, during the academic year of 2013/14, the programmes of study for key stages 3 and 4 citizenship have been dis-applied and schools are being advised to develop their own citizenship curriculum until the new programmes of study become statutory in September 2014. For the purpose of this thesis, however,

the current programmes of study (QCA, 2000) have been examined in regard to how they offer opportunities for LGBT education.

The citizenship national curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 indicates the importance for pupils to ‘engage critically with and explore diverse ideas, beliefs, cultures and identities and the values we share as citizens of the United Kingdom’ (DfES, 2013, p.3). Whilst LGBT education is not mentioned specifically here, it would be possible to include this community within the diverse identities area. Explicit reference is then made about encouraging pupils to challenge injustice, inequalities and discrimination. Once more, this has no precise direction towards LGBT discrimination and inequality, but valuable work could be included within this aspect of citizenship education. However, on closer examination of the key concepts required in citizenship education there are slightly more narrow details given of what should be covered. Within the democracy and justice concept, for example, focus is given towards toleration, respect and freedom, but concentrating on people with different beliefs, backgrounds and traditions, which suggests a more cultural, ethnic focus rather than sexual orientation or perceived gender. Another example of this focus is within the key concept of identities and diversity: living in the United Kingdom, where a possible example of how to approach this area is given, involving how migration has shaped the communities and how it continues to shape political, social, economic and cultural changes.

The only direct mention of LGBT education is within the range and content section, where the breadth of the subject is taken into account when addressing the key concepts. Here teachers are advised that they should draw upon this breadth when teaching the subject. Here, sexual orientation and gender (although not transgender specifically) are mentioned alongside other areas of diversity, for example race, ethnicity, physical and sensory ability and religion. It should be noted that this is only present in the key stage 3 programme of study. As a result of the subsidiary and circuitous references towards LGBT awareness within the programmes of study, it may be more fitting and beneficial to include this area within human rights education as is discussed in the following section.

### **3.3. Citizenship education and human rights**

At the same time that citizenship education was being developed by the advisory group in England, other initiatives were being addressed and developed in Europe and across the world (Osler & Starkey, 2006). These include issues revolving around democratic education and 'developing and participating in sustainable and cohesive communities' (Osler & Starkey, 2006, p.4). Additionally, the development of the Human Rights Act (1998) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) gave an opportunity for human rights and democratic citizenship to feature prominently in citizenship education. However, this opportunity was largely bypassed and citizenship education was later criticised for being too closely linked to nationalist agendas and not focused enough on human rights education and education for democratic citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2006).

Human rights education allows coverage of LGBT issues in regard to equality of rights. For example, it could be argued that the right to choose and express your own sexuality is a basic human right (Lees, 2000), as well as the right to marry who you choose (Article 16), which until 2013 in England was not possible in the full marriage definition.

Despite the earlier mentioned concerns about human rights education not being prevalent enough within the citizenship agenda, human rights (unlike LGBT issues) are mentioned a number of times within the national curriculum programmes of study for citizenship education at key stages 3 and 4, firstly within the importance of citizenship section. Within the key concepts section, rights and responsibilities are mentioned in detail, with human rights specifically mentioned within the range and content section. LGBT education could be included within these sections; however, it is only mentioned specifically within the explanatory notes for the range and content section, where sexual orientation is included within the diversity content rather than the human rights content, and only at key stage 3.

However, I argue that there is great potential for LGBT education to occur within human rights education as so many of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) articles are relevant to LGBT issues. Articles 1 and 2, the right to equality and freedom from discrimination, could be used specifically in regard to discussions about LGBT struggles in the past and present to gain equality and live free from discrimination, both in the United Kingdom and across the rest of the world.

With regard to homophobic bullying of young people, which has been shown potentially to be prevalent through the research outlined in Chapter 2, Articles 3, 5 and 12 of the UDHR – right to security of person, freedom from inhumane treatment and freedom from interference – could be used as examples of rights that some LGBT individuals do not have. It has been documented that as many as seven out of ten LGBT pupils find it hard to concentrate at school or skip school because of homophobic bullying (Hunt & Jensen, 2007), which may put their right to education (Article 26) at risk if they feel too intimidated to go to school, or do not access the curriculum as fully as they could due to anxiety or fear when in school. Finally, if these students are not attending school fully, they are not able to access the knowledge that the UDHR exists, and so might not become aware of the human rights they have. Therefore, despite sexual orientation not being specifically exemplified within the human rights context of the national curriculum at the time of writing, I would argue that there are many opportunities for it to be included within this area. However, if not enough focus is given to human rights within citizenship education generally, the question of where LGBT education will find a voice within an already minimized topic remains a difficult one to answer.

### **3.4. The difficulties facing citizenship education**

There are a number of issues surrounding citizenship education which are relevant to this research, especially in the context of how the subject has struggled to be successfully implemented into the school curriculum. This is suggestive of some of the difficulties that may be encountered when incorporating LGBT education into an already marginalised subject.

Introducing any subject into the curriculum is likely to involve difficulties, but citizenship education seemed to have more than its fair share of teething problems. Implementing educational policy into practice can involve a number of different ‘leaps’ (McCowan, 2008). Based on his model for policy analysis and from research carried out analysing the implementation of citizenship education in Brazil, McCowan describes three leaps from policy to curriculum. The first discusses the leap from policy vision to the construction of a curriculum and involves the extent to which an educational policy matches what is eventually taught in the curriculum, and the method by which it is taught, including support and teaching materials. The second

leap involves how teachers translate the ideal curriculum into a real curriculum, which they then teach. What is eventually taught may be a result of how that teacher interprets the ideal curriculum, rather than resembling the original policy. The final leap highlights the differences between what the teacher teaches and what the pupils learn. As a professional teacher for over a decade, this is a familiar area for me, as from experience, pupils put emphasis on and sometimes absorb different information from what you intend them to. These three leaps may result in the pupils learning a subject very different from what the policy intended.

Additionally, there is often 'a "lossy" transmission to and within schools, in which documents literally get lost, but are also filtered, summarized and reinterpreted as the policy works its way through the system, thus losing significant detail' (Jerome, 2012, p.97). Once again, as a professional teacher, I have been subject to regular 'lossy' experiences, when occasional information and resources have been sent to every school in England, but have not made it to my desk. Furthermore, my interpretation of different policies has often been different to other professionals, as well as parents and pupils. For citizenship education, where the definition was kept so broad, the programmes of study were light touch and flexible, and the majority of teachers teaching it had had no specialist training, the potential for 'lossiness' was vast.

Within the introduction of citizenship education, there were also a number of further difficulties. These can be equated to a number of issues, both in the advisory group stages and during its introduction into the national curriculum in 2002 and beyond. One of these issues was the status of the subject. Kerr et al. (2003) reported in their findings that citizenship 'did not have the status of traditional subjects' (Kerr et al., 2003: p.12). This may have resulted from teachers regarding citizenship education as just another initiative that may disappear if it was ignored (Brett, 2004a; Kerr et al., 2003).

A confused vision for what citizenship education was and is led to confusion amongst professional teachers and indeed Ofsted inspectors in the initial years of citizenship education becoming a statutory subject in the national curriculum. This was especially apparent in the area of active citizenship, which some schools and Ofsted inspectors regarded as merely participating in physical education or sport

(Jerome, 2012). This may be largely due to the brief programmes of study outlined by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) which confused, or at the very least did not clarify, the requirements of this area of citizenship education. This may have also led to difficulties with selecting appropriate activities for GCSE students to carry out for the participation aspect of their coursework. When introducing the citizenship education GCSE coursework during the year 2004, I, along with my team, believed that work experience could be regarded as a satisfactory active citizenship project, given that the student is unpaid, learning new skills and playing an active role in a working society that they will eventually become a part of. However, after attending a course offered by the exam board, I discovered it was not a satisfactory topic and we went back to the drawing board with the coursework ideas. Had I not attended this particular meeting, I would have remained unaware of this, and subsequently the students of that cohort would have suffered as a result of my misunderstanding.

However, there are other possible reasons as to why citizenship enjoys a lower status both nationally and within schools (Calvert & Clemitshaw, 2005). Each issue will be discussed separately, with an understanding that the issues are inherently connected and interdependent.

### **3.4.1 Assessment in citizenship education**

Despite citizenship education becoming a statutory national curriculum subject in September 2002, assessment and reporting to parents in the subject were not compulsory until the summer of 2004. Assessment is one of the main formal characteristics by which you can identify a subject (Jerome, 2012) and this delay may have led to schools not addressing citizenship education with the urgency it required. It may also have led to a proportion of schools deciding to cover citizenship education via a cross-curricular method, which was not regarded as a successful approach, as implied by Kerr (2007), and which is traditionally very difficult to assess (Brett, 2004a).

Another discrepancy concerning the assessment of citizenship education was that initially the assessment framework differed from the eight-level scale required for all other national curriculum subjects. Instead, assessment was in the form of

working towards, working at and working beyond the 'expected levels'. This had two implications – it led to confusion about the requirements of the course, and resulted in citizenship not gaining equal status to other subjects in the curriculum. This was reported in a series of highly critical reports from Ofsted (2003). The eight-level scale for the assessment of citizenship education in schools finally arrived in 2008 – six years after citizenship education became statutory. Whilst this move was generally welcomed by teachers, it required teachers to absorb another new initiative.

There were, and still are, many debates around the assessment of citizenship education. These include whether assessment produces the possibility to fail as a citizen (Jerome, 2004); whether assessment of citizenship tests the "goodness" of individuals (Richardson, 2007); and the content versus process debate (Jerome, 2004). Additionally, there is a lack of agreement concerning the elements that will be used to assess citizenship education and how assessments are constructed in order to test not just knowledge but also beliefs and values (Jerome, 2002; Richardson, 2009; Tudor, 2001), especially in regard to LGBT issues where the pupils may have a lack of knowledge or experience of such a community.

Nevertheless, much research asserts that assessment does help to raise the status of a subject (Calvert & Clemitshaw, 2005; Harlen, 2004, 2007; Newton, 2002; Stobart, 2008). This is something that citizenship education had been struggling to obtain. Huddleston and Kerr (2006) conclude that 'assessment is important in citizenship education because...it raises the status of the subject in the school and within the wider community' (Huddleston & Kerr, 2006, p.142). The mere presence of a GCSE in citizenship education showed better standards of teaching and learning (Ofsted, 2005) and raised the status of the subject within the school (Brett, 2004b; Kerr et al., 2003). Brett also advocates the active requirement of the GCSE in Citizenship Studies by suggesting that it gives students an opportunity to engage in work beneficial to the community (Brett, 2004b).

### **3.4.2 The teaching of citizenship education in schools**

As a result of the definition of citizenship education being kept broad, schools were allowed to decide how to teach the subject within their curriculum. This was intended to provide teachers with the freedom to decide what they would teach. But,

in reality, many teachers did little more than follow the schemes of work developed by QCA. Crick's (2002) response to this was the advice that teachers of citizenship education should read the report from the citizenship advisory group alongside the 'light touch' (Kerr et al., 2004) programmes of study.

Despite the guidance offered to teachers in regard to how citizenship education was to be covered in schools by the Crick report, Ofsted, QCA and the National Foundation for Educational Research, schools were not prescribed a specific model of delivery, which resulted in a variety of different delivery methods being used to cover citizenship education. These included cross-curricular methods; teaching citizenship in discrete lessons, during tutor time or within a collapsed timetable day; and encompassing it within PSHE. These methods met with varying success (Kerr et al., 2003; Kerr, 2007) as school approaches were uneven and patchy (Kerr et al., 2004). Many schools chose to deliver citizenship education via a cross-curricular method (Kerr 2007), which resulted in citizenship education lacking another characteristic it required to be regarded as a subject: a designated slot in the timetable. Instead, it was to have no more than five per cent of the curriculum time and how that five per cent was delivered was left up to the schools themselves.

The citizenship programmes of study are also significantly smaller than other national curriculum subjects and are often at the back of the curriculum programmes of study (Hayward & Jerome, 2010). Even Crick (2002) admitted that 'no other curriculum subject was stated so briefly and left so much to the individual teacher in different schools, in different circumstances' (Crick, 2002, p.449). Hence, when citizenship education was introduced into the curriculum, it already lacked the three main elements which would have helped in having it regarded as a subject in its own right: detailed programmes of study; a designated place in the timetable; and formalised assessment requirements (Jerome, 2012).

### **3.5. The lack of specialist citizenship education teachers**

Despite initially being regarded by the advisory group as an essential element in the successful implementation of citizenship education into the curriculum, when citizenship education was introduced into the national curriculum as a statutory



subject, there were few specially trained citizenship education teachers already in schools and only about 200 PGCE trained teachers. Undoubtedly, this caused some issues around its delivery. A number of trainee teacher places were made available on PGCE courses, offering citizenship education in conjunction with a second national curriculum subject. This may have been a purposeful step to emphasise the links between citizenship education and other subjects (Hayward & Jerome, 2010), or to ensure that citizenship education would be more easily incorporated into other, already established, national curriculum subjects (Lewis, 2003).

My earlier research found from interviews with teachers of citizenship who had completed a joint PGCE course in citizenship with another subject (mainly history or English) that a large proportion of them felt that the reason for the marriage of citizenship with another subject was to ensure they were in a stronger position to gain employment at the end of the course; a precaution in case solely citizenship jobs were not available (Laxton, 2010). Unfortunately, their suspicions proved to be correct. In 2006, 250 PGCE citizenship students graduated from their courses. However, there were only eighty-eight citizenship jobs advertised that year in the *Times Educational Supplement* (2006). A further proportion of students in this small-scale study reported that they were only on the citizenship PGCE course because they were unable to gain entry to a university providing the PGCE in their preferred subject, for example English. So they chose a PGCE in Citizenship Education and English, with the hope and intention of teaching the non-citizenship subject in the future (Laxton, 2010).

The demographic of the PGCE citizenship education students is also useful to consider. They come from a variety of different disciplines and bring with them their own set of specialisms. This may well be a strength of the cohort as a whole, but also means the groups lack homogeneity as a whole (Jerome, 2012), which in turn can result in a lack of clear subject identity. It is true to say that all teachers have topics within their curriculum area which they are less confident about teaching, but at least they will have experienced these topics at school themselves. For citizenship PGCE students, this was not the case. They lacked an image of what a citizenship education teacher should 'look' like, and as a result of not studying citizenship when they were at school, were also missing an appropriate citizenship lens through which

to view the world (Jerome, 2012). This could therefore have an effect on how they approach and ultimately teach the subject.

Similarly, when PGCE students enter schools to carry out their in-school training, they are often able to approach their mentor for advice on how to deliver particular aspects of the course they may lack confidence in. For the early citizenship education PGCE students, this was often not the case (Jerome, 2012). I distinctly remember the citizenship education PGCE students arriving at my school during 2003 and regarding them as much more informed about the subject than I was.

The shortage of trained citizenship education specialists within schools is still present. The shortage may only be partly fulfilled by 2036. By then, there should be enough trained teachers to deliver citizenship education for each secondary school in England. However, having one specialist in the subject area per school may not be enough. Few other subjects would claim to have such scarce numbers of specialists teaching within their department.

For teachers who were already teaching in schools during the introduction of citizenship education, there was limited training offered to them. This was not the intention during the consultation conferences, where teacher training was envisaged as an important focus. However, in the Essential Recommendations section (QCA, 1998), training for teachers was mentioned only twice (Hayward & Jerome, 2010). Middle and senior school leaders should have attended accredited training courses in citizenship education (Crick, 2000). There also should have been specific training materials and resources provided to aid schools in the delivery of citizenship education. However, the reality was somewhat different. By 2003, 71 per cent of citizenship education teachers had not received any formal training (Kerr et al., 2003). Furthermore, the following year the citizenship education longitudinal study reported that less than half of teachers had received some sort of citizenship training (Kerr et al., 2004), and even though the Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF) training courses were deemed to be good by Ofsted (2010), uptake was lower than hoped for.

It also should be acknowledged that a non-citizenship specialist teacher is likely to be a specialist teacher within another subject area. This can cause

difficulties in managing workload. Such teachers will already be fulfilling commitments to other curriculum areas, such as preparing lessons, continuing professional development in the specialist area, and attending meetings, and departmental development plans (Calvert & Clemitshaw, 2005).

The lack of citizenship education specialists is likely to have far-reaching effects on the initial implementation of citizenship education in the curriculum, especially as schools lacked the direction, focus, knowledge and skills to teach the subject. This has added to the confusion and lack of confidence in delivering the subject, resulting in a general lack of enthusiasm for it (Laxton, 2010). Crick (2000) originally expressed a desire for teachers to approach citizenship education with a sense of mission. However, the lack of direction, guidance and support may have weakened teachers' desire to complete the task.

### **3.6. Teaching citizenship education within PSHE**

Although Crick (2000) was keen for citizenship and PSHE to be autonomous of each other during the consultation period, many schools decided to deliver citizenship within PSHE lessons. Kerr et al. (2003) reported that 90 per cent of schools initially decided to cover citizenship education in PSHE, and that in 2007, this was still the most popular mode of delivery (Kerr, 2007). The primary reason for this is the lack of spare curriculum time in which to deliver citizenship education, and within PSHE citizenship gained a dedicated time slot which would not impose on other subjects and not suffer from the potential difficulties of cross-curricular delivery methods. However, the main consequence of placing citizenship education within PSHE is that pupils gained a similar perception of citizenship education as they had of PSHE, which is low priority and non-academic. Moreover, citizenship struggled to be identified as an explicit subject (Whitty et al., 1995) because it was taught largely by non-specialists, was not properly examined (Keast & Croft, 2010) and lacked recognition and realisation rules.

During the initial consultation process for the draft proposals for citizenship education in the national curriculum, citizenship education was joined with PSHE in the key stages 1 and 2 non-statutory framework. They were separated in key stages

3 and 4, as Crick (2000) argued that values in citizenship education were not the same as those in PSHE and cultural education. Therefore, PSHE and citizenship should not be confused as the same. Crick (2000) regarded PSHE as personal value education and citizenship education as a public and political value education. He sought to make a clear distinction between PSHE and citizenship, so despite the personal and cultural aspect featuring in a statement of values produced by the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community, it was neglected in the final citizenship education dimensions.

In this discourse, many of the issues concerning LGBT young people may not have a place within citizenship education. This view is defended by Althof and Berkowitz (2006), who concur that the private aspects of character education should remain within PSHE and the public aspects within citizenship. Cremin (2006) agrees, believing that peer-based conflict resolution is PSHE, not citizenship. Again, this raises the question of whether issues such as the bullying of LGBT youth and homophobic use of language have a place within citizenship education. Currently, and since the 2013 curriculum review, unless students are studying the GCSE in Citizenship Studies, there is no compulsory coverage of LGBT issues in the national curriculum for citizenship education at key stage 4, as explained in section 3.2. This could suggest to teachers there is no place for LGBT issues in this curriculum area.

However, there is a strong argument against this view, and one to which I can relate as a PSHE and citizenship teacher. Initially, I held the view that PSHE and citizenship education should be completely separate due to issues of status, specialist teaching and students' perceptions of the subjects. However, as a result of my reading and doctoral journey, I have changed my stance on this topic and justify this view for several reasons.

Within citizenship education itself, Haydon (1999) states that it 'should embrace morality as a topic' (Haydon, 1999, p.50). Halstead and Pike (2006) also advocate moral education as a part of citizenship education due to the possibility of developing dispositions and values, as well as accruing skills and knowledge. Rowe (2006) concurs by advocating a link between citizenship education and moral development, arguing that citizenship education should not just be about constitutional literacy. Rowe (2006) goes on to argue that by blending social and

moral education with political education, the issues studied become more relevant to pupils. This is supported by Stradling (1977) and Torney-Purta (1992), who suggest that when pupils have direct and personal experience of issues, they are more likely to engage in discussion about them and play a more active part in dealing with and thinking about them.

Haydon (2000) summarises two opposing positions for citizenship education. One encompasses moral education and suggests that citizenship education and moral education are the same and cannot be taught in isolation from each other. The other postulates that citizenship education is only concerned with the public and political realm, and therefore should not include any moral education. However, Haydon offers a third position, where citizenship education involves addressing the understanding of morality, which would result in it being both private and public. This provides the opportunity for issues involving LGBT people to be addressed, not only as a private but also as a public subject.

With this in mind, McLaughlin (1992, 2000) offers two different approaches to teaching citizenship education. The first is a minimal approach, wherein pupils learn only about their own rights and identities and about becoming decent citizens, for example voting and having a passport (Deuchar, 2007). McLaughlin argues that this is the national curriculum approach to citizenship education. Second, is the maximal approach to citizenship education (Lawson, 2001), which includes an obligation to others and a willingness to change on a local, national and global scale. Deuchar (2007), Oliver and Heater (1994) and Wilkins (2001) suggest that this approach 'encourages pupils to become agents of social change, developing enquiring minds and skills of participation' (Deuchar, 2007, p.28). Osler and Starkey (2006) hold the opinion that in order to engage learners it is important to include both the cultural and political elements, and they also advocate a maximal approach to the teaching of citizenship education. Osler and Starkey (2010) also suggest that citizenship per se can be regarded as different concepts: firstly, as status, equal to nationality; secondly, as feeling, in regard to a sense of belonging; and finally as practice, where individuals work together to make a difference. It is the citizenship as feeling aspect which is of most interest in this argument. Osler and Starkey (2010) suggest that belonging to a community is an important aspect of citizenship. This includes access

to services and resources, legal rights of residence, security and, most pertinent to this research, being free from discrimination and accepted by others. It could be argued that the LGBT community may not regard themselves as having citizenship under these conditions as many do not live free from discrimination and do not enjoy acceptance by others. This further strengthens the argument for including LGBT awareness within citizenship education.

If a maximal approach (McLaughlin 1992, 2000) is taken and an obligation is felt towards others, along with a will to engage and undertake social change, then addressing LGBT issues sits comfortably within this framework for citizenship education. Pupils would be able to discuss issues, not only from a law and rights approach but also from a more personal, cultural and moral approach. This in turn may help to bring about change, driven by the pupils themselves rather than by the school leaders.

However, if a minimal approach is taken in regard to these issues, the pupils will only gain access to their rights and learn about the laws and legislation around this subject. This would not be a holistic approach and pupils may not engage as fully, unlike if they were involved on a more personal level.

Whether one takes a maximal or minimal approach to citizenship education may depend on which of over 300 definitions of citizenship in educational contexts one adheres to (Davies et al., 1999). The whole concept of the meaning of citizenship education is still widely contested (Deakin-Crick et al., 2004, 2005; Heater, 1999, 2004; Kerr et al., 2003; Richardson, 2010). However, I strongly agree that a moral aspect should be included in citizenship education in order to engage pupils and bring about the possibility of change.

Even with the view that moral education has a place within citizenship education, there are still difficulties in terms of incorporating LGBT issues within citizenship education. Ahier et al. (2003) discuss some of the problems in trying to increase the citizenship agenda, including the sheer number of interest groups pushing for their own agenda within citizenship education and the continuing confusion regarding what citizenship education actually is. This may not be a contemporary problem though, as Heater (1990) suggests, 'maybe the attempt we

are making...to bundle so much meaning into the term (citizenship) is unrealistically to overload its capacity' (Heater, 1990, p.282).

Moreover, LGBT issues have the potential to be controversial and their inclusion into school curriculums can often be fraught with difficulties. Zine (2001) reported on some of the problems in Toronto, Canada when the District School Board produced an anti-racist initiative. Whilst not carried out in the United Kingdom, Zine (2001) reports some valuable concerns. The initiative was initially criticised for being too narrow and should have included not only race but also women, disabled, and gay and lesbian members of society. The response was a huge amount of resistance, especially to lesbian and gay issues, largely from the church and ethnic groups, who felt that lifestyle issues such as sexuality could not be likened to issues of race and religion, and therefore demanded separate policies for each area. I would argue, however, that much religious practice could also be described as a lifestyle choice, in regard to choice of religion, and furthermore, choice of religious practice within that religion.

A further problem with addressing LGBT issues within citizenship education is that teachers of citizenship education are unlikely to be specialists and require training in order to deliver appropriate education on this subject. Out of all the subjects offered by teachers, it is logical to suggest that citizenship education may well be the best placed subject to cover LGBT issues, as it is the subject which covers discrimination and equality in the most detail. Whilst my own view is that every teacher in every school should have training on how to approach LGBT issues, since they are not restricted to one classroom and one subject, the nature of citizenship education seems to indicate that this would be an appropriate area in which to start.

Based on the view that there is a pressing need for LGBT issues to be covered in schools, and despite there being areas of difficulties within citizenship education, these issues should be taught within citizenship education, possibly featuring within human rights education, and should encompass a maximal approach to the teaching of citizenship. The following chapter details how the research sought to understand the level of preparedness of PGCE students in regard to addressing

LGBT issues within schools. The participants are taken from a sample of the 2011-2012 PGCE students from three London universities.

### **3.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter has focused on citizenship education and its complex journey since its introduction as a statutory subject in the national curriculum in 2002. The first section of the chapter focused on the history of citizenship education and some of the motivations behind its introduction into the formal curriculum. This was followed by some of the difficulties citizenship education faced after it appeared in the national curriculum, including a lack of specialist citizenship education teachers and whether citizenship should be incorporated within PSHE.



## **Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The following chapter will discuss the research methods that were utilised in this thesis in order to explore the research questions that arose from a careful review of the current literature and personal experiences as a professional teacher closely involved with initial teacher training of PGCE students in citizenship for a decade. I also have an on-going concern about how PGCE students are trained to cope with the plethora of incidents which may occur in and outside the classroom, including LGBT issues.

A research methodology is an integrated phenomenon describing the nature of a research work, based on a number of different aspects that have been included within the research framework (Rubin & Babbie, 2012). Different aspects of the research methodology will be discussed, including the theoretical framework of the thesis, the research approach, data collection and analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

### **4.2. Theoretical framework**

The research was approached from a constructivist view, which emphasises that the social world must be understood within its culture and context, and that constructed knowledge must be made on the basis of such an understanding (Crotty, 1998). Simply put, reality is constructed by the actor within it. Knowledge, therefore, is both socially and culturally constructed. Individuals construct meaning via their interactions with each other, and the environment.

The intention of this research was to explore trainee teachers' understandings of issues of equality and diversity and the extent to which they recognised LGBT perspectives in this context. Through this research, I wanted to explore ways in which their formal training as teachers was influencing both their consciousness and their ability to make practical judgements in their professional contexts at this point in their training.

Within this epistemology, the interpretivist approach is particularly complementary. I concur with Walsham (1993) who proposes that all our knowledge of reality is socially constructed, therefore the objectivity suggested by a positivist approach is simply not possible as researchers are human actors.

This research was interpretivist, as it sought to understand individuals' interpretations of the world around them (Cohen et al., 2007) and how those individuals made sense of the world (Denscombe, 2002). I adhered to both Walsham's (1993) and Robson's (2002) opinions that 'truths' about the social world cannot be established by using scientific methods because of the use of people as subject matter. 'People, unlike objects of the natural world, are conscious, purposive actors who have ideas about their world and attach meaning to what is going on around them' (Robson, 2002, p.24). In the context of education, which is concerned with human beings rather than objects, I believe a people-centred approach to be necessary.

I recognise that the positivist scientific approach would be inappropriate in this research because it cannot fully address the primary objective, which is to discover and understand the opinions and interpretations of PGCE students in regard to their preparedness in addressing LGBT issues in schools. A positivist approach would have required the discovery of facts which could be applied in all situations within a relevant category. Opinions and interpretations of a situation are not facts, as each individual will regard them through their own lens of experience. Accordingly, this research makes no claims about generalisability or causation, but instead aims to shed light on the experiences of the participants, with the hope of developing a more successful practice in this area (Thomas, 2009).

Rather than approaching the research deductively, with a committed theory, as one would in positivism, it was intended that this research would generate and develop theory as it progressed in order to comprehend how PGCE students made sense of this issue (Creswell, 2009). Moreover, this research aims to make suggestions as to how training in this area could be improved. This closely adheres to an interpretivist perspective and would not have been possible if the research was approached from a positivist point of view.

It is understood that there is a substantial element of subjectivity involved in interpretivist research. Indeed, interpretivists argue that only through the subjective interpretation of interventions and phenomena in reality can that reality be understood. All researchers bring a degree of subjectivity shaped by individual experience, and it becomes their challenge to recognise such bias and build a critical reflexivity into the research process (Herr & Anderson, 2005). In this context, my personal opinions and intentions would have an effect on how I interpreted the opinions and views of others (Thomas, 2009). I recognised my position within the research and acknowledged the lack of objectivity, due to my concern for LGBT equality and my involvement in teacher training within schools. This lack of objectivity is always a possibility in interpretivist research.

There are specific reasons as to why this research is approached from an interpretivist view. Its aim is to look at perceptions, feelings, ideas and thoughts of the participants through the scenario and questionnaire methods of data collection. An interpretivist view also enables the creation of a flexible research design (Oakley, 2000). Additionally, it recognises that situations are fluid and dynamic, rather than static, so are affected by context. This is applicable in the case of the three different universities, where the participants were selected for this research (Cohen et al., 2007). Most importantly, it is important to examine situations through the eyes of the participants, thus giving the PGCE students a voice with regard to their own training.

I recognise, however, that there are limitations to the interpretivist paradigm, including a potential mass abandonment of scientific procedures, therefore limiting broad generalisations about behaviour. However, the degree of detail and scrutiny involved in interpretivist inquiry allows researchers insight into specific events, as well as a range of perspectives that may not have come to light in the absence of such scrutiny (McMurray et al., 2004).

Within the constructivist views of knowledge and learning lies the Transformative Learning Theory (Dirkx, 1998). Transformative Learning Theory is the process of using prior interpretation to construct new meaning and guide future action (Mezirow, 1996). It is said to develop autonomous thinking by self-examination and critical assessment of a disorientating dilemma and through

planning, knowledge or skill acquisition can lead to a change in perception or frame of reference (Mezirow, 1997), causing a paradigmatic shift (Taylor, 2008).

Transformative Learning Theory has been found to be effective at showing how adults experience the development of meaning during a shift in paradigm (Taylor, 2007), and research has shown the importance of critical reflection after a disorientating dilemma (Mezirow, 1991). However, there has also been criticism of Transformative Learning Theory with regard to the fact that perspective transformation is not always reliant on critical reflection (Taylor, 1993). There is also too much emphasis on a rational approach, which ignores the importance of intuition, imagination and emotion (Boyd & Myers, 1988).

Transformative Learning Theory was relevant to this research because some of the situations dealt with in regard to LGBT issues can sometimes challenge culturally and socially assimilated frames of reference. Furthermore, it is argued that transformative learning can alter social structures and help improve issues such as inequality and injustice (Mezirow, 1997). Transformative Learning Theory is also pertinent to adult education, although there is growing research towards how transformative learning can also occur in younger students.

Wilkins' (1999) research regarding the social and political attitudes of PGCE students (also using Transformative Learning Theory) was carried out on a large scale with 418 questionnaires, as well as using attitude scales. However, this approach would not be appropriate for this research for two important reasons. Firstly, there are only a few citizenship PGCE students in the United Kingdom, and secondly the length of this thesis would not allow full analysis of such a vast amount of data. However, Wilkins conducted in-depth interviews with twenty-six students and published an article based on the results of the interviews. This gave reassurance that a more interpretive approach was necessary in investigating the thoughts and opinions of the PGCE students.

Although the focus of the research is very different, the methodology used was similar to the research carried out by Ryan (2004) regarding student teachers' attitudes towards education for sustainable development. Ryan's (2004) aims were to identify, describe and understand individual perspectives and seek insight rather

than focus on statistical analysis. This is also an appropriate approach with regard to research concerning LGBT issues, as there are strong values and personal thoughts in this area.

#### **4.3. Research approach**

This research was carried out as a small-scale qualitative study using three citizenship programmes as cases. I originally intended to undertake case study research involving investigations into one or a small set of cases with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of certain aspects of the cases. It is not intended for the results to be generalised due to the restricted sample size; however, the benefit of greater detail in the information gained may help to increase understanding within a specific area.

Further advantages to case study research include the potential to capture unique features of a situation which may be lost in large-scale research. These unique perspectives may be the vital elements to building a greater understanding of a situation (Nisbet & Watt, 1984). Case study data also tends to be strong in reality, as it is small-scale, which allows the research to serve multiple audiences, which I regarded as an important aspect of carrying out this study.

Stake (1995) suggests a case study approach is decided upon due to an intrinsic interest in a particular area or aspect of the case. In this situation my interest in both citizenship and LGBT education made case study research the most appropriate approach. However, a number of practical considerations, including the fact I teach full time, effectively ruled out a commitment to ethnographic research. Consequently I chose a small-scale qualitative study using three citizenship programmes as cases.

#### **4.4. Research questions**

The research sought to solicit PGCE citizenship students' views on their training on how to address LGBT issues within schools and the extent to which it

prepares them to address such issues in the classroom. To date, there has been a lack of research in this particular area and little literature on this specific concern. Therefore, the scope of the research questions was broad. However, due to my role as a professional secondary school teacher, I wanted to ensure that my research questions were able to inform me about the programmes currently offered by the universities and give the students the opportunity to suggest how the programmes could be improved in the future. Therefore, the first two research questions were:

- i) To what extent do the current citizenship PGCE courses in London address issues of equality and diversity in a way that includes LGBT perspectives?
- ii) To what extent do the citizenship PGCE students in London feel prepared to address these issues when they enter the classroom?

These questions enabled initial information to be gained about the issues relating to the topic and to find out the opinions of students regarding the subject.

Since I am also interested in how to improve the current provision offered by the universities, the third research question was as follows:

- iii) What suggestions do the sample of PGCE citizenship students have for improving their training in this respect?

This question allowed the PGCE students to offer their own thoughts and opinions towards how the current programmes could be improved, and gave them the opportunity to provide feedback about their training.

## **4.5 Research methods**

### **4.5.1 Sampling**

London was chosen as the site for this research due to its proximity and diversity and the number of PGCE citizenship courses on offer within the city and its suburbs. The research was carried out in all three London universities which offer a PGCE in citizenship education, between January and February 2012. One of the

universities is in the city centre, whilst the other two are situated in the inner and outer suburbs of the city. Each university was visited separately and data collection took between one and one and a half hours. The data collection was followed by a brief training session addressing current educational issues with regard to LGBT students. This was delivered by myself as the researcher.

Recruiting and selecting an appropriate research sample is of key significance for the researcher, as this helps to obtain a feasible proportion of the population upon which the study can be carried out in the most effective and efficient manner. For this study, opportunity sampling based on the proximity of the universities and their offering of the PGCE course in citizenship education was selected. Due to the qualitative approach, a larger sample was not deemed necessary as the PGCE students' opinions were regarded as the required outcome, rather than generalisable facts. Three out of the nine universities offering the PGCE course in citizenship education were approached and asked for their participation in the research. All three universities agreed.

- University One is located in the inner suburbs of the city. At the time of the research, it had fourteen students completing the citizenship education PGCE course.
- University Two had the largest cohort, with sixteen citizenship education PGCE students, and was located in the city centre.
- The smallest cohort was University Three, with eleven PGCE citizenship education students. This university was located in the outer suburbs of the city.

All universities were visited between January and February 2012, between the first and second teaching practice in schools. Therefore, the students had already had one school experience and were about to enter a different school for their final teaching practice. The students had attended a Controversial Issues day together at one of the universities and from experience whilst on teaching practice within schools, had clearly covered the citizenship curriculum as well as lesson planning and structure. There were forty-one students in total studying this course at the three selected universities, two of whom were absent on the data collection day. Therefore, thirty-nine students completed the questionnaire and scenario activity. This

represents a response rate of 95 per cent. No student refused to participate, or exercised their right to withdraw from the research during the data collection. All students participated enthusiastically in the training session, showing a real willingness to improve their knowledge and understanding of this area.

#### **4.5.2 Data collection**

A qualitative methodology was used as it allows a focus on the subjective views of the participants and gave me the opportunity to explain those views in order to present the participants' views of social reality: in this case, their thoughts on any training they had experienced in LGBT during their PGCE course. With a qualitative methodology it is also possible to gather data which enables themes to emerge during the analysis, which was the intention of this research.

Although it has been acknowledged that the tendency towards subjectivity could be viewed as a strength of the interpretivist approach, this is also one of the main criticisms of this approach. However, triangulation can help to minimise this. Triangulation refers to implementing a range of data collection methods to enable comparison of results from one source to another. The questionnaire asked students about their awareness of certain legislation around LGBT issues and more specifically about their training. The questionnaires therefore helped to give some information in regard to how aware the PGCE students were around the area of LGBT. The scenario activity served to triangulate the results of the written questionnaire since the students were able to further reveal the extent of their knowledge. Therefore in this research these were the two methods used – the questionnaire and the scenario activity.

#### **4.5.3 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are sometimes referred to as a written form of questioning (Thomas, 2009). Questionnaires are an efficient method of gaining a lot of data in a short period of time and can be relatively straightforward to analyse (Wilson & McLean, 1994).

The main advantages to using questionnaires to collect data are their low cost and speed of administration. However, questionnaires are also especially useful



when research is concerned with sensitive topics, owing to the possibility of anonymity. However, in this research the sample was so small, it may have been possible for anonymity to be at risk, so whilst confidentiality could be guaranteed in regard to no names being used, anonymity may not have been possible. Many of the traditional disadvantages of using a questionnaire were not relevant in this study. For example, low response rates did not present any issue as the questionnaire was administered during organised sessions.

The questionnaires (Appendix 1) were administered by me in order to enable any queries or questions to be addressed during completion time. This aided the completion of the questionnaires, as well as having a rapid data collection process. Universities One and Two were visited in the afternoon during one of the last sessions of the day. University Three was visited in the morning for the first session of the day. At all three universities, students were in their normal teaching room, and they remained in the places they had been in for the session before in regard to Universities One and Two. They chose where they normally sat in University Three. At Universities Two and Three students were sitting around tables in groups; University One had the tables set out in two long rows, facing forward. At the beginning of the research I was introduced by each of the course tutors as someone who was carrying out some research for a Doctorate in Education and that I would be available afterwards for any general questions. To introduce myself and the research I read out the same pre-prepared script at each university (Appendix 4), explaining who I was and the area I was researching.

I asked the students to read the permission letter and if they were comfortable to continue, to sign it. These were at this point collected in by me. Students were then given a questionnaire each and when all the questionnaires were handed out, they began completing them in silence. There were no clarifications needed throughout the research in any of the three universities. Students who finished earlier than others waited for the rest of the cohort to finish. This was not at any point over five minutes. Questionnaire completion took approximately fifteen minutes and when completed, were collected and not discussed.

The questionnaires could not be completely confidential and anonymous; however, the data would be treated confidentially and the findings reported anonymously. It was acknowledged that the researcher's mere presence in the room could have made some participants feel uncomfortable, which may have inhibited some of their responses. These issues were addressed in the permission letter (Appendix 3), which clearly stated that every student could terminate their participation at any point during the activity.

In order to ensure the questionnaire was as useful as possible, I utilised guidelines from Cohen et al. (2007). The questionnaire was simple, clear and as brief as possible, without compromising on detail, and ensuring issues of interest required was explored. Leading and difficult questions were avoided and the questions addressed one idea at a time. Most importantly, each question was designed to generate the data required in order to answer the research questions. The questionnaire was then piloted with ten non-citizenship education PGCE students from a different university to the three included in the research sample. Feedback was given in regard to the wording of the final question on the questionnaire, which initially, the pilot respondents had to select a choice of answers. By making the question open-ended, it enabled the research respondents to give their own opinions, rather than simply select one of the ones on offer. The scenario activity was not changed as a result of the pilot as it was deemed clear and concise by the initial respondents.

The respondents were required to state their gender and age group. Then, they had to confirm whether or not they were aware of the Equality Act 2010, and if they were, what their understanding of it was. This was followed by a number of open-ended questions asking about how prepared the students felt about addressing LGBT issues around school and in the classroom; whether they felt it was important to address bullying in a physical and verbal sense; and their thoughts around the use of the word gay to describe something that is sad or rubbish. Finally, the students were asked how their university had prepared them to teach about LGBT issues and what could be improved in their training in this area.

Although a questionnaire is generally regarded as a quantitative method of inquiry, in this instance a qualitatively designed questionnaire was employed, using

open-ended questions to allow participants to respond flexibly. Open-ended questions were particularly useful in this case as they allowed the respondents to make personal and honest comments, which may contain 'gems' of information that otherwise might not be caught in the questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2007).

The questionnaire was effective because it yielded important qualitative data to work from in regard to assessing the extent of the PGCE students' understanding of LGBT perspectives on issues of equality and diversity.

#### **4.5.4 Vignettes**

Vignettes give respondents an opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to apply their knowledge to a situation. In this research, the vignettes, which were based on some of the themes that emerged from the literature review, helped to gain a greater insight into the extent of the PGCE students' knowledge around LGBT perspectives on issues of equality and diversity. The vignettes also offered the opportunity for the training session after the data collection, where transformative learning had the potential to occur.

Vignettes are 'short stories about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances, to whose situation the interviewee is invited to respond' (Finch, 1987, p.105). Although Finch used this definition to refer to the use of vignettes within a quantitative paradigm, they traditionally have a history of being imbedded within qualitative research.

Vignettes are particularly useful as they enable the researcher to discover the participant's perspective as the situation offered by the vignette is defined in the participant's own terms (Renold, 2002). The technique is employed when the researcher wishes to elicit the opinions, attitudes and perceptions of their study participants by drawing on their responses and comments to short stories depicting particular scenarios. It is possible for vignettes to fulfil the following purposes:

1. Interpretation of actions and occurrences that allows situational context to be explored and influential variables to be elucidated;
2. Clarification of individual judgements, often in relation to moral dilemmas;

3. Discussion of sensitive experiences in comparison with the 'normality' of the vignette.

(Barter & Renold, 1999)

Put simply, the use of vignettes allows the researcher to explore action within context; to clarify people's judgements; and to explore potentially sensitive areas in a depersonalised and non-threatening manner. In typical vignette research, respondents are asked to read a short story, usually containing a moral dilemma, and are asked what they would do in the same situation. They have been widely used as a complementary data collection technique alongside other methods, to either triangulate existing data or generate new data. For example, Smart et al (1999) (in Barter and Renold, 2000), in a study of child perceptions of the family unit, employed vignettes after conducting semi-structured interviews, and were able to purposefully select scenarios that had not been touched upon during interviews.

In this research, five vignettes were created to elicit responses from participants (Appendix 2). Drawing on the literature surrounding the design of vignettes, the scenarios were based on the themes which emerged from the literature around LGBT in schools. This adhered to several principles of design identified in the literature. For example, it ensured that the scenarios were plausible and appeared realistic to participants (Neff, 1979); reflected typical or mundane situations (Finch, 1987); and contained enough detail to provide the necessary contextual information for responding, but were vague enough to invite a variety of responses (Barter & Renold, 1999). It was particularly important in this context to provide scenarios that depicted possible situations that PGCE students may experience within schools. These were also used as a discussion stimulus for the training session after the data collection. Additionally, the range of vignettes was designed specifically to address a variety of scenarios, each relating to an endemic problem of discrimination against LGBT individuals described in the literature. The scenarios included:

1. The use of homophobic language in schools, specifically the use of the word 'gay' as a pejorative adjective.
2. Heteronormativity in schools and a lack of teacher training in regard to a student struggling to disclose their sexuality to their teacher.

3. Historical legislation in regard to LGBT education in the form of a parent threatening legal action against a teacher for the perceived promotion of homosexuality.
4. Homophobia and verbal homophobic bullying during a lesson from a female student regarding the right for same-sex couples to have children and the appropriateness of same-sex marriage.
5. Homophobia and a lack of teacher training in regard to a teacher refusing to teach about LGBT issues on the grounds of religion.

The vignette method aided the exploration of a potentially sensitive subject, namely issues pertaining to the LGBT community. It is less inhibiting for a participant to comment on a fictional story than their own personal experiences, and the vignette approach provides participants with greater control over the interaction. They can determine whether they feel comfortable disclosing their own experiences in relation to the fictional scenarios (Barter & Renold, 1999). Additionally, vignettes were included in the methodological design for another crucial reason – they are closely aligned with the principles of Transformative Learning Theory.

Problem-based activities (such as vignettes) have a valuable place in transformative learning since they allow the exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions – this is the process of ‘perspective transformation’. Perspective transformation occurs across three dimensions: (a) psychologically – changes regarding understanding the self; (b) convictionally – revision of belief systems; and (c) behavioural – changes in lifestyle (Neff, 1979).

Although it is rare, Mezirow (1995) argues that perspective transformation results from a disorienting dilemma. Such a dilemma presents the individual with an experience that does not fit their pre-existing meaning structure, causing disorientation. Transformational learning then takes place when critical reflection or the lack of it leads to changes to the meaning structure, either epochally or incrementally. If an individual is only presented with experiences that fit within existing meaning structures, transformational learning cannot take place (Mezirow, 1995).

The scenarios allowed the students to become aware and critical of their own and others' assumptions (Mezirow, 1997) and gave an opportunity to discuss critical incidents to encourage critical reflection and discourse (Mezirow, 1990). Any transformational learning may have occurred during the training session which occurred after the data collection, as each vignette was discussed within the group and responses compared. Where there were disagreements or whenever required, I offered advice as to how the situations could be dealt with in schools. During each data collection visit, I witnessed indications of transformational learning occurring as PGCE students changed their perspectives on different scenarios, particularly vignette two, regarding the pupil 'coming out' to them. For example, a number of students indicated that they would inform the child protection officer at the school as a result of this conversation. I challenged this by asking if they would do the same if a child told them he or she was heterosexual. Every student replied 'No', and then many commented that now their initial response seemed inappropriate. I found this part of the research experience very rewarding and feel it was appreciated by the PGCE students themselves.

The written vignettes were read out to participants, who wrote their responses in regard to how they would deal with each scenario as a teacher in a school. Each vignette was read out by me once, to encourage an instant response from the PGCE students. I decided to approach the vignette data collection in this way as it would make the scenario more realistic for the students. By allowing them to read the vignettes themselves, they would have an opportunity to re-read the information more than once, which would not happen in a school situation. By reading them out, the students had to respond at a similar speed to the incident happening to them in real life. Students handwrote their responses on a sheet provided, with space to complete each response for the separate scenarios. The scenario activities were addressed one by one to allow each student to respond fully before the next scenario was given. Participants needed different amounts of time to complete the scenarios, so those who had finished waited for the rest. Different students took longer to respond each time, rather than the same ones responding quickly and always having to wait. On average each response took twenty minutes to complete. The response forms were then collected to avoid any changes during the accompanying training session.

The training session allowed students to discuss ideas and opinions on different approaches to the vignettes. This was well received and the students participated with enthusiasm in the discussions. They were keen to discuss and generate appropriate and novel responses to such situations, and this prompted more general discussion about LGBT issues in school and how to approach them. The discussions in the training sessions were lively and meaningful, with a genuine commitment to improving LGBT education in schools and the students' role in this. This was shown by all three cohorts of students contributing to the sessions and vignette discussions, demonstrating concern and commitment for LGBT youth. When the training sessions finished, all students thanked me and many stayed behind to ask further questions and express how important they felt the work was.

An often-cited drawback of the vignette approach is the danger of drawing spurious correlations between beliefs and actions (West, 1982, in Finch, 1987). It may be that not enough is known about the relationship between vignettes and real-life responses to make it possible to draw parallels between the two (Hughes, 1998). However, this can be avoided if the research aims to only understand the meanings individuals assign to specific contexts, without extrapolating to action, as is the case in this thesis. Using the vignette approach as part of a multi-method design can also ameliorate some of these methodological issues by shedding some light on the interplay between beliefs and actions (Barter & Renold, 1999).

#### **4.6 Data analysis**

Humans as analysts have a number of deficiencies, including biases and limits to the volume of data that can be dealt with (Robson, 2002). Thus, the approaches used for data analysis were chosen in regard to reliability and appropriateness to the research. The responses to the questionnaires and the scenarios were initially tabulated (Cohen et al., 2007) and colour coded so students could be traced throughout their responses. Every answer to each question was grouped together, which produced a summary of the data in a clear and coherent form. This enabled me to gain an overview of the data, revealing similarities and differences in the responses to each question. (This summary is included in Appendices 5 and 6.) A preliminary data analysis, which involved the tracking and checking of the data in order to reveal patterns, enabled me to engage with the data

and gain a holistic view of the data set as a whole. During this process I noted any emerging themes, the possible relationship between those themes and the frequencies of similar responses. An example of the coding process by which themes emerged from the data is included in Appendix 7. Whilst the data set was relatively small, it was still possible to identify patterns and themes from this process (Grbich, 2007). By the process of constant comparison (Thomas, 2009) I was able to check and summarise the data and themes. This involved going through the data a number of times in order to compare the elements of each theme and build upon their possible meanings. The data is presented within the general themes of the questionnaire: knowledge of past and present legislation; preparation; confidence in LGBT education; and importance of addressing LGBT issues and improvements to the current programmes. The vignette scenarios were integrated during the data analysis where appropriate, for example vignette three relates to the theme of knowledge of current legislation. The results are discussed in Chapter 6.

#### **4.7. Ethical considerations**

Of prime concern to any researcher are the ethical considerations and implications of their work. A full understanding of research ethics, as well as adherence and accountability to an ethical framework, can provide a solid base for the research work in order to achieve successful completion of the research (Willis et al., 2010). Adherence to ethical considerations in research promotes the ethical concerns of research, which are preventing the falsification of results, and avoiding error. Ethical norms ensure that the researcher remains accountable to the public and can prevent harm. Therefore, prior to the commencement of any piece of research, it is essential to consider all the ethical implications that may present themselves throughout all stages of the study.

It was important that the research closely consider the ethical issues laid out in the British Educational Research Association's Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2004). This research was carried out in accordance with those guidelines. The research was reviewed by the research ethics committee at the Institute of Education, London University. It was important to be aware of the



codes of ethics in the early stages of the research in order to ensure that they were followed closely.

This research invoked a number of specific ethical issues. Firstly, there was an element of insider research as two of the three universities included have links to my professional life. It was important for me to consider this when I collected and analysed the data. I also had to bear in mind that some of the participants may well be completing their school training experiences in my school, with me as their professional mentor. This could have meant the students gave answers they perceived to be 'right' or responses they felt I would approve of. However, every effort had been made to protect the anonymity of participants and the universities. There may also have been an issue of research bias, which was considered. This bias refers not only to my own opinions about this subject, but also the fact that some of the trainees already knew me due to their experiences in my school and this may have affected their responses.

Central to research ethics is the issue of consent. Informed consent was gained via a letter, which the PGCE students were asked to sign before participating in the research (Appendix 3). The students were then asked to complete the questionnaire individually. The letter clearly stated that if the respondent wished to withdraw from the research at any time, they could do so, and that none of the information they had already provided would be used in the write up of the research.

In much research, keeping the personal details of the respondents secured is a prime ethical requirement. Therefore, another major ethical consideration of the proposed study related to anonymity and confidentiality. Conducting any research within the workplace could raise concerns amongst participants. Therefore, responses to the questionnaire and vignettes were anonymised and assigned a code. Participants were also assured that their responses would be used only for this research, were strictly confidential and would remain anonymous in the write up of the research. The course leader was not present in the room in order to allow further anonymity and to prevent any of the students from expressing concern regarding their answers. One of the course leaders returned for the training session and made useful contributions to the discussion. However, the data collection had finished by that stage.

Although there were no incentives offered to the participants, as a package of reciprocation I offered a workshop involving a discussion about the vignette activity after the data collection, which was used as training within this area. This was followed by a question and answer session about any concerns the trainees had in addressing LGBT issues in schools. This session was highly successful and gratefully received by the students and tutors, readily expressing their appreciation at the end of it.

It was not anticipated that there would be any harm to the participants. However, during the training session it was made clear to the participants that any offensive thoughts or remarks about the LGBT community in general or about members of the group should not be voiced.

#### **4.8. Considerations of rigour**

The issue of rigour can bestow significant adverse impact on the authenticity and viability of a research work, as non-rigorous explanation of the research approach or data can significantly affect the quality of the research. Mainly, the issue of rigour is imbedded within the gathering and interpretation of qualitative data. Rigour can be explained as a measurement of the authenticity of the qualitative information collected from different data sources: in this case from the questionnaire and vignettes. Issues of rigour in a research work also emerge during the interpretation of the data. During the collection of data, I ensured I read the same script to each university cohort, briefly explaining who I was and what I was researching. The script can be found in Appendix 4. Each scenario was read out in exactly the same manner and responses were given a similar time limit. The questionnaires were completed in silence and the data was collected by me before the training session began. This ensured no answers were modified as a result of the training session. The tutors at all three universities were not present in the room, so all students felt liberated to express their honest opinions. The tutor at University Three re-entered the room for the training session, but after all the data had been collected. All responses were kept, un-opened, until all three universities had been visited and all data was collected.

Reflexivity is a form of rigour that emphasises independent reflection, and is contingent on the preconceptions, beliefs and personal values that affect the interpretation of output. Reflexivity allows the researcher to explain their impact on the research, and improves the credibility of the work, as it accounts for the researcher's knowledge, bias and beliefs (Creswell, 2009). As such, it is essential for the researcher to understand the context of all the data collected and analysed, alongside the literature reviewed, as part of the research process, and to interpret the findings of the data accordingly. During this research, I had to acknowledge that I have a professional involvement with all three universities as a mentor to their PGCE students in a variety of different subject areas. This may affect how I analysed the data, although every effort was made to be as reflexive as possible during this process. I am also aware of my own personal stance on LGBT equality, which may influence my findings and recommendations. With this in mind, during the analysis of the data I adhered closely to what the students had written and ensured my own opinions remained neutral.

#### **4.9. Evaluation of methods**

The scenarios were understood by the students and their responses were detailed, useful and revealing. It was clear from the data collection experience that some of the students found the scenario activities quite challenging. This can be observed in their reactions during the activity. Some students also wrote on the response forms that the particular scenarios were hard. This was the desired outcome as it was important to challenge them, as well as give them real-life scenarios which I have experienced or had been experienced by my colleagues recently in schools.

A particular strength of the approach was that it allowed the possibility of exploring different groups' interpretations of a constant situation, in this case the possible differences between the students from the three universities. By analysing the extent of agreement or disagreement in responses, the benchmarks for understanding differences between responses were established. It may have been advantageous to allow participants to respond to the vignettes verbally rather than in

writing. This is because respondents may, in initial stages, produce socially desirable responses that require further probing from the researcher. This ability to probe further was somewhat lost in this case. However, due to time and resource constraints, it was necessary to gather the data via written responses.

The questionnaires were administered successfully and produced very rich data, with the students giving plenty of ideas and suggestions in response to the questions asked. The data provided by the two methods helped address the research questions and produced a plethora of information on this issue. This is beneficial both for the PGCE students themselves and the universities participating in the research.

#### **4.10. Chapter summary**

This chapter discussed the research methods and approach which were employed to address the research questions. Drawing on an interpretivist framework, this evaluation research included the use of questionnaires and carefully designed vignettes. Information retrieved through these different methods was used to explore the opinions of PGCE students regarding: (a) How well LGBT issues were covered in their training; (b) How this will prepare them for life in the classroom; and (c) What their suggestions are regarding training related to LGBT issues.

## **Chapter 5: Results**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Data was collected via a questionnaire and a vignette activity. The questionnaire was based around a number of themes: knowledge of past and present legislation; preparation for addressing LGBT issues in schools; confidence in different area of LGBT education; the importance of addressing LGBT issues in schools; and improvements in training for LGBT within PGCE programmes. The five vignettes were each linked to one of the emerging literature themes and enabled me to assess the extent to which PGCE students were able to apply their knowledge to realistic situations.

The results from both data collection methods yielded rich data and interesting patterns, which help to contribute to the body of knowledge in this area of study. Each theme from the questionnaire will be reported on in the same order as it appeared in the questionnaire, with a brief summary of findings. Data from the vignettes will be included as appropriate. In this chapter, the results are summarised below. They are then discussed within the next chapter, where patterns and themes are analysed in more detail.

### **5.2 Knowledge of past and present legislation**

In a question asking about awareness of current legislation, namely the Equality Act 2010, the data shows that twenty-nine out of the thirty-nine respondents claimed they were aware of its existence, with eight being unsure and two claiming they were unaware of the Act. Most (twenty-three) of those who stated they were aware of the Act gave accurate descriptions of the Act, including student two from University Three who wrote 'consolidating all anti-discriminatory acts into one act'. Most included some element of anti-discriminatory purpose within their descriptions. One of the most coherent responses came from student five at University Two. It 'brings together all previous discrimination acts. Applies to all public bodies. Outlaws discrimination on grounds of protected characteristics including age, race, gender, sexuality, religions and disability.' Whilst some other students gave more vague

responses, it could be argued that time constraints or the written response requirement did not allow them to expand on their answers.

Vignette three was a scenario based around past legislation, Section 28. The scenario involved a parent complaining that recent LGBT education delivered by the respondents was against the law. From the responses, there was no acknowledgement of such a law and none of the respondents referred to Section 28 by title or in terms of more general historical existence. In fact, a few students responded with the defence of the Equality Act 2010 as legislation, claiming they would inform the parent that they are required by law to teach this area, for example student six at University Two who states '[I would] calmly explain to the parent that there is no such law and in fact the opposite is true. The Equality Act requires LGBT students to be treated equally. It is a duty of the school as a public body to make sure gay people are not discriminated against.' However, many used the wider area of the teaching of equality and diversity in order to defend LGBT education, without mentioning the Equality Act 2010; for example, student eleven at University Two responded, '(I would) explain that it is my duty to teach about diversity and that we are entitled to be treated equally as human beings.' A small number incorrectly identified LGBT education as being compulsory in the national curriculum for citizenship education, when there is no requirement to cover this precise area. The responses to vignette three suggest that these students are able to articulate a legal justification for including LGBT education in schools.

### **5.3 Preparation for addressing LGBT issues in schools**

The questionnaire addressed both how the students felt the PGCE courses had prepared them to address LGBT issues in schools and also how prepared they felt in themselves. These questions were asked separately as I wanted to gauge where their knowledge, training and readiness to cover these issues came from: the PGCE course or elsewhere.

In response to how the universities had prepared the students for LGBT education, one university had completed specific training in LGBT. All students at University Three were able to describe and offer examples of training they had received, whether it was watching a video, taking part in tutorials or as a specific

topic in subject studies sessions. Neither University One or Two seemed to have offered similar training, with almost all students claiming they had received no training at all in this area, or, if they had, it was as part of casual discussions within other sessions. Some responses suggested they had received lectures or training on how to address controversial issues, but that they were not specifically about LGBT. Many simply responded with 'very little' or 'none'.

Slightly more of the students felt prepared within themselves to address LGBT issues within lessons and around the school, although a planned lesson gained a slightly more confident response. Twenty-one of the thirty-nine respondents, however, stated they did not feel prepared enough to teach a lesson on LGBT issues, largely due to reasons including a lack of knowledge, experience and training. Many mentioned they felt they would require more training in this area before feeling confident in teaching a lesson on an area of LGBT. Those who expressed that they were confident in this area cited reasons based on personal experience or open-mindedness rather than training received during their courses. Student five from University One is an example of this type of response: 'Due to my personal background I feel more prepared to teach these lessons; however, just from university training, not that confident.'

There was less confidence reported when students were asked if they felt prepared when considering dealing with LGBT issues around the school generally, with eleven students expressing they felt prepared and comfortable to deal with a variety of situations. Some students specifically mentioned the use of inappropriate homophobic language as a situation they would feel comfortable dealing with. Those who did not feel they were adequately prepared to deal with more general LGBT issues around school gave a variety of reasons, including being unaware of the policies and protocols around this area and the absence of a controlled classroom environment, and made comments pertaining to a general lack of experience. More than one student suggested that the frequency of some incidents, namely homophobic language, may prevent them from dealing with every issue. Typical of these responses is student one at University Three who states they would be 'confident to handle issues, but not confident that I will have the time to deal with every issue that I see/hear around school'.

## **5.4 Confidence in different areas of LGBT education**

During the questionnaire, the PGCE students were asked, without any prompts or specific examples being offered, to suggest areas of LGBT education which they felt most and least confident about addressing. Areas such as legislation, bullying, equality, LGBT rights and using homophobic language were the most common areas of confidence. Five students from different universities responded that they were confident in all areas of LGBT education and four different students gave answers of 'don't know' or 'none'. The students' responses from University Three, who had received some specific training in LGBT, were similar to Universities One and Two.

When asked which aspects of LGBT the students were least confident about addressing, the most common areas were transgender, LGBT and religion, and a pupil coming out to a teacher. Four students stated they were not confident about all or most areas, although none of these were from University Three. Other responses included pupils challenging the teacher's sexuality, discrimination from staff or other adults (including parents) and the nature/nurture debate.

By far the most common response to this question was a lack of confidence in approaching transgender issues in schools. There were no suggested answers for this question, which indicates the PGCE students could already be aware that transgender education needs more attention. However, the questionnaire asks for the aspects of LGBT issues which the students felt least confident about addressing. This could have resulted in students responding with which area of the abbreviation 'LGBT' they felt least confident about, and most chose transgender (T) as their response, indicating they were more confident with the LGB aspects. Nevertheless, ten of the students stated this to be the area they were least confident about, many giving a lack of experience or knowledge as their explanation. Students seven and fifteen at University Two both stated that having no personal experience or any transgender friends was the reason they lacked confidence in this area. The students at University Three who answered transgender to this question also claimed it was as a result of a lack of understanding or knowledge in this area.



A pupil 'coming out' to a teacher was another relatively frequent answer given in response to areas the trainees felt less confident about dealing with. The PGCE students who responded with this area wrote that they were unsure of the next steps, that they needed training in order to be able to deal with the situation effectively. This was evident in the responses to vignette two, where the scenario involves a pupil 'coming out' to a teacher. Seven of the responses involved informing child protection, with a further two mentioning they may inform child protection – resulting in a quarter of responses mentioning child protection in this situation. A number of students also responded that they would have to tell the child that the conversation could not remain confidential. All responses showed a genuine concern for the child and some were well informed, offering support and suggesting possible groups which the child could turn to.

Areas such as staff discrimination, adult homophobia, and religion and LGBT were also identified as issues some of the PGCE students did not feel confident about addressing. Vignette five touches on some of these issues, with a teacher refusing to cover LGBT issues within a lesson due to their religious beliefs. A significant number of responses expressed the importance of objectivity within teaching and the difference between personal feelings and professional life. Many expressed the discriminatory nature of the teacher's views, some claiming they would report the teacher to a line manager or the senior team. More sympathetic responses included suggesting the teacher was provided with training in this area or offering to take the lesson themselves instead.

## **5.5 The importance of addressing LGBT issues in schools**

All respondents stated that it was important to address LGBT issues in schools generally. There was a wide range of reasons given, including the necessity of learning to live in a diverse society, equality needing to be addressed and becoming a more accepting community. The most frequent answers given were around ensuring children have the correct knowledge about this area, combatting homophobia and ensuring a safe environment for LGBT pupils. None of the students gave legislation as the reason this area should be addressed.

In response to whether it was important to address verbal and physical bullying of LGBT or perceived LGBT pupils, all of the respondents indicated that it was. Many stated that all bullying was wrong and should be addressed regardless of cause. Some specifically mentioned the seriousness of homophobic bullying. 'If it's not dealt with, LGBT students may be afraid to speak out about bullying but with the levels of homophobia I witnessed it undoubtedly occurs. Definitely needs to be addressed' stated student three at University Two. Student five at University Three recognised the importance of addressing all bullying and suggested the potential uniqueness of homophobic bullying by stating 'First, it is important to tackle any bullying for any reason. Secondly, because LGBT individuals will often face further bullying outside school.'

Specifically in regard to the use of the word 'gay' being challenged by teachers, the responses were slightly more mixed. Most (thirty-four) strongly expressed that teachers should challenge the use of this word. Many gave justifications around the homophobic connotations of 'gay' being used in a derogatory manner. An example of this is student three at University One who states 'Describing an object as gay is derogatory to someone's lifestyle and should be corrected.' However, the potential to offend other individuals and the negative undertone of this language were also cited by a number of students, for example student three at University Two who states 'it is associating being gay with something negative, enforcing homophobia'. Some students even likened it to a racist slur, for example student five at University Three.

A number of the PGCE students, however, responded with answers showing less conviction towards teachers always addressing the use of the word 'gay' to describe an object which was rubbish or sad. Five students responded that they were not sure if this was always necessary, proposing the evolving meaning of the word as the main argument against challenging the use of it.

However, a contradiction to the majority of students' views that the word 'gay' should be challenged by teachers revealed itself within the responses to one of the scenarios used in the data collection. Vignette one was based around a student responding to a friend who has just referred to a book club as 'sad'. The student agrees with the friend, replying 'Yeah, that's so gay'. The responses to this scenario

added to the questionnaire responses in the sense that the PGCE students had to write how they would respond in a 'real-life' situation, rather than simply their opinions on the topic. The majority of responses involved the teacher challenging the student in this situation, mainly for the inappropriate use of the word 'gay'. Some suggested they would sanction the child in line with the school policy, others wrote they would respond with a more informal response, yet still explaining why the word should not be used in this context. A few students gave responses suggesting they would not deal with this situation for a variety of reasons. Student nine at University Three suggested they would 'ignore the comment probably (honestly)', yet other students justified their answers by the lack of offence apparently linked to this situation. One student wrote that they would 'continue walking as gay is not being used offensively amongst young people at the moment' (student seven, University One) and another wrote 'I wouldn't necessarily challenge the use of the term gay unless it's related to a person' (student thirteen, University Two). The higher frequency of responses indicating an uncertainty over whether the pupil in vignette one should be challenged over their use of 'gay' to describe something they regard as 'sad' contradicts what the students suggested in the questionnaire. This could indicate that whilst the students feel it is important to challenge the use of the word 'gay' in a derogatory sense, in reality they are less likely to do so for a variety of reasons.

Overall, whilst the results show there seems to be no disagreement about whether bullying in a verbal or physical sense should be addressed, there is some discrepancy over whether using 'gay' as an insult, which could be regarded as a form of verbal bullying, should always be challenged.

## **5.6 Improvements in training for LGBT within the PGCE programmes**

Students gave a wide variety of interesting responses to this question on the questionnaire and also referred to the need for more training through some of the responses to the vignettes, stating that they would not know what to do in some of these situations. Despite University Three having had specific LGBT training sessions, almost all students at this university stated that they would like more, giving similar suggestions in regard to types of training as students from Universities One and Two. Many students used the word specific when responding to the types

of training which would improve LGBT training in their PGCE programmes, including suggestions such as workshops, real-life scenarios, guest speakers and advice on how to deal with sensitive situations, for example religion and sexuality. Some students from Universities One and Two suggested that their training in LGBT issues could be improved by simply having some, and others pointed towards whole PGCE cohort training, stating that ‘They should ensure every PGCE student teacher is trained’ (student eleven, University Two) and ‘not just for citizenship teachers’ (student seven, University Three).

## **5.7 Chapter summary**

The results from the data collection have revealed a range of responses and some interesting patterns in regard to teacher training and LGBT issues in schools. Many students identified gaps in their knowledge and confidence in addressing LGBT in their teaching and the wider school, yet there is a strong sense of commitment towards tackling homophobia and educating in equality and diversity in relation to LGBT. The PGCE students express a clear desire to include more LGBT preparation in their programmes and suggest practical and specific ideas by which to approach that training. The next chapter discusses the themes emerging from the data in more detail.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion of Results**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Data was collected via questionnaires and a vignette activity. The questionnaires were administered by me and included open-ended questions about the Equality Act 2010, how the PGCE students felt about addressing the verbal and physical abuse of LGBT pupils, and the use of the word gay as an insult. The final questions were concerned with how well the students felt their university had prepared them for teaching LGBT issues in schools, and how they thought this preparation could be improved. There were five vignettes used in the data collection, all of which were grounded in the themes emerging from the literature. Students were given the scenarios and asked to write down how they would respond if they experienced such a situation in a school.

The results from both data collection methods revealed interesting patterns, which help to contribute to the body of knowledge in this area of study. Each emerging theme will be discussed separately. For each theme, the three universities will be discussed as one body of students, unless one university presents itself as showing distinctly different responses to the other two.

### **6.2 Knowledge of past and present legislation**

#### **6.2.1 The Equality Act 2010**

A number of symbolic society changes since 2000 have affected the management of LGBT within schools. The repeal of Section 28 in 2003 and the introduction of the Equality Act in 2010 are considered the most relevant to this research. Questions concerning awareness of the Equality Act were included in the questionnaire, and vignette three focused on issues stemming from the abolition of Section 28, without specific reference to the Act.

The Equality Act brought together nine separate pieces of legislation into one single Act, simplifying and strengthening the law to help tackle discrimination and inequality in public areas. It includes groups already protected by individual Acts, for example race and disability, but also extends the protection previously offered to

other groups including, specifically relevant to this research, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

The majority of PGCE students were aware of the Equality Act. This is the most recent legislation affecting this area, with twenty-nine of the students stating they were aware of the Act. Of the remaining ten, eight were unsure and two claimed that they had not heard about the Equality Act 2010.

Twenty-three of the twenty-nine who claimed to be aware of the Act were able to provide an accurate description, with the remaining six offering statements that were less accurate. Examples of accurate descriptions were 'Consolidating all anti-discriminatory acts into one act' (student two, University Three) and 'Bring together all previous discrimination acts. Applies to all public bodies. Outlaws discrimination on grounds of protected characteristics including age, race, gender, sexuality, religions and disability' (student five, University Two). However, nearly half of the respondents (sixteen of thirty-nine) did not accurately describe the Equality Act 2010. Responses such as 'no person should be subject to discrimination based on things they cannot change' (student ten, University Two) and 'All people should be treated equally' (student thirteen, University Two) show an awareness of the general essence of the Equality Act, but are not sufficiently detailed to show an accurate understanding. This may have been due to the limited time available to answer the question as well as an unclear understanding of the legislation. Those students who claimed to not have heard of the Equality Act left this section blank, and one student stated they had heard of the Act, but did not answer the question which asked them to describe it.

However, the need for equality generally was referred to throughout the respondents' answers to other questions. For example, when asked if it is important to cover LGBT issues in schools, the majority of responses indicated equality as one of the reasons why it was important. Many other responses such as breaking down barriers and reducing discrimination also stem from conceptualisations of equality. This indicates a personal commitment to equality from the students questioned, but one not necessarily backed up by detailed knowledge of the legislation currently available. An example of this type of response was seen from Student two at University Three: 'I believe in equality for all. Not everyone agrees with everyone, but

there should be respect and dignity for all.’ However, despite this awareness and the frequent use of words equating to equality being used throughout the responses as a justification for many of their views, only one student mentioned the Equality Act 2010 during other sections of the data collection, described during the vignette activity as an argument to justify the inclusion of LGBT issues within the school curriculum. This could be as a result of, as mentioned above, a lack of detailed knowledge at the Act, but could also be due to the PGCE students regarding the concept of equality in itself as justification enough to address LGBT issues, rather than as a result of a piece of legislation.

### **6.2.2 Section 28**

None of the PGCE students made any reference to Section 28 during the data collection. One of the scenarios was specifically designed around the presence of Section 28, yet responses from the participants did not indicate that any thought this legislation still existed. The scenario was based around a parent complaining that teaching about LGBT issues was against the law. However, the majority of PGCE students responded that there is no law against teaching such issues and none mentioned that there used to be legislation, which was repealed. A particularly well informed answer to this scenario was from student six at University Two who responded ‘[I would] calmly explain to the parent that there is no such law and in fact the opposite is true. The Equality Act requires LGBT students to be treated equally. It is a duty of the school as a public body to make sure gay people are not discriminated against.’ This answer shows knowledge of the legislation, without confusing the issue with a legal obligation to teach about LGBT issues, which some other students incorrectly claimed in their responses. Examples of such answers include statements relating to the statutory content of PSHE and LGBT issues being part of the compulsory national curriculum.

Justifications for teaching about LGBT from the participants came mainly from the importance of teaching about equality and diversity, as well as to help prevent bullying, rather than knowledge of the law. One answer given by student eleven at University Two expressed the need to teach this topic as ‘it is my duty to teach about diversity and that we are entitled to be treated equally as human beings and not be victims of discrimination’. Whilst this response shows a genuine belief that covering

LGBT is a worthy vehicle for equality and anti-discrimination work, it does not acknowledge the legislation around this area. This may be because the student ran out of time or space on the response sheet, but could also be that the student felt this response was sufficient justification for teaching about equality and diversity. As stated above, some students incorrectly identified that LGBT education was in the compulsory PSHE curriculum, which is non-statutory. Others stated that LGBT education is an identifiable area of citizenship education. However, LGBT is not mentioned specifically in the citizenship programmes of study.

The lack of acknowledgement of Section 28 may indicate a shift away from the fear of retribution and self-censoring (Epstein, 1994) when covering LGBT issues in school. However, throughout the various responses, there were several incorrect statements concerning the legalities surrounding LGBT education. A number of PGCE students stated that they were required by law to deliver LGBT education, or that it is part of the compulsory national curriculum – neither of which were the case.

Other answers, rather than justifying LGBT education with legislation requirements, included placing it within human rights education, teaching about diversity and trying to combat prejudice. The PGCE students revealed a confidence about addressing LGBT issues within human rights education. It was the most common response to the question about which areas of LGBT the students felt most confident about addressing. This is not surprising as human rights is a large area of the citizenship education national curriculum and therefore has no doubt been covered during the PGCE course. It is also possible that human rights education, because of its factual nature, may not be loaded with the same personal and private judgements that LGBT issues can sometimes initiate.

The potential perception of safety during a scenario activity may well have led to some more exaggerated responses than would be expected in real life. Some of the students were highly confident in the language they used in their declared responses. I question whether in a real-life parents' evening, faced with this situation, students would have responded with statements such as 'if he would like to make a complaint to the head teacher he can, but for now, please leave' (University Three, student one) and 'take a hard line with the parent' (University Two, student one). However, defusing the situation and arranging a meeting with the parent, along with



the head teacher or head of department, is a more favourable option. This could be a result of a lack of experience in teaching that the PGCE students had had at that point of their training; however, it may be valuable to have some training in how to deal with parents' views about LGBT education whilst they are completing their PGCE year.

Responses to vignette three indicated again a demonstrable commitment to addressing LGBT education within schools, yet some lack of knowledge in regard to its justification, beyond their personal sentiments on the subject.

### **6.3 Preparation for addressing LGBT issues in school**

Despite the perceived lack of training in LGBT in the PGCE courses at Universities One and Two, some students responded that they felt ready to address such issues within the classroom. 'I have a confident understanding of how I would approach the area. This would be the same way I would teach any area' (University One, student one) shows that the general training received on the PGCE course could be transferred to LGBT education. However, this student then goes on to state 'However, it would be useful to gain better skills on types of activities that would be appropriate', therefore showing that whilst student one feels ready to a certain extent, specific training would also be useful.

Many of the PGCE students from Universities One and Two put their readiness to address LGBT issues in their lessons down to a personal knowledge of this area. For example, student seven at University Two stated 'I am an open-minded individual and would be willing to address the issue. This is an area I am quite passionate about having witnessed homophobia with family members/friends.' This shows a personal knowledge of LGBT issues, which student seven is confident about drawing on in order to address LGBT issues within their lessons. Other students cited previous professional experiences as the reasons they felt ready to address LGBT within their lessons. Student one at University Two stated that they felt moderately prepared due to their work as a youth worker for ten years prior to the PGCE course. However, student one went on to state that they felt they could 'definitely do with knowing more' (University Two, student one). Two PGCE students felt they had been trained in this area during their school teaching placements.

Student two at University One observed a 'very good lesson that showed me a way I could attempt to teach this topic, so I feel slightly more prepared' and student six from University Two had taught a lesson on LGBT during their teaching placement with guidance from Stonewall and as a result felt very prepared to teach this area.

Responses from University Three, despite being the university which had received specific training in this area, also showed some lack of confidence when addressing LGBT issues within the classroom. Students two, four, nine and ten stated they did not feel fully prepared in this area, student four declaring 'I'm about to go on my second placement and I feel I probably learnt more from experience as TA than on the course.' However, other students did feel prepared; for example student one states 'Very [confident]. I feel comfortable dealing with any issues that arise and confident handling them', and student five expresses that they are 'Positive. Enthusiastic. [I] have considered several strategies already. [I] am looking forward to challenging assumptions and helping pupils to have an open mind about the LGBT community.' This may be as a result of the training that students at University Three had received, but could also be due to individual ethical principles. Nevertheless, the responses from University Three indicate that, despite their specific training in LGBT, some still feel unprepared in this area and draw upon other sources of knowledge to address the area of LGBT education.

Dealing with LGBT issues around school was an area which some of the PGCE students felt less confident in addressing. For some students, discussing these issues within their own domain, the classroom, posed less of a concern, but for others the opposite was true. These students felt they had the confidence to challenge behaviours around the school, but struggled more with delivering a whole lesson about the issue, perhaps concerned to portray themselves as 'the expert in the area' when in fact they felt as if they lacked the basic knowledge necessary. For some students, the perception of control over the situation when teaching within their own classroom ameliorated their concerns, whilst for others, promoting LGBT issues around the school was less anxiety-provoking as it required them to draw more upon their general skills in challenging inappropriate behaviour than requiring in-depth knowledge about the area. For both groups, however, increased training in this area would help raise knowledge levels, therefore confidence levels, empowering the

teacher in both situations. In addition, some students discussed a lack of knowledge surrounding official school policies when dealing with LGBT issues or challenging homophobic behaviour. In these instances, the Equality Act 2010 would be an appropriate starting place for schools to discuss LGBT issues within relation to official policies. It would be interesting to understand whether addressing issues of race around schools would have provoked the same degree of uncertainty regarding school official policies amongst the students.

The area that the majority of the sample felt prepared and confident in dealing with around the general school was the adoption of the word gay as a negative adjective. There was some evidence within the sample of a temptation to ignore such use of the word (despite recognition of its inappropriate nature), and this was affected by a number of factors including desensitisation towards the word, workload, attitudes of colleagues and the changing semantics of the word. Research by Guasp (2008) proposed that one in five teachers admit to never challenging the use of this word when heard amongst pupils, a statistic that was also roughly borne out in this research. Teacher training courses should note and explore this issue, so that the PGCE students develop their confidence, empowering them to take decisive action in the face of such behaviour, and not to merely model the actions of other trained and experienced teachers, a possible twenty per cent of whom are not challenging the term gay as an insult.

## **6.4 Confidence in different areas of LGBT education**

### **6.4.1 Areas of most confidence**

The PGCE students were asked during the questionnaire to give areas of LGBT education which they felt most and least confident in addressing. The areas which the students gave as ones which they were most confident in addressing included legislation, equality, bullying, LGBT rights and the use of homophobic language. Of these areas, addressing homophobia and homophobic bullying showed some of the most confident reactions.

Responses to scenario four indicated a strong sense of control over potentially homophobic comments within a lesson. During this scenario, a pupil claims during a human rights lesson that gay people should not have children as

they would bring them up gay, and furthermore goes on to declare that they would feel uncomfortable visiting a particular classmate's house if their parents were gay due to the possibility that one of the parents may 'fancy them'. The majority of responses indicated towards challenging these remarks, with some students suggesting punishing the pupil as well. Less punitive responses included opening the topic up to a class discussion, asking the pupil to explain their views and inviting the pupil to carry out some research on the nature/nurture debate to report back next lesson. Whilst these actions may be educational to the class, I would argue that this should be done after the pupil has been challenged. Many of the students from Universities One and Three stated they would challenge the pupil for unacceptable or inappropriate comments. University Two showed the highest frequency of suggesting a class discussion or expressing to the class that people have the right to their own opinion. Homophobic comments may well occur during lessons, and they can be easier to deal with in this situation, rather than around the general school, as the teacher has more control over the direction of discussion. However, dealing with such comments during a lesson may also be more challenging as there is a captive audience, which means everyone in the room will be listening and watching to see how the teacher reacts. In this scenario, there is no doubt that the pupil should be told these sorts of comments are unacceptable and offensive. Whilst it may be desirable that everyone should have the right to their own opinion, if that opinion has the potential to offend, insult or upset other individuals, then it is questionable whether it should be voiced in a lesson. It would not be acceptable for a pupil to make a racist comment within a lesson and be told that everyone has a right to their own opinion, so it should not be acceptable for this to be the case for LGBT. However, punishment may not be the answer at this initial stage, as these may be views expressed by other adults in this pupil's life. Continual homophobic comments should, of course, be punished, but education around the situation may prove to be more valuable in the first instance. Student eight from University One provides one of the most appropriate responses: 'Encourage the student to research the issues of gay couples bringing up children. I would also ask him to think about what he is saying, its discriminatory manner and the way this could have an effect on the people around him – it could be harmful.' In these situations, education and factual information, as suggested by student eight at University One, may prove to be the most useful methods of managing this scenario. However, training in responding to

such incidents is needed in order for teachers to be confident and appropriate in their reactions.

#### **6.4.2 Areas of least confidence**

PGCE students reported several areas in which they felt they lacked confidence. Clearly there will be some discrepancies amongst the sample; some students will differ individually in their different strengths and weaknesses. However, the most common areas which the students lacked confidence in addressing are outlined below.

##### ***Transgender education***

Transgender issues are completely missing from teacher education (Rands, 2009) and yet teacher education could lead the way in this area. Results from this research also indicated that transgender education is indeed absent from the teacher training programme in the three universities visited. Transgender and transsexual issues were the most common response to areas the PGCE students did not feel confident in addressing within the LGBT area. The main reason given was a lack of knowledge of this area. One student put the lack of knowledge down to not having 'any friends who are transsexual therefore I have not discussed the experience' (University Two, student fifteen), which indicates (as this student does throughout the questionnaire) that their knowledge comes from personal experience rather than the PGCE course. This will be discussed in more depth within the teacher training section of the analysis.

The perceived rarity of transgender and transsexual youth may be a reason why many teachers are not trained in this area; however, whilst approximately twenty in every one hundred thousand people have sought medical help for transgender issues, one per cent of the population experience some degree of gender variance, but do not reveal it (Reed et al., 2009). This could mean that in a school of a thousand pupils, ten could experience gender variance. This in itself makes it vital that this area is covered within initial teacher training, so not only do the teachers understand transgender and transsexual issues but also the pupils who may be having transgender or transsexual experiences, as well as those around them.

I agree with Rands (2009) in regard to transgender issues being absent from teacher education. Colleagues express a lack of understanding around the issue and lack confidence in approaching it with the pupils. Despite including this area on the PSHCE programme within the schools I have worked in, end of year evaluations show the topic has only been covered by my classes. Whilst training has been offered in this area, in my experience it is the LGB part of the acronym which to some extent has been covered more frequently within lessons, with transgender education often being ignored completely.

### ***Religion and LGBT***

Despite a decline in the significance of religion in British culture being suggested as a reason for a possible decrease in homophobia (McCormack, 2012), a number of PGCE students were concerned about how confident they felt when addressing this issue in schools. A number of the PGCE students participating in this research indicated they were not confident about addressing religion in regard to LGBT. Five students specifically mentioned the church and different religions' views towards LGBT as an area they were not confident in addressing within schools. Students nine and thirteen from University One both mentioned 'religious beliefs' within their areas of least confidence. Student six at University Two specifically stated 'Islam' as a religious issue of concern and student nine at University Three felt least confident about 'LGBT in church as priests'. This is the second most common concern when addressing LGBT education, based on the perspective of the PGCE students. This could be due to a perceived fear of consequence in regard to pupil or parent complaint, owing to a lack of knowledge in this area.

The PGCE students were more confident, but not necessarily more informed, when responding to scenario five, involving a teacher who refuses to teach about LGBT issues, based on it being against their religious beliefs. Whilst many of the students drew upon the importance of objectivity within teaching, there were fewer realistic suggestions for addressing this situation. Generic responses such as informing the senior leadership team or a line manager, whilst useful, were not LGBT specific and may have been given as a result of more general professional studies training. The sensitivity of this scenario and some of the more unsympathetic responses highlights the need for more training in LGBT in regard to religion.

Student two at University One wrote that they would respond by saying 'You are in the wrong profession' and student five from University Three wrote they would reply 'that this is unacceptable conduct/speech and that he is jeopardising his position in the school'. Student two at University Three went as far as to state they 'probably would even tell him it's sick to have views like that in this day and age'. Each of these responses could ignite the situation further, and with training in this area, PGCE students could be given guidance on how to deal with circumstances similar to this in school if they arose. However, it should be remembered that whilst the strength of feeling is clear within these two answers, the safety of a vignette scenario may have caused a more extreme response than would have occurred in real life. More measured responses involved offering to take the lesson for the teacher and expressing the importance of 'sticking to the scheme of work' (student three, University Three). The most supportive and informed answers revolved around offering training to the member of staff. However, there were only two such responses, from students one and seven from University One. The responses to scenario five, whilst indicating a strong sense of sentiment towards the discriminatory nature of this situation, showed that few were confident or able to give viable and knowledgeable responses. Universities should address this area within their PGCE courses in order to tackle the naivety and doubt.

The frequency of responses citing low confidence towards the issue of religion and LGBT, along with some of the reactions given to vignette five, indicates that this is an important area within this topic for further research. Because I had not anticipated this as an issue, I did not include the theme of religion directly in the questionnaire or vignettes. Consequently, investigation of this issue is recommended for future research in this area.

### ***A pupil disclosing their sexual orientation to a teacher***

When asked about areas of LGBT education that they felt least confident about addressing, a relatively small number (three) responded that they would not know what to do if a pupil 'came out' to them as gay, not the quarter as suggested by Stonewall's 2009 *The Teachers' Report*. A larger proportion of the PGCE students, however, gave uniform responses to scenario two, where a pupil confides in the teacher that they think they are gay.

A surprising number responded that they would inform the child protection officer in this situation (seven), with a further two mentioning they might pass it on to the child protection officer. This means nearly a quarter of the responses to this scenario mentioned child protection in reaction to a child confiding in them that they were gay. This begs the question whether similar responses would have been given if the pupil told them they were straight and, if not, which would be logical to assume, this could indicate heterosexism on behalf of those PGCE students who would consider informing the child protection officer in this situation.

There were also responses recommending that the conversation could not be kept confidential and that the pupil could be referred to the counselling service, which I would suggest may not have been the case had the pupil 'out-ed' themselves as straight. There were some suggestions of directing the pupil to support groups, or giving leaflets to the pupil, but there were also a number of PGCE students who confessed to not knowing how to deal with this situation; for example, 'I would honestly not know what to say' (University Two, student two) and 'I don't feel confident in my knowledge/experience/training in being able to handle this situation' (University One, student one).

Students at University Three appeared to have the most informed responses to this scenario. University Three is the only university of the sample which had had specific LGBT training. However, student four's response to this scenario involved pointing the pupil 'in the direction of someone who is gay/lesbian on the staff and might be able to offer more help' (University Three, student four), which may result in an unwanted 'outing' of that particular member of staff, or if already 'out' may suggest role encapsulation that only LGBT people understand LGBT others.

Another student at University Three responded that they would ask the pupil how they knew they were gay. It would be highly unlikely that a teacher would respond in the same way if the pupil told him/her that they were straight. Once again, a heteronormative mind-set may have featured in this response, indicating that you should identify specifically how you know you are gay, yet not have to explain how you know you are straight, as this is regarded as the norm.



More informed answers included a number of different options, as given by student five at University Three who suggested she would 'reassure them that it's ok, that there's nothing wrong with being gay. Ask if they have/would speak to someone else, a trusted family member or join a support group for young gay people.' The swift reassurance to the pupil towards nothing 'wrong with being gay' initially indicated to me that there was a perceived wider negative attachment towards homosexuality voiced by this particular PGCE student; that she was trying to show the pupil that despite society thinking that being gay was wrong, she did not. However, this comment could also have been a reaction to the scenario itself, which stated that the pupil was upset, so could have merely been a comforting phrase. Further informed answers offered support, researching possible groups and information for them, ensuring their response was positive towards the gay community and keeping the pupil's confidence (unless they felt the child was in danger).

Some of the responses to scenario two where a pupil 'comes out' to the teacher are appropriate and supportive. However, many of these responses came from the PGCE students who equate their confidence in LGBT to their own personal life experiences, rather than any training they may or may not have had at university or whilst in schools. Between 1988 and 2003, when Section 28 was still shadowing progress in this area, teacher reaction to such a scenario may well have been very different from today. However, in the current legal climate and with more acceptance of LGBT individuals within society, it is possible for teachers to be able to advise, support and educate young people whether they are LGBT or not in dealing with sexualities and gender. It is possible that merely listening to the young person, without showering them with advice or questions, can be an invaluable support. In many cases, their teacher may be the first person they have told, in which case a source of relief may be simply to talk. In some cases the child may well be very upset, which undoubtedly requires some comforting. However, if it is a statement made as a matter of fact, then often no reaction (rather than sympathy, comfort or questioning) results in the child feeling this is not in fact anything to feel embarrassed or worried about, it is normal. The response to this scenario is so vitally important to the young person involved that I argue it is essential for training to be given in this area, as part of a specialised LGBT theme.

## **6.5 The importance of addressing LGBT issues in schools**

One of the purposes of this research was to discover how the PGCE course prepared its students and how confident they felt in addressing LGBT issues within schools. However it was also interesting to examine their responses in regard to how important they felt it was to address LGBT issues within school generally, thus indicating whether the PGCE students approached citizenship from a minimal or maximal perspective. When asked whether it is important to teach about LGBT in schools, all thirty-nine responded that it was important, some suggesting 'very'. Reasons for their opinions included the need for equality, respect and dignity for all, preventing discrimination, raising awareness and challenging homophobia. Student one from University One showed a maximal approach to citizenship education by responding 'All areas that can affect young people should be covered to some degree.' None of the PGCE students suggested that since LGBT is not included specifically in the national curriculum for citizenship education, it should not be addressed, which indicates these PGCE students have a maximal approach to citizenship education.

Almost a third of the PGCE students mentioned combatting homophobia or ensuring a safe environment for LGBT pupils as a justification for the importance of addressing LGBT issues in schools.

### **6.5.1 Homophobia and heteronormativity**

The results indicated a strong acknowledgement of the presence of homophobia in schools and that it is the PGCE students' duty to tackle it once they enter the profession. Students' responses to why it was important to teach about LGBT issues in schools largely reflected the students' belief that schools are homophobic. For example, one participant commented that 'There is still a lot of homophobia amongst young people and I think it is an area that is deliberately under addressed to avoid embarrassment/confrontations' (University One, student nine). This statement is indicative of heteronormative recuperation, by not only stating that there is homophobia present in a lot of young people, but also that the potential recuperation for addressing the issue is a confrontation, resulting in the issue being avoided, and heterosexism remaining dominant. More direct responses indicating a

fear of heteronormative recuperation resulted from scenario one – the response to hearing a pupil say that a book club was ‘gay’. Two students expressed an uneasiness about challenging the use of this word due to a fear of reprisal. Student five from University One stated ‘I may just let it slip and carry on walking as I wouldn’t want any comeback on me i.e. think I was gay.’ This statement demonstrates a fear of the pupils thinking the trainee teacher was gay and the possible retributions resulting from this. Student two from University Two based the way they would react to this situation on who the pupils were: ‘Depends on the situation – either say “please don’t say comments like that, it is not appropriate” or I may just ignore it, especially if they are the sorts of pupils who are likely to answer me back or challenge why I’m defending LGBT.’ This comment shows an adaption of behaviour and response to this scenario solely based on the likelihood of heteronormative recuperation – a judgement this PGCE student has made due to the typology of the pupils involved: if they are the type to question the PGCE student’s reasons for protecting the LGBT community, then the homophobic language would not be challenged. Additionally, a small number of PGCE students wrote they would choose to ignore the pupils commenting that a book club was ‘gay’, without expanding on their reasons why. This could be down to a number of reasons, some of which were stated in the responses, for example feeling tired. However, ignoring such a comment (or pretending not to hear it, which I have witnessed many times in my professional life) could also be due to a fear of heteronormative recuperation.

The majority of the PGCE students, whilst showing awareness that homophobia exists in schools, did not equate that to heterosexism. Some students, however, acknowledged the heterosexism within schools (albeit without using the terminology).

Student three at University Two stated that it is important to teach about LGBT issues in schools because ‘it allows students to address different types of sexuality as schools can often emphasise straight as being the norm and gay as being the other – most students refer to straight as being the normal’. By suggesting that students refer to straight as being the norm, this PGCE student showed an awareness of heterosexism within schools. This student also acknowledged that gay

is regarded as 'the other', which is also cited in literature describing potential difficulties of LGBT youth in a heteronormative culture (Sedgwick, 1990).

Student four at University Two showed an understanding of the heterosexist nature of schools by using the phrase 'perpetuates the status quo' with regard to challenging the use of the word 'gay' as a derogatory term. The student stated that the use of this word should be challenged otherwise the teacher preserves the status quo: in this case, the assumption that the heterosexual individual is privileged, and the gay individual is the oppressed other.

Other PGCE students showed an awareness of homophobia amongst other adults within the young peoples' lives. Children growing up in homophobic families was mentioned by student four at University Three and adults with homophobic attitudes was mentioned as a concern by student thirteen at University Two.

These responses show that despite not necessarily knowing or understanding the concepts of heterosexism and heteronormativity, some of the PGCE students recognise that being LGBT may place a young person outside the realms of normality within a school context.

### **6.5.2 Homophobic bullying**

Not only is it a legal obligation for teachers to tackle bullying within schools (DfE, 2013), it is also a right for all children to be educated in an atmosphere free from fear. Teachers need to be aware that they are required to do everything they reasonably can to ensure any bullying is prevented or dealt with effectively. It is well documented that LGBT youth are often the targets of homophobic bullying (Rivers, 2004; Rivers et al., 2007; Warwick et al., 2000), which requires all teachers to recognise this within schools. All of the PGCE students participating stated that the physical bullying of LGBT students or students perceived to be LGBT was wrong. Many responses added that all bullying was wrong and that bullying of LGBT individuals was equal to that of racism or religious prejudice.

Some PGCE students recognised the potential results of such bullying, such as self-harm, depression and low self-esteem, similar to evidence from other sources of research on homophobic bullying outlined in the literature review. Answers were

similar in response to the verbal bullying of LGBT, or perceived LGBT individuals. Once again, many students stated that all bullying should be addressed. Others acknowledged the potentially more devastating effects of verbal bullying, being that it can go unnoticed and that it is as bad as racist verbal bullying. It is not surprising that these responses were given as I would suggest most people disagree with bullying generally; however, there are some interesting comments within the responses which warrant further examination.

One student showed an appreciation of the results of not adequately managing bullying, namely that it would be regarded as acceptable if not dealt with: 'If it is ignored then it's almost as if we are saying it's acceptable...If it's not challenged, others will believe that action is acceptable' (University One, student eleven), which may serve to further alienate LGBT pupils in an already heterosexual school culture.

Student three from University Two also showed an understanding of the repercussions of not dealing with this type of bullying: 'If it's not dealt with then LGBT students may be afraid to speak out about bullying, but with the levels of homophobia I witnessed, it undoubtedly occurs.'

Some of the PGCE students referred to the importance of addressing LGBT bullying specifically. Student twelve at University One stated 'LGBT students need to feel they have the respect of their peers. Verbal bullying needs to be tackled to avoid disrespect of LGBT students.' This may be due to the unique nature of LGBT in regard to its lack of visibility compared to race or disability, yet may simply be an accurate response to a question specifically addressing LGBT bullying. The majority of the responses, however, indicated that all bullying was wrong or that LGBT bullying is similar to racism and religious bullying.

The connection of LGBT bullying to any other type of bullying, although understandable on the surface, is inaccurate when examined more closely. Equating LGBT bullying to racist or religious bullying can be useful to a certain extent as it may result in more stringent policies within schools for mistreatment of LGBT pupils. Racist incidents that occur in schools must be reported to the local education authority, which (amongst other initiatives) has led to many schools dealing with

these incidents very seriously. The same may not be true in all schools for LGBT bullying incidents, as there is no requirement to inform anyone outside the school about such incidents.

A parallel vision of racist and LGBT bullying would be useful in this instance. However, I suggest that the bullying of LGBT individuals can be even more damaging to such individuals than victims of racism or religious bullying. This is because LGBT individuals, unlike ethnic groups or religious groups, do not necessarily have the support of their family and community. Parents and siblings are fully aware of the ethnic group of their family members (as it is visible) and are mostly of the same ethnic heritage. This may not be the case for LGBT individuals as sexuality can remain hidden. Therefore LGBT individuals may not be able to gain the same support from their home life as ethnic minority individuals, if being bullied.

There is also a possibility that a bullied LGBT child may not tell their parents of the bullying, for fear of disclosing their sexuality. Whilst it is understood that children may find informing their parents of any type of bullying difficult, I suggest that for LGBT young people there are such added complications. This could intensify the feelings of loneliness and unhappiness that are often reported as a result of bullying. I also argue that there is not the same support for LGBT individuals within the community.

Religious groups often have places of worship which young people can attend and gain support from. Whilst the number is growing, there are still many fewer LGBT youth groups than religious places of worship, which could increase the feelings of negativity. Young LGBT people are often left with exploring the Internet to find similar individuals and support, with the well-known dangers this brings. Whilst the situation is improving and more LGBT youth groups are being developed, I argue that LGBT youth continue to have less support than many other groups in society, exacerbating the effects of bullying if it happens. I would also argue that homophobic bullying is one of few types of bullying where the target of the bullying may be inaccurate. It is not only LGBT individuals who are bullied, but also those who are perceived to be LGBT, even if they are straight. This is not entirely unique to LGBT bullying as there are other cases where bullying may be as a result of inaccurate ascribed identity, for example different groups within ethnicities. However, I argue

that possibly due to the potential invisibility of sexuality and therefore the difficulty in proving one's sexual orientation, the possibility of inaccurate labelling is more probable.

As a result of my opinion that the bullying of LGBT individuals is not the same as racist or religious bullying, I suggest it requires a unique approach. I consider any training in dealing with bullying as a whole valuable, but argue that bullying training specifically aimed at the LGBT community is also essential. Due to the potential lack of parental support, peer acceptance and community provision for LGBT young people, school may well be the one place an LGBT young person may be able to find someone to confide in. It is also well documented that the same location may be the site of most of the bullying. Therefore, it is essential that teachers are aware of how to deal with this type of bullying, rather than agreeing that it is wrong and equating it to all types of bullying.

### ***Using the word 'gay'***

Epstein (1994), Nayak and Kehily (1996) and Swain (2002) share my own professional concerns about the use of the word gay to describe something as 'naïf', sad or rubbish. Hunt and Jensen (2007) report that 98 per cent of pupils hear phrases such as 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' in Britain's schools. An important element of this research was to discover how the PGCE citizenship students felt about this terminology and how they would react to it.

During the questionnaire activity, thirty-four of the thirty-nine PGCE students felt that the use of the word gay to mean something rubbish should be challenged. Justifications for this included the homophobic nature of the word used in this sense: 'It is inherently homophobic' (University Three, student four) and 'it is associating being gay with something negative, enforcing homophobia' (University Two, student three). Other reasons for why the use of this word should be challenged included the possibility that it may offend individuals, and that it is derogatory towards gay people more generally.

Some PGCE students likened the use of gay in this sense as equivalent to using a racist slur. Students ten and eleven at University Two both stated that the use of racist language 'would be challenged in the first instance', recognising a

similarity in degree of offence caused, but not necessarily in the way such language is dealt with.

Other students felt that the use of gay should be challenged due to the link to the assumption that gay people were also rubbish. 'It implies that being gay is sad or rubbish' (University One, student twelve) and 'Being gay should not be seen as being sad or rubbish and pupils should always be told not to use this word in such a way' (University One, student thirteen) were examples of two students' views.

A minority of students questioned the correct use of the word gay, rather than the negative connotations associated with it. Student thirteen at University Two suggested it should be challenged as 'it is a poor use of vocabulary', and during the vignette activity involving a pupil calling a book club gay, a number of responses indicated they would question the pupil's choice of language in this situation.

Although none of the PGCE students said they did not think teachers should be challenging the use of the word gay in a derogatory sense, five did respond that they were unsure. Reasons given pointed to pupils' different use of language; for example, student thirteen at University Two, after saying teachers should challenge the poor use of vocabulary in this situation, goes on to say that the use of the word gay should not be challenged because 'language changes and for many people the word does not relate to homosexuality'. Student seven from University Three also commented about the meaning of the word gay to the pupils, stating 'Words evolve...gay word has evolved from happy, to homosexuality, to rubbish.'

This was also noted in the responses to the scenario about a book club being gay. Responses such as student seven at University One who stated they would 'Continue walking as gay is not being used offensively amongst young people at the moment.' One student even went as far as to say they would challenge the negative attitude towards the book club, but not the use of the word gay unless it was related to a person (student thirteen, University Two).

The publication by McCormack (2012) draws on research carried out in three sixth form colleges during 2008 and 2009. McCormack refers to a lack of homophobia behind the use of the word gay, claiming that gay now has a new meaning to sixth form students: rubbish. This McCormack describes as 'gay



discourse', where homosexually themed language is not regarded as homophobic. A minority of the PGCE students participating in this research – two students – indicate some awareness of the change in meaning of the word gay. Two further students commented that the use of the word gay to describe a book club was not necessarily offensive to gay people. However, the overwhelming majority of respondents felt that the use of the word gay to mean rubbish is offensive, derogatory or homophobic.

McCormack also refers to a cultural lag (Ogburn, 1950) in regard to the use of language amongst young people. In this situation, this would mean that pupils are not homophobic, but that their language may still be. An example of this would be a student claiming they are not homophobic, have gay friends, and are just using the word gay in its new meaning: rubbish.

Student ten at University Two proposed a strong objection to this argument, claiming 'It would not be ok for a pupil to say they had black friends, then call something a rubbish [racial slur], claiming they didn't mean it in a racist way, so why is it ok for a pupil to use that as an excuse to use the word 'gay'?' This also begs the question as to whether racist language would be deemed not racist if the word evolved amongst the young.

Student eleven at University Two states 'If I used the word (racial slur) just because I understood (racial slur) to mean rubbish, would that be acceptable? No, so the same should apply for "gay".' Student six at University Three showed an understanding of the difficulties in classifying the use of gay, by stating 'I don't think all students use the word meaning it to be offensive, but it should be challenged because it is offensive to gay people as it infers that gay is rubbish.' I would argue that most secondary schools are not benefiting from a 'gay discourse' at the time of writing this thesis. Whilst I appreciate that the meaning of the word gay may have shifted to mean rubbish to some young people, I do not agree that this is enough of a reason to accept the use of this word in a derogatory sense.

Finally, two of the students commented that continually challenging the use of gay around schools feels 'like nit-picking and pupils will carry on saying it regardless' (University Three, student nine) and 'can become tiresome' (University Two, student one). These responses indicate the frequency of the use of the word in schools

being a reason for not challenging pupils when they use it, a situation also reported in research by Hunt and Jensen (2007). Two students responded that they may well ignore the pupil calling a book club 'gay' in scenario one, one indicating this would be due to how jaded they felt themselves.

During the training activities carried out after the data collection was completed, a large proportion of time was dedicated in all three universities to addressing how best to react to the scenario where a student calls a book club 'gay'. It generated significantly more debate than the question in the questionnaire asking whether teachers should challenge the use of the word 'gay' as a derogatory term, which most PGCE students agreed should not be accepted. Discussions around whether the word 'gay' was used as an insult to a person were frequent, as well as whether the pupil was being homophobic, or just using the language incorrectly or in its 'new' meaning. Either way, many of the LGBT community have expressed strongly that the use of this word to mean anything sad or rubbish, be it a book club or person, is offensive and discriminatory to their community as a whole. I argue that the use of the word 'gay' in any derogatory sense should be challenged by teachers every time. It is possible to state to the pupil that it is an incorrect use of language, but that allows for a response suggesting the pupil 'didn't mean it in a homosexual way, just that it's rubbish'; this is a response often given when teachers challenge the use of this word with such an approach.

Another possible way of dealing with this situation would be to question if the book club was actually homosexual, and question whether it is possible for book clubs to have 'a sexuality'. This approach may be successful as it draws the pupil's attention to the logic, or lack thereof, behind the language. However, by far the most effective way of dealing with pupils who use the word 'gay' in a deprecating manner is to immediately challenge them, explaining that their use of such a word in this context is not only incorrect but is also offensive to many people, whether they are LGBT or not. However, the fear of recuperation is both understandable and an experience I have encountered myself. This strengthens the argument for training in this area to give teachers confidence when dealing with situations similar to scenario one.

## **6.6 Improvements in training for LGBT within the PGCE programmes**

There are arguments to suggest that the training of teachers in LGBT education may well be unnecessary due to the misplacement of moral education within citizenship education. As outlined in the literature review, there are opposing approaches to the place of moral education in citizenship lessons. A minimal approach advocates pupils only learning of their rights and becoming decent law-abiding citizens. This would include understanding why it is important to vote and own a passport. Some would argue that this is the national curriculum approach to citizenship education (McLaughlin, 1992, 2000). However, a maximal approach to citizenship education would also include an obligation to others and a willingness to become agents of social change (Deuchar, 2007; Oliver & Heater, 1994; Wilkins, 2001). Within a maximal approach LGBT issues would be an area covered and addressed; however, within a minimal approach, LGBT would struggle to justify a place. There is also an argument to suggest that LGBT issues are politically grounded as well as morally grounded, as outlined in Chapter 3. With this in mind, LGBT issues could be justified as belonging within citizenship education.

Despite viewing LGBT issues as important to address within schools, only PGCE students at University Three reported that they had had specific training in LGBT education during their PGCE course. The training took the form of 'sessions on how to deal with LGBT issues in subject studies' (student one), and, more specifically, through tutorials, video, discussion and 'subject knowledge lesson time taken to focus on homophobia in schools and identify what homophobic bullying may look like' (student ten). However, two students from University Three claimed that despite their training, the PGCE course had not prepared them for addressing LGBT issues, one stating 'It hasn't [prepared us], we watched a video on it – haven't gone through how we would attempt to teach a lesson on it' (student two). Students at this university expressed a desire for more training in LGBT by suggesting more sessions and time dedicated to this area. Students at University Three were specific in the requirements they felt necessary and included training on transgender issues, religion and sexuality and detailed training on other 'numerous LGBT issues and ways in which we as teachers can be consistent with this' (student ten, University Three). In regard to how these sessions could be delivered, the use of scenarios, real-life cases and examples were mentioned as methods the students felt would be particularly useful. By using scenarios in the training of LGBT, real-life situations can

be explored in relatively safe environments. This would enable the PGCE students to discuss and rehearse reactions to the situations and allow the opportunity for transformative learning to occur.

Responses from Universities One and Two indicated that little or no training in LGBT had been delivered within the PGCE course. Students from University One had received limited general preparation on the importance of equality, diversity and discrimination, with very little specifically about LGBT. Links were made between addressing LGBT issues and teaching about diversity and discrimination by student four at University One, and equality and diversity was linked to training regarding LGBT issues by student eleven. However three of the thirteen students stated they had received no training on LGBT issues and ten indicated that they required more training in this area. Student twelve at this university stated that they had 'had exposure to LGBT issues outside of academic learning but no formal training as of yet'. Student six responded that they group had received lectures on how to address controversial issues, which will be discussed later in this section.

Fourteen of the sixteen PGCE students participating from University Two responded that they had not received any training in LGBT education during the PGCE course. The remaining two stated that they had received a session regarding how to deal with controversial issues. Another student (student ten), however, stated that the training on controversial issues was not focused on LGBT exclusively. As discussed in the literature review, the inclusion of LGBT education within the area of controversial issues may be inaccurate. If epistemic criteria are used to judge the controversial nature of a topic, and reasoned arguments based on factual knowledge are required, homosexuality cannot be regarded as controversial as all reasoned arguments fail to find within it any moral wrong (Hand, 2007). One could contend that if LGBT issues were covered within controversial issues, at least some LGBT education was occurring. However, I would argue that placing LGBT within a controversial arena may hinder progress within society and pass the message on to young people that there is still a question of immorality surrounding the LGBT community.

When asked how their university could improve the training in LGBT education, many students suggested merely providing some level of training specific

to LGBT issues, indicative of the current paucity of training offered. However even the students from University Three, 80 per cent of whom reported receiving some LGBT specific training, stated they would benefit from more.

Suggestions from the trainees at Universities One and Two regarding the nature of the improved training ranged from lectures to bringing in specialists to run workshops on LGBT. The PGCE students put forward many ideas, including, once again, using examples and real-life scenarios as well as discussions, case studies and role play. Crucially, students expressed a desire for this training to be specialist and specific to LGBT issues, indicating that PGCE students were motivated to address their self-acknowledged lack of confidence and/or knowledge in this area. Two students commented that all PGCE students should have this training, as opposed to only citizenship education PGCE students, indicating an opinion that this is not merely an area involving citizenship education teachers.

## **6.7 Limitations of the research**

This research experienced a number of limitations which are important to highlight in regard to the quality of data it has produced. This section will also advise future researchers and others carrying out similar investigations.

The group of students participating in the research was thirty-nine PGCE citizenship students all studying in universities based in London or the surrounding suburbs. This was due to accessibility and proximity issues. It may well be that these students have a different perception and life experience of LGBT issues in that they chose to study in London, the most diverse city in the United Kingdom. It would have been interesting to compare more universities across the country in order not only to gain more data but also to be able to compare responses gained from the London students with those studying elsewhere. Researching more institutions would also have enabled more students to have taken part, therefore the potential for more reliable data.

I decided only to research citizenship PGCE students for the reasons I have mentioned above, including LGBT's potential place within citizenship education within human rights, equality and diversity as well as a personal, professional and academic interest in the subject. Through the responses, it became clear that some

of the PGCE students thought it important that all PGCE students should have LGBT training. It may have been useful to compare the PGCE students on the citizenship courses with other PGCE subject students. This would have enabled me to see whether the citizenship students were more informed, aware of or welcoming to LGBT issues compared to other subjects. There would have also been value in this approach due to some of the scenarios and questions within the questionnaire being based around whole school life, rather than just citizenship specific situations.

I was aware when completing the data collection that I had kindly been given a specific time within the students' training day to carry out this research. As a result, I had limited time with the students, but also, as with two of the universities, I had the slot at the end of the day, so if the day was over-running, as in the case of University Two, I started my research late yet still had to finish on time. At University Three, which I visited in the morning, I was able to continue beyond the allotted time, which did not affect the timings of the data collection, but allowed the training session to be more substantial. More time with each university may have helped with detail included in the data and allowed for a longer questionnaire, more scenarios and a more in-depth training session.

The questionnaire covered the main areas necessary for the research questions. However, time restraints may have led to students rushing responses, therefore reflecting less detailed responses in some cases. Some of the questions could have been adapted or removed, for example the questions on bullying, as I would argue that all trainee teachers would disagree with bullying in whichever guise – they all responded as expected. However, the use of homophobic language questions could have benefitted from more focus to try to uncover more about the reasons behind the responses. I also note that there was not an option to tick 'transgender' on the gender question at the start of the questionnaire, which should be pertinent to this study.

The vignettes were read out in order to gain an immediate response, as would be required if this was a real-life situation. To make the responses even more realistic, it could have been valuable to have shown video recordings of the scenarios so the PGCE students could gain a more accurate impression of what was occurring. Some responses, especially to the pupil 'coming out' to the teacher, possibly required

further clarification or scene setting. Some of the scenario activities bore richer data than others. Scenarios one, two and three provided the most useful data for analysis on LGBT issues in school. Scenario four could have generated responses about general discipline for inappropriate comments within the classroom context rather than being specifically related to homophobia. Similarly, scenario five produced more general staffing responses rather than the perceived reaction to a potentially homophobic teacher. Both scenarios four and five, however, were extremely useful during the training session that followed. A scenario based around heteronormative recuperation and self-recuperation could have produced some excellent data for this thesis. Despite scenario one tentatively allowing for a recuperation response, many of the students answered this more generally, relating it to a behaviour issue. It may have been useful to include such a scenario involving heteronormative behaviour within the staff room in order to gain data on the possibility of recuperation.

Despite areas which could have been expanded or consolidated with the data collection methods, the methods produced useful insights and information in order to answer the research questions. They also highlighted further questions which could be investigated further.

## **6.8 Chapter summary**

The data collected from the universities indicates many positive aspects, none less than the PGCE students' desire and commitment to address LGBT issues in schools, which differs from research by Robinson and Ferfolja (2002) carried out in Australia. However, although the PGCE students were enthusiastic about LGBT education they were also aware of gaps in their knowledge within this area and indicated a need for more training during their PGCE courses. This reinforces the argument from other writers for the need for more teachers to be trained in LGBT issues (Douglas et al., 1997; Meyer, 2009; Ofsted, 2002; Rivers et al., 2007; Ryan & Rivers, 2003; Warwick et al., 2004; Watkins, 2008;).

Teacher training courses could provide specific training sessions in LGBT education within the PGCE course and not as part of a controversial issues programme. The training could include knowledge acquirement around the history of LGBT within the western world, showing an appreciation of the struggles of the

LGBT community in the past and the rise and fall of homophobia. Knowledge acquisition should also include specific terminology and concepts such as heterosexism and heteronormativity, in order for the trainee teachers to develop an appreciation of some of the difficulties LGBT youth may experience in schools generally. Transgender and transsexual education could also be addressed within a knowledge acquirement programme with the purpose of improving awareness and understanding of this community. Specific sessions on homophobic bullying and the unique nature of this type of bullying could also be delivered, using scenarios, role plays and real-life stories. Discussions around the use of the word gay as an insult could be initiated to allow trainee teachers to decide their own strategy towards the use of this term amongst young people, so they are not relying upon other teachers within schools to lead the way. Further training on supporting young LGBT individuals, especially if they 'come out' to a teacher, along with a closer examination into the matter of religion and LGBT, could also improve teacher training in LGBT.

Teacher training could be incorporated as part of an LGBT adapted Dimensions of Multicultural Education model (Banks, 2004) where a teacher training dimension could precede the other five dimensions to ensure teachers are prepared in and knowledgeable about LGBT issues before they enter the profession, enabling them to contribute to the model within schools. Without such training, teachers new to the profession are relying on their own personal knowledge and experience of LGBT, which, as this research indicates, may be adequate or extremely limited.



## **Chapter 7: Conclusions**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This thesis was guided by the following research questions:

- i) To what extent do the current citizenship PGCE courses in London address issues of equality and diversity in a way that includes LGBT perspectives?
- ii) To what extent do citizenship PGCE students in London feel prepared to address these issues when they enter the classroom?
- iii) What suggestions do the sample of PGCE citizenship students have for improving their training in this respect?

The first section of this chapter addresses the research questions by focusing on some specific themes drawn out of the research where training could be improved within the PGCE programme. Following this, suggestions are offered as to how training in these areas could be developed. The final two sections focus on identifying and addressing the gaps in LGBT teacher training as a result of the responses from the participants from the three universities visited.

### **7.2 Suggested solutions**

#### **7.2.1 Knowledge of past and present legislation**

The data indicates gaps in knowledge that is essential for successful LGBT education delivery. Whilst the PGCE students all showed a commitment to addressing LGBT issues in schools, their justifications were largely personal and revolved around the need for equality and to combat discrimination. This is admirable in many respects; however, I suggest more knowledge of certain areas of LGBT education is necessary in order for the PGCE students to be empowered and to feel confident in all aspects of LGBT delivery. All PGCE students should have knowledge of the Equality Act 2010, how the legislation affects children and adults, and why the Act is unique. More guidance is needed regarding dealing with religion and LGBT education. Some students also need clarification on the national curriculum legislation in regard to LGBT.

Knowledge of these areas could be delivered by every university offering the PGCE course in any subject. Historical oppression of the LGBT community should be covered, along with each significant political and social step forward. The setbacks and difficulties experienced by the LGBT community since 1967, before which it was illegal for men to have sex together, should also be addressed in order to contextualise the subject. A timeline of events could be used to show the significant events, including the backlash of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s, the introduction of Section 28 and its abolition, the Equality Act 2010 and the successful efforts by the government in June 2013 to make marriage legal for gay couples. Not only is it important to have the knowledge of these events, but it is also necessary to have an understanding of and empathy for how the LGBT community experienced life in society during this time. The opportunity for transformative learning arises here, as students may well alter their frame of reference after learning about and trying to understand the experiences of LGBT individuals in the past and how important the recent equality legislation is to this community. The use of scenarios and real-life narratives may help to stimulate disorientating dilemmas in order for the PGCE students to self-examine their own perspectives and critically reflect on their opinions and reactions, in order to construct new meanings and understandings of the LGBT community.

By drawing upon Banks's (2004) model of the Dimensions of Multicultural Education, it is possible to adapt the different dimensions to improve LGBT education. However, Banks's model assumes a level of teacher knowledge about multicultural education which may not be present in LGBT education. A sixth dimension may be added to ensure all teachers are trained sufficiently within this area. Discussions about the Equality Act 2010, Section 28, religion and LGBT, and other gaps in knowledge should all be addressed within teacher training so that teachers enter the profession prepared. The sixth dimension that I am proposing will be discussed in more detail in the teacher training section.

### **7.2.2 Homophobia and homophobic bullying**

Whilst most of the respondents showed an awareness of what homophobia is and suggested it was present within secondary schools, few showed an understanding of heterosexism and the heteronormative culture in schools. Teacher

training programmes should include education on these concepts, in order for PGCE students to gain a better understanding of how LGBT youths may feel within this system. Once again, transformative learning could be used to address these issues. It is one thing to acknowledge that heterosexism and heteronormativity exist in schools, but I argue that this is only half of the battle. It is important that teachers gain an understanding of how it might 'feel' for a young LGBT person in this situation. For individuals to go some way towards achieving this, it is necessary to go some way towards experiencing this state. By using methods such as role play, scenarios and group discussions, it may be possible for the PGCE students to gauge to a certain extent how it feels to not be the norm in regard to sexuality or gender orientation. These concepts could then be addressed through the prejudice reduction dimension of the model developed by Banks (2004), by addressing the pupils' attitudes towards the LGBT community and by ensuring that teaching methods and materials are not heterosexist.

The concept of heteronormative recuperation should also be visited within teacher training programmes as it may be one of the major barriers to reducing heterosexism, yet one which many trainees are unaware exists. An investigation around the plethora of reasons teachers may not respond to homophobic behaviour could be part of the prejudice reduction dimension of the Banks (2004) model. However, I also suggest that it is essential there is a whole school approach to the fear of heteronormative recuperation, so no pupil or adult in the school feels their position or sexuality will be threatened when challenging homophobia or homophobic behaviour. This could be addressed as an element of the empowering school culture dimension of the same model.

The school as a whole has an important part to play in reducing heterosexism within schools, which would mean that further work in this area could be undertaken within the empowering school culture dimension. Schools should adopt a culture which is empowering not only to different racial, ethnic and gender groups but also to the LGBT community. This could be regarded as one of the most effective ways of generating an LGBT friendly atmosphere (Banks, 2004). However, it would take members of staff to drive this agenda forward in schools, and without the initial training in this area, this may not happen. Once again, I argue that PGCE students

are in an ideal position to be trained within this area and then to take their expertise into schools.

It was not unexpected that all of the PGCE participants' responses indicated a strong feeling that the bullying of LGBT, or perceived LGBT students, was important to address, be it physical or verbal bullying. Some students acknowledged LGBT individuals in their responses, but most expressed a view that all bullying was wrong. This view, of course, is encouraged; however, a lack of understanding was shown by the PGCE students of the specific difficulties LGBT individuals may face, including a lack of support from their family or the wider community. It is also important for trainee teachers to learn about the bullying of individuals who are perceived to be LGBT, as this can be equally as devastating for an individual.

Teacher training institutions should educate their PGCE students on the particular difficulties LGBT young people face with regard to bullying by using specific examples, life stories and scenarios. The loneliness and solitude felt by some LGBT youth could be described as unlike any other minority group. To be able to understand how a child may feel when they may be not only confused about their sexual feelings but also in a position where they may not be able to turn to those closest to them, including their family or friends, requires a specific understanding from the teaching community. If a child is being bullied as a result of their actual, or perceived, sexuality or gender orientation, the conventional methods of dealing with bullying may not be sufficient or appropriate. The young person may not want to report the bullying for fear of disclosure of their sexuality. The young person's friends may not know of the victim's sexuality, so support may not be guaranteed, and this could also be the case of the parents of the victim, therefore fear of sexuality disclosure at home may prevent the victim from reporting the situation, or it being dealt with in the same manner as other forms of bullying. As a result of the unique nature of homophobic bullying and a potentially complicated and sensitive background, it is vital that specific training is given to teachers in regard to how to deal with this in schools, especially as schools could also be the actual site where the bullying is taking place. This could then be included within the dimension of prejudice reduction in the Dimensions of Multicultural Education model by Banks

(2004), in order for pupils to focus on their own attitudes towards the LGBT community within schools.

More examination of the meaning young people attach to using the word 'gay' is needed to be able to advise and train PGCE students in how to deal with the use of this language. However, the majority of PGCE students believed the use of this word to be offensive and claimed they would challenge this within schools. Accurate responses to such situations as well as guidance on how to deal with the frequency of this in schools could give the trainee teachers more confidence in this area. An acknowledgement within school policies of the use of homophobic language may also help to combat this within schools. This sort of guidance could also be addressed within teacher training courses. Model answers could be suggested as a response to different situations the PGCE students could face within schools. Role play could feature within this training as it allows the trainee teachers to rehearse answers within a safe environment before entering schools to face the potential extensive use of homophobic language. This may also give teachers more confidence in regard to the possibility of heteronormative recuperation, as they will already have a pre-prepared list of possible responses.

Language is not specifically mentioned within Banks's (2004) Dimensions of Multicultural Education model; however, it could fit within the prejudice reduction dimension, being that addressing pupils' language could help to reduce homophobia in the school by focusing on pupils' attitudes towards the LGBT community.

### **7.2.3 Teacher training and LGBT**

Teacher training programmes could include dedicated time to addressing some of the difficulties transgender and transsexual pupils may have. An understanding of the gender oppression matrix (Rands, 2009) could help trainee teachers to appreciate the different gender systems operating within schools and allow them to understand the difficulties involved with not fitting into the accepted gender transgression category, therefore being oppressed. The school culture of heteronormativity would also be relevant here as not only do transgender and transsexual individuals not fit into the gender norms, they may also be suppressed by the heteronormativity mechanics of a school's culture. This knowledge construction

(Banks, 2004) could also be passed on to pupils within schools, enabling transgender and transsexual pupils to achieve their potential in line with their peers.

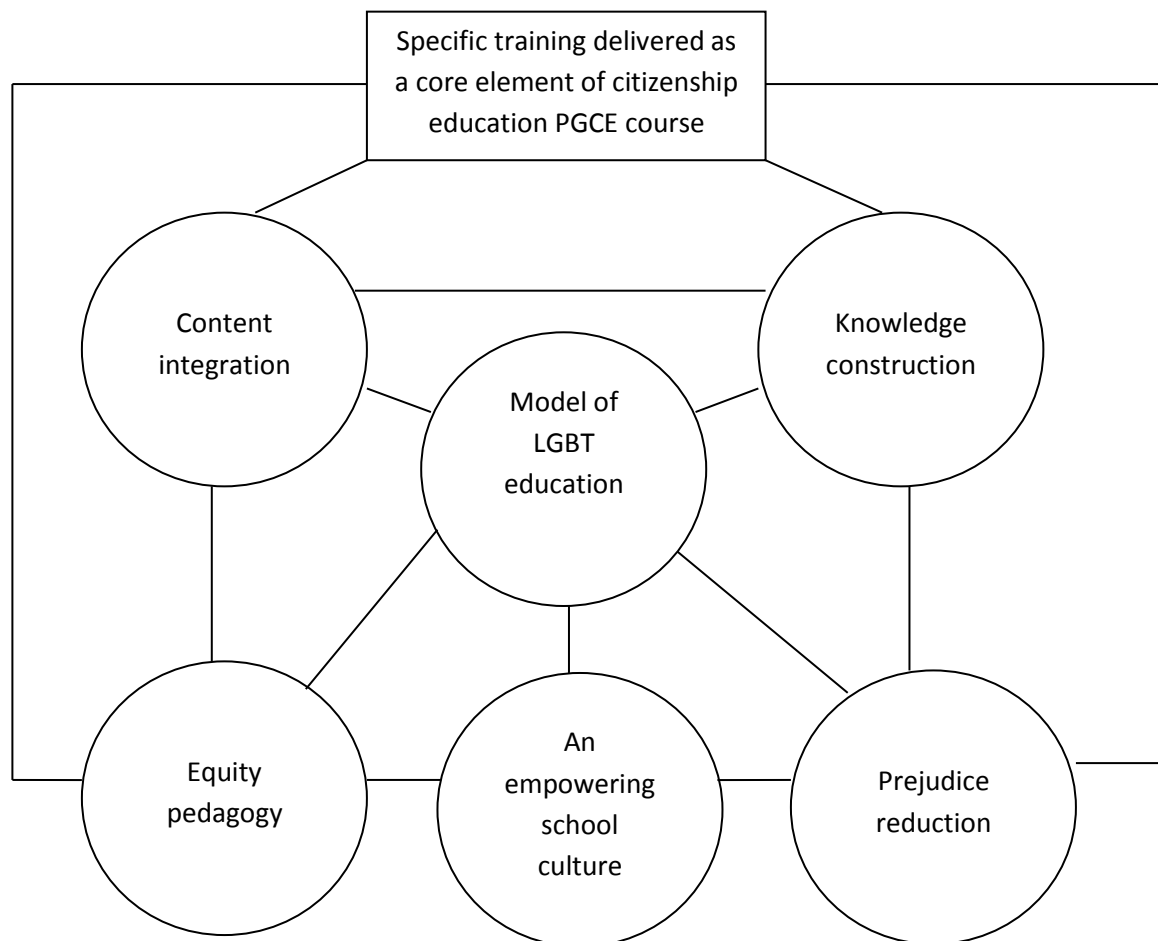
More understanding of the issues between religions and LGBT issues could also be addressed within teacher training programmes. It appears that without a personal knowledge or experience of these issues, PGCE students may not be as informed as they wish to be. This could result in awkward situations and ill-informed discussions in the classroom.

Finally, PGCE students could be trained to deal with pupils 'coming out' to them, both privately, within a lesson, or as a result of other pupils 'outing' the pupil for them, or against their wishes. It is vital that these situations are dealt with appropriately as this could be an important incident in the pupil's life. Being told that the child protection officer will have to be informed and that the conversation cannot remain confidential may do little to reassure the pupil of equality and lack of discrimination within the school. Guidance is available from non-government organisations such as Stonewall, who display extensive advice on their website. However, I would argue that during their PGCE year, few trainee teachers would search for such advice unless required to do so by the university or as a result of an incident already experienced during a teaching placement. It is therefore important that dedicated time is obligatory for the students to use the valuable resources available from LGBT non-governmental organisations. Once trained, the PGCE students could address this area through an empowering school culture (Banks, 2004), where the school culture embraces LGBT individuals, who then feel confident about equality and lack of discrimination.

From the data gathered, a picture has emerged. Two of the universities delivered no specific training in LGBT issues outside of a teaching controversial issues day, where LGBT issues were merely touched upon. One university delivered specific training, but students were keen for more. As a result, many of the students sampled felt unprepared to deal with LGBT issues within lessons or around school. The vast majority of the sample were able to offer ways in which such training could be improved for subsequent citizenship education PGCE cohorts. Training regarding specific issues pertaining to the LGBT community could be included in initial teacher training in order to address the gaps in knowledge and increase the confidence of

the PGCE students, and would represent an addition to Banks's (2004) Model of Multicultural Education. I propose the addition of training as an essential dimension to implement the pre-existing dimension of Banks's model.

I propose the following revised model:



In this model, the starting point for effective LGBT education within schools is the delivery of effective LGBT education within initial teacher training. Equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge of LGBT issues facilitates content integration by equipping teachers with the ability to include multiple examples and content from a variety of LGBT issues in their teaching. The knowledge construction dimension would be invoked by providing better education for trainee teachers surrounding issues such as heteronormativity and LGBT equality. This in turn allows teachers to help students to understand, investigate and determine how the implicit heterosexist

assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed.

This model allows for potential transformative learning to occur within the knowledge construction and the prejudice reduction dimensions by initially challenging the trainee teachers' assumptions about the LGBT community. This equips them with the necessary skills to enable them to in turn help their pupils to investigate and challenge these assumptions. Examples of how this could be achieved in schools includes holding discussions that question the origins of homophobia, and investigating the history of LGBT equality in order to provide the pupils with a greater knowledge base and understanding.

Improving training in LGBT issues at the PGCE level allows the development of equity pedagogy; this develops when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse sexuality and gender groups, and can only be achieved when teachers are given the necessary guidance to modify their teaching in such a way. Prejudice reduction is achieved when attitudes towards sexual orientation and gender identity are modified by teaching methods and materials; however, teachers themselves must first have their own pre-existing attitudes to the LGBT community challenged before they can pass on such knowledge to pupils in schools.

Challenging prejudice and creating equity pedagogy lead to an empowering school culture, where grouping and labelling practices, sports participation, disproportionality in achievement, and the interaction of the staff and the students across sexual orientation and gender lines are examined to create a school culture that empowers LGBT individuals and creates an alliance with the heterosexual population in schools. On a wider scale, an empowering school culture would be developed through directly challenging the heteronormative culture by discussing scenarios and real-life stories from LGBT individuals in order to demonstrate the potential experiences of LGBT youth in schools. Role play activities could help to foster understanding and empathy amongst students, and help challenge homophobic bullying and the use of homophobic language. Educational tools that have been shown to be particularly powerful are those which create a reversal of the norm. A compelling short film was released by the Disability Rights Commission



(2004) whereby an interview candidate awoke one morning to find he was the only able-bodied individual in society. He was judged by the other characters in the film in a similar way to how disabled people may be judged within an able-bodied society. A similar educational tool would be useful for LGBT education in order to emphasise how it may feel to be LGBT in school and the wider society. Together, these dimensions interact to create an effective model of LGBT education in the modern classroom.

### **7.3 Identifying the gaps**

This research has produced both interesting and original results which are able to make significant contributions to the area of teacher training in regard to LGBT issues. Attempts made to protect LGBT individuals through the Human Rights Act and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, along with a commitment from the government in power at the time of writing, including the Equality Act, do not yet appear to have filtered down into the teacher training institutions. Despite Ofsted providing an online training course for inspectors showing an awareness of the need for training in this area, this research indicated that little specialist training is currently happening during teacher training courses. As a result, trainee teachers are unaware of certain issues they may be faced with during their early careers and are not confident about some aspects of LGBT education, yet remain eager and committed to improving their knowledge and understanding in this area.

Every PGCE student who took part in this research indicated they considered the issue important in schools, unlike previous research noting that the majority of trainee teachers failed to see the relevance of such issues in comparison to other more practical teaching concerns (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2001). The justifications the PGCE students in this research gave for this ranged from the prevention of bullying of LGBT pupils to the importance of LGBT education within the wider contexts of equality, discrimination and prejudice. Whilst some mentioned a requirement to reduce homophobia, there was little indication that the trainee teachers acknowledged the presence of heterosexism or heteronormativity within schools. It is noted here that the PGCE students were not questioned specifically on this issue; however, many commented that they had not considered LGBT education before the data collection exercise, suggesting an assumption that it was not something they

would experience in school. This conclusion was further strengthened by the frequency of responses which included phrases such as 'I don't know' or 'I have no idea'. This could indicate that some of the trainee teachers had not considered many of the issues they faced during the data collection exercise. This could indicate that heterosexuality is presumed within universities, making them heteronormative (Hill, 2006; Nixon & Givens, 2007) as well as schools. Certainly this is at times apparent in the students' responses to the vignettes, with a propensity to ignore homophobic language, or consider the disclosure of sexuality a child protection issue. Whilst training can help with this, the presumption needs to be recognised before it is challenged.

The areas within LGBT education where the PGCE students felt most confident were closely linked to the citizenship education knowledge required to teach the subject, namely within human rights topics, prejudice, discrimination and equality education. The students mentioned feeling safe teaching LGBT issues within these areas as they are more knowledge-based and do not rely on personal judgements and prejudices, although they also expressed concern about gaps in their own knowledge.

The participants felt strongly about homophobic bullying, all stating that any type of homophobic bullying was unacceptable, whether it be physical or verbal. Yet the responses to the use of homophobic language, specifically the use of the word gay, were somewhat less conclusive. Most of the responses focused on how using gay in that context was offensive to lesbian and gay people or likening it to a racist slur. These students felt strongly that this behaviour should be dealt with in line with the school policy for racism or verbal bullying. However, a minority of the trainee teachers were unsure as to their response to a pupil using this language, suggesting that the word gay has evolved in its meaning, justifying this with reasoning that gay used to mean happy before it meant homosexual, and now it means rubbish. This would defend other research explanations (McCormack, 2012) for 'gay discourse' to some extent. However, it should be noted that only three participants mentioned they were unsure of the developing meaning of gay compared to thirty-six who responded that they find it unacceptable, offensive or on a par with racist language.

During the scenario and interview responses, some students responded that they may not react to every incident when they heard gay being used, as the student may not have been deliberately offending homosexuals (especially if they were talking about an object) or due to the frequency of these incidents in schools.

Many students felt unconfident about addressing LGBT in general within schools. Those that were confident attributed this to their own personal experiences of LGBT friends or family. Students who were not confident often cited their lack of knowledge and experience as a reason, which made them very nervous about dealing with incidents involving LGBT issues within a school. One area of particular concern to the students was a pupil 'coming out' to them. The majority of students felt unconfident in regard to what they could do to help the pupil and where the student could advise the pupil to go for help. This mirrors previous research where more than a quarter of teachers expressed concern about being able to deal with a child 'coming out' (Guasp, 2009). This was also demonstrated in the responses to the scenario exercise focusing on a child 'coming out' to a teacher, where a quarter of the student teachers would have involved a child protection officer. The suggestion of one student teacher that she would point the child in the direction of a gay teacher, whilst suggested with the best of intentions, could result in the accusation of role encapsulation at the least, and an unwanted 'outing' of the gay teacher at the other end of the spectrum. It is possible that LGBT training in universities may help prevent such responses.

The majority of PGCE students also reported a lack of confidence when addressing transgender issues in schools, many indicating they had no knowledge or experience in this area. This may be due to the relative low numbers of transgender individuals (estimated at 1/1000) having gender dysphoria, and not all of those seeking gender reassignment (GIREs, 2008). However, this figure still indicates that potentially there may be one transgender person in each school on average, which more than justifies a need for training in this area, training which, from the results of this research, appears to be completely missing from teacher education.

The majority of PGCE students felt the training they had received from their university had been inadequate and all students requested more specific training in LGBT. Most of the students reported that they had experienced no training

whatsoever in the area of LGBT. One university was reported to have offered specific training sessions over the year, yet the students' recall of this training was patchy. Training at the remaining two universities was reported as very little, or none. Some of these students recalled that the only mention of LGBT issues had been during a teaching controversial issues day. As I have argued in previous chapters, this is not the most suitable place to address LGBT issues, as they are not controversial in nature and deserve training sessions within a different segment of the course, or as a stand-alone module.

#### **7.4 Addressing the gaps**

The research indicated a number of areas within LGBT education which require further training for teachers, in order to ensure LGBT young people are treated as equal members of the school community and not discriminated against or victimised. Addressing these same areas will have the added advantage of instilling confidence into trainee teachers about dealing with LGBT situations and education when they enter into the profession. It is also hoped that by having teachers already trained in this area before they enter schools, they could train others already within the profession.

More training in this area was a requirement expressed by the PGCE students themselves. This enthusiasm and commitment to addressing some of the specific issues LGBT young people may face should be embraced by educators and used to drive this issue forward in teacher training institutions.

Meyer (2009) suggests one of the factors influencing the non-intervention in (gender) harassment is the formal influence of education and training. In regard to LGBT education, if the teacher receives no teacher training in the area of LGBT and the informal influences within the school are heterosexist, then the teacher may be less likely to deal with LGBT harassment or bullying, or see some uses of homophobic language as acceptable, in this case, the use of the word gay as an insult. However, Meyer's model can be used in more general terms than just harassment. Any effective training a PGCE student receives whilst in teacher education is likely to help that student, through both knowledge and confidence to address such issues within schools.

In regard to some more specific methods to improve LGBT education within schools, I drew upon Banks's (2004) Dimensions of Multicultural Education model, where five dimensions are conceptually different yet overlap and interact, in order to achieve successful education in this area. Each of the five dimensions could be adapted to include LGBT education, and whilst this model is aimed at schools, it could undoubtedly be introduced into teacher training programmes in order to highlight the area and alert trainee teachers to issues of heterosexism and institutionalised heterosexism, as well as offer practical strategies to improve LGBT education (see p.119).

As well as advocating the education of trainee teachers in potential heterosexism and the heteronormative nature of schools, with possible resulting homophobia, this research indicates that some specific practical solutions and knowledge are required in certain aspects of LGBT education within teacher training institutions. PGCE students in this research indicated a lack of knowledge and confidence in regard to dealing with pupils who 'come out' to them, transgender issues and confusion around the use of the term gay as an insult. Currently, the PGCE students who participated in this research, despite reporting a commitment to LGBT issues, are relying on their personal knowledge of this area. For many of these students, the responses indicate that this knowledge is not always sufficient or accurate.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 – The questionnaire**

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire.

Your responses to the following questions will help me to further understand your thoughts and opinions about training for PGCE students in LGBT issues.

You should not put your name on this questionnaire so you remain anonymous. All your answers will be confidential. You may stop the questionnaire at any time if you wish to do so.

#### Questionnaire

What gender are you (please circle)

Male      Female

What age group are you (please circle)

21-25      26-30      31-35      36-40      41-45      46-50      51-55      56-60

Are you aware of the Equality Act 2010?

If so, how would you describe it in your own words?

Describe how your university has prepared you for addressing LGBT issues in schools?

How prepared do you feel about addressing LGBT issues in your lessons?  
Please give details.

How prepared do you feel about addressing LGBT issues around the school generally? Please give details.

Which aspects of LGBT issues are you most confident about addressing? Please say why.

Which aspects of LGBT issues are you least confident about addressing? Please say why.

Do you think it is important to teach about LGBT issues in schools? Please say why.

Do you think it is important to address the physical bullying of LGBT, or perceived LGBT students? Please say why.

Do you think it is important to address the verbal bullying of LGBT, or perceived LGBT students? Please say why.

Do you think that the use of the word 'gay' to describe an object that is 'rubbish' or 'sad' should be challenged by teachers? Please say why.

How could your university improve training in LGBT issues?

Thank you very much.

## **Appendix 2 – The vignettes**

### **Scenario 1**

Whilst moving from one classroom to another during changeover time, two students pass a notice board showing details of an extra curricular book club on offer. One student points to the club notice and says to the other student 'Look at that mate, book club...how sad!' The other student replies 'Yeah, that's so gay '.

### **Scenario 2**

At the end of a lesson, a student approaches you and asks to speak to you in private. As there is it lunchtime and the classroom is not being used, you agree that now would be fine. After a period of time when the student demonstrates that they are very uncomfortable and nervous, the student finally tells you that they think they are gay. The student is a little upset and informs you that you are the only person who knows.

### **Scenario 3**

During a parents evening, a parent approaches you about a lesson which you taught recently about prejudice and discrimination. The parent expresses that whilst they agree that racism and disability prejudice are wrong, you should not be teaching that it is ok to be gay and that there is a law to prevent you from doing so. The parent threatens to inform the head teacher and the local authority if you ever teach this again.

### **Scenario 4**

During a lesson about human rights, a student makes the point that they disagree with 'X' as gay people, although can marry in some countries, should not have children as they will bring them up to be gay. The student then goes on to say that they wouldn't want to go round to 'Y's' house if the parents were gay women in case one of the parents fancied them.

### **Scenario 5**

A non-specialist citizenship teacher in your department approaches you in the staff room. They tell you that they are refusing to teach about LGBT issues and equality because they disagree with homosexuality due to their religion. They make it very clear that they find the LGBT community morally wrong and cannot teach the students otherwise.



### **Appendix 3 – The letter of consent**

Dear PGCE citizenship student,

I am currently studying for a Doctorate in Education at the University of London. The main focus of my studies so far has been citizenship education. However I have adapted my final piece of research to incorporate my specific interests in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. I wish to gain your perspectives and ideas about how well prepared you feel in addressing such issues as a teacher in schools.

In order to do this, I would like to invite you to participate in a questionnaire and a scenario activity based around LGBT issues in schools. The first activity will be a short questionnaire followed by a scenario activity which will involve you logging your reactions to certain situations. All your responses will be anonymous and your answers will be completely confidential. If, during the activity or questionnaire, you wish to withdraw from the research you may do and none of your answers will be used. Following the research, I will be offering a short training session so you can address any issues in this area. The training session will not be part of the research.

Your participation in this research will be greatly appreciated and will also help inform current research in this area. If you would be happy to take part, please fill in the slip below.

If you would like any more information about the research before you make your decision, then do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Kerry Laxton

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I am willing to participate in the research activities. I understand that my name will not be given in the research and that all my answers will be confidential. I also know that I can withdraw from the research at any time.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Appendix 4 – The script used in data collection**

Good morning/afternoon everyone. Firstly, thank you for giving up some of your day to take part in my research. My name is Kerry Laxton and I am currently studying for a Doctorate in Education at the Institute of Education, London University. I completed my Masters of Arts at the Institute of Education in 2007, which focused on citizenship education, hence why I'm with your particular course now.

The focus of my research is based around the topic of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in education. I have put on your tables a letter which I would like you to read and sign if you are happy to take part in the research. Please be careful to note, you do not have to take part and you can withdraw at any time. Also please read the section about confidentiality carefully.

(students read and sign letter)

On your tables is a questionnaire. Could you fill it out as fully as you see necessary. There is no time limit so if you finish early, please either add to your answers or just wait for the rest of the group. This needs to be completed in silence please.

(students fill out questionnaires in silence)

On your tables is a response sheet with scenarios one to five written on it. I am going to read out five real life scenarios one at a time. After each scenario, could you please write down how you would respond to it if you experienced whilst working at your school.

(I read out each scenario. PGCE students respond in writing)

Thank you for your time. I'm going to collect the paperwork in before we start the training session, which is based on the scenarios you have just responded to.

## Appendix 5 – Tabulation of questionnaire responses

### Questionnaires

#### University One

Female 11  
Male 2  
(One female student absent)

#### Ages

21-25 – 9  
26-30 – 2  
31-35 – 2

#### Aware of Equality Act?

Yes – 9  
No – 2  
DNA – 1  
Vaguely – 1

How many accurately described Equality Act out of 9 who said they were aware of it...?

6

Along the right lines....

3

Describe how your university has prepared you for addressing LGBT issues in school

Given us training on rights respecting policies. However they have not given us any specific training in this area. They haven't.

Not much.

We had a workshop on teaching diversity and looking at discrimination.

Discussed in lectures and identified some of the laws, however I believe booklets and information sheets should be provided too.

We have had lectures on how to address controversial issues.

Minimum preparation = address the issue, don't let it go. How to address the issues has not been modelled.

None!

I don't think they have given enough training. All I can remember is a brief discussion in professional studies – however the misconceptions some subject teachers held were not addressed or challenged even then.

Brief training on teaching controversial issues, however very little training on specifically addressing LGBT issues.

That it is essential to promote awareness of diversity in society. Challenge stereotypes and make students aware of laws/legislation on rights and equality.

University didn't prepare me for teaching LGBT issues. I had exposure to LGBT issues outside of academic learning but no formal training as of yet. We briefly discussed it during PGCE course.

I don't think it has done enough. We only really covered rights, equality and the appropriate use of language, and tricky balance of rights and religion.

How prepared do you feel about addressing LGBT issues in your lessons?

Personally I have a confident understanding of how I would approach the area. This would be the same way I would teach any area. However it would be useful to gain better skills on types of activities that would be appropriate. I observed a very good lesson that showed me a way I could attempt to teach the topic, so I feel slightly more prepared.

I am more prepared to teach about LGB issues than transgender.

I feel prepared to a point, but feel that some of the hard line opinions which may be brought up would be hard to challenge, especially if they are based on religious/cultural beliefs.

Due to my personal background I feel more prepared to teach these lessons, however, just from university training, not that confident.

I haven't encountered any so far so not very confident of what I would do in that particular situation.

Not prepared. When the issue arises, my heart beats so hard.

I think I would struggle and may not provide the appropriate advice/guidance to support students with these issues. I am not prepared at all. I would just try to distinguish between what my personal/professional life and explain different perspectives. I would not refuse to teach the lesson but I would find it hard.

I would hope that I could give a reasonably informed and diplomatic response – but I've had no training.

Do not feel prepared in the slightest.

Not very.

I am prepared to teach about LGBT issues. Teaching children about the effects of discrimination is very important and there is room to address a number of issues.

Not very prepared, although I have dealt with a few incidents already in SE1, mainly along the lines of 'that's gay' and religious beliefs. I still feel I'd struggle to cope with some incidents, ie knowing how to respond.

How prepared do you feel about addressing LGBT issues around the school generally?

Same way as in any lesson, with careful consideration of lesson objectives and students misconceptions. In addition, lesson content/material would be appropriately considered.

I feel I need to know more about the appropriate 'teacher language' to use in a situation.

I am prepared to teach LGBT issues in schools but I am more concerned about the attitude from students, parents and other members of staff.

I feel I would be able to address these issues but would like to feel that the school has frameworks and policies which would back up any issues I would be addressing.

Not that confident, mainly because sometimes you are not sure how far you should take the use of the term gay. It depends on other staff – would they pick it up too?

If I am ever in doubt I would always consult my HOD, but again as I have never really experienced any so not very confident.

Not prepared.

I would not know what to do.

I would hope that I could give a reasonably informed and diplomatic response – but I've had no training.

I feel comfortable in addressing this issue through a lesson around the concept of rights, however, not as confident in addressing the issue around school in general.

I'd challenge all negative behaviour/comments that are homophobic and refer any incidents to the appropriate member of staff.

I don't think I am fully prepared. I don't know the proper protocol for dealing with LGBT issues.

Better prepared than I was in SE1. Always comfortable addressing name calling and other gay references.

Which aspects of LGBT issues are you most confident about addressing?

Homophobia – confident about addressing any kind of discrimination. Understanding and empathy of this issue – support etc. PSHCE – sexual health issues.

Definitions, laws

L and G people, why they choose to be gay as well as the fight for gay rights and same sex marriages in the UK and USA.

Use of the word gay to mean something derogatory. Teaching about not discriminating against LGBT.

Societies views and changes over time. Breaking stereotypes held.

Use of language around LGBT in a discriminatory way.

Bullying – but not confident.

None. I only have basic knowledge of LGBT issues. I might use wrong/offensive language.

Issues around equality, due to my knowledge of human rights and equality laws.

LGBT rights issues.

Equality – linked to citizenship rights and media portrayal of LGBT.

Gay marriage because I have read a lot about it. Role of LGBT using famous examples of people who are LGBT and have achieved a lot.

Explaining and promoting equality in the context of citizenship lessons eg. Diversity, equality, human rights, democracy, justice.

Least confident?

Challenging of your own sexuality. Serious bullying. Staff/management discrimination.

Transsexuals. I feel I need to know more information before I try and deliver a lesson relating to this topic.

Transgender and Transsexuals

Supporting a young person coming out, unsure about next step, need training.

Laws, this is an area I would like to know more about.

When LGBT students are seeking your advice. Issues where students are very discriminative against LGBT.

Everything. I would take the LGBT issue out of the situation and deal with it as one person not being nice to another.

All.

Religious beliefs and LGBT issues.

Dealing with a pupil who may want to confide in me about their sexuality.

Laws – not very good/advanced political knowledge.

Child adoption in LGBT community – I don't know enough about it.

The religious beliefs argument.

### Important to teach about LGBT issues in schools?

All areas that can affect young people should be covered to some degree. Not an adequate excuse not to cover the area just because staff are uncomfortable or not trained.

Yes, because students may only get one view either religious or have no factual information on the issues, therefore aren't equipped with the right knowledge.

Yes! So that people become more accepting and less resisting, this could be compared to mixed marriages which were seen in a negative light 50 years ago, but is accepted by mainstream realm of society.

Yes, as young people need to be aware of some of the issues which LGBT issues have. And providing a safe environment for LGBT students.

Yes, important to break down stereotypes and support those pupils exploring their sexuality.

Yes, because we live in a diverse society. LGBT people are part of a diverse community.

Most definitely, by teachers who are able to deliver it PROPERLY.

Yes, because students may be faced with these issues and it can lead to problems in students school life. There are no clear framework/strategies to address these issues in schools.

Yes very much so. There is still a lot of homophobia amongst young people and I think it is an issue deliberately unaddressed to avoid embarrassment/confrontations.

Yes it is important to address these issues in order to raise awareness.

Yes because as a citizenship teacher it's my responsibility to make students aware of diversity and promote an equal and safe society.

Yes because it helps achieve inclusion in school and helps children who want to come out to feel safe in the school around staff and students.

Yes in the same way we deal with religion and race. This is an area that needs addressing if we are to increase equality.

### Important to address physical bullying of LGBT or perceived LGBT?

Definitely – no student should be unsupported in school for any type of bullying.

Any form of bullying needs to be addressed. Students need to know it's a form of discrimination, just like racism.

Yes! So that students can know why such behaviour like bullying is unacceptable and how to deal with bullying of students that are or seen as LGBT.

Any type of bullying has to be dealt with, the added use of LGBT as a reason to bully a child requires intervention.

Definitely, bullying is not acceptable in any circumstances, esp of LGBT. The long term effects can be devastating.

Yes because we should be teaching students to respect people irrespective of their values, beliefs, backgrounds or sexual orientation.

YES. Bullying is bullying and needs to be stamped out.

It should not be treated any different to other forms of bullying in schools. Teachers need guidance to do this.

Yes. It is important to address the physical bullying of any student, for whatever reasons.

Yes. Bullying in any form has to be addressed whether it's LGBT pupils or not.

Definitely. If it is ignored then it's almost as if we are saying it's acceptable. Just because someone is perceived to be/or is LGBT, why should they be treated differently? If it's not challenged, others will believe that action is acceptable.

Yes because it is important to address physical bullying regardless of LGBT or not. Obviously there are instances of physical bullying of LGBT students. LGBT students need to feel safe in school especially if their home is not a safe environment to be themselves.

Yes, in the same way we deal with religion and race. Although things are changing, this still needs to be highlighted to raise awareness.

### Important to address verbal bullying of LGBT or perceived LGBT?

Definitely – verbal bullying of any kind is unacceptable. All students rights are equal and should be considered.

Yes, terminology such as 'you're gay' or 'that's gay' is being used to loosely and young people are not realising the extent of what they are saying.

It is important because people use the word gay in an offensive manner or as a joke which is not correct, so it needs to be taught to change the way people feel and verbally abuse others.

Verbal bullying also needs to be dealt with appropriately and teaching about the implications of your actions.

Definitely, but I don't think it is essential to address perceived LGBT as they may be comfortable and not need to discuss it or have their sexuality highlighted.

Yes because nowadays students use language without evaluating the true meaning of what they are saying.

Yes. Words are vicious.

It should not be treated any different to other forms of bullying in schools. Teachers need guidance to do this.

Yes, because students use the terms gay and lesbian very loosely and it is not always perceived as being bad. We as teachers need to make sure it is not acceptable to use these terms loosely.

Yes. Again it is important to address the bullying of any student.

Definitely. If it is ignored then it's almost as if we are saying it's acceptable. Just because someone is perceived to be/or is LGBT, why should they be treated differently? If it's not challenged, others will believe that action is acceptable.

Yes because verbal bullying cuts deep, sometimes more than physical bullying. LGBT students need to feel they have the respect of their peers. Verbal bullying needs to be tackled to avoid disrespect of LGBT students.

Yes, in the same way we deal with religion and race. Although things are changing, this still needs to be highlighted to raise awareness.

Should using 'gay' be challenged by teachers?

Absolutely. The term is loaded with negative connotations and if it is not addressed then it reinforces this terminology and stereotypes.

Yes, teachers need to be 100% challenge students use of the word and implications related to it.

Definitely. Describing an object as gay is derogatory to someone's lifestyle and should be corrected.

This should definitely be dealt with and challenged in order to stop this.

Yes it needs to be established across all teachers so everyone is working together to tackle it or else it is pointless.

Yes because if it is not, it produces a culture of ignorance with the students as they think that the use of this word in that way is ok in and out of school.

I am not sure a language evolves so quickly amongst students.

Yes to highlight how some people can be offended by the use of the word.

Yes,. I understand that young people don't see this use of the word in the same context as homosexuality, but it gives the term a negative connotation that should not become common place.

Yes. Definitely.

Yes, it trivialises the word and makes it socially acceptable.

Yes because it implies that being gay is sad or naff. It causes pain to LGBT students to see teachers not addressing it even if the context of the word is not related to something actually being 'gay'.

Yes. Being gay should not be seen as being sad or rubbish and pupils should always be told not to use this word in such a way.

How could your university improve training in LGBT issues....

Offer specific training in the area with suggestions for learning activities and training in dealing with bullying and discrimination from particular students.

Include it in a professional studies lecture/workshop as it is a cross curricular skill teachers need.

Have workshops on how to teach LGBT issues and guest speakers to talk about how LGBT issues can be approached in the school.

Having a specific workshop to trouble shoot and look at scenarios on how to deal with them.

More scenario activities. Booklets on laws and tips. Getting someone to come in and talk about it. In turn this may identify teachers that have issues in teaching this area.

Give us strategies for talking about different LGBT issues.

Bring in specialists with workshops that involve a lot of role play.

They need to train us in LGBT issues. How to deal with the issues in schools, what are the issues students might be faced with. Inclusion of LGBT students and parents in lessons.

They could actually provide some... Protocol advice on issues that could arise would be useful.

Yes.

Workshops for a day to address possible challenges we might face and how to run units of work on LGBT issues.

Having a session on addressing discrimination in LGBT and how to achieve that in citizenship education.

Perhaps have a seminar focussed on these issues with helpful scenarios/role plays etc to help us. We need to know how to deal with such situations.

## University Two

Male – 5  
Female – 11

### Age groups

21-25 – 9  
26-30 – 3  
31-35 – 2  
36-40 –  
41-45 - 1  
46-50 - 1

### Aware of equality act?

Yes – 12  
No -  
Unsure - 4

How many accurately described the equality act of the 12 who said they were aware of it?

9

Along the right lines...

2

Describe how your university has prepared you for addressing LGBT issues on schools

I don't think we have done anything on this subject yet.

I do not feel very confident in addressing this topic.

I haven't.

None.

Only this session.

Training in how to deal with controversial issues.

Nothing specific has been done.

There has been no actual training on addressing LGBT issues but it is more to do with common sense.

Just a generic session on teaching controversial issues.

Not much. We had a session on teaching controversial issues but it was not focussed on LGBT.

Not explicitly. I've just had to use my initiative.

I am unaware of any specific workshops or lectures on this issue.

I don't feel that it has. Not explicitly anyway.

Very little.

Very little.

None.

How prepared do you feel about addressing LGBT issues in lessons?

I was a youth worker for 10 years prior to PGCE so I feel reasonably prepared, but I could definitely do with knowing more.

Not very prepared.

It's hard because I taught a lesson about different types of sexuality and most of the boys were homophobic and refused to take the lesson seriously. It was a real challenge to get them not to be homophobic in the classroom.

Not well – I only have my own thoughts on the spot in the classroom.

Moderate – touched upon it in bullying and rights and responsibilities and also identity and diversity.

I taught lessons on FIT (Stonewall) to 2 year 10 GCSE citizenship classes so now feel well prepared. Very good resources from Stonewall.

I am an open minded individual and would be willing to address the issue. This is an area I am quite passionate about having witnessed homophobia with family members/friends.

I do not feel very prepared but the aim will be to ensure that it is very wrong to discriminate against someone who is LGBT.

Not very prepared. Is it only relevant in lessons on prejudice/discrimination?

Not much. I do not know what sort of interventions I can do or which ones are appropriate/inappropriate. I just try to do what feels ok at the time.

Slightly prepared, but could do with extra training.

I feel unprepared and it is something I am nervous about.

I feel prepared in that I fully advocate LGBT rights. Also because I am quite aware of the common misconceptions and negative opinions people (especially young people) can make. Furthermore I have had many a debate about LGBT issues that have armed me with the facts.

I don't think LGBT should be an 'issue'. But unfortunately I think behaviour in schools needs to be challenged more. If behaviour management strategies are good at a school, I do not think it will be a problem in challenging any homophobic behaviour.

I am able to help the students to see different sides and attitudes towards the issues but I am not very confident in how to deal with it as a professional.

As I am comfortable with the issue I would be happy in addressing LGBT in my class. I would however like to know more of some of the legal and policy information. I am legally uninformed.

How prepared do you feel about addressing LGBT issues around the school generally?

I feel ok about it, though there is a lot of use of the word gay thrown around, so it could be hard work.

Depending on what the issue was, but generally speaking, ensuring students were not saying inappropriate things on the topic.

I always address students who throw around the word gay – however this does not really address the core issue.

Not well – I only have my own thoughts on the spot in the classroom.

Not very as I have not encountered such issues in my limited experience.

Less, but mainly because it depends more on school policies.

Happy to do it.

Confident enough to deal with issues of LGBT but a lot more research needed to deliver a lesson.

Not prepared. The urgency of this is not apparent although general sensitivity to how to treat people and each other is always present.

I feel ok. I haven't had a lesson on LGBT specifically. I haven't come across an issue relate to LGBT.

Slightly confident as I have experienced young people's views to the issues and have had to tackle them.

Very unprepared.

Less confident because I only have experience in school where I know a handful of pupils by name and nature, and I don't know the schools behaviour and punishment policy.

As an inexperienced teacher, less well prepared than in a class, but I hope to show and model that it is unacceptable behaviour.

Not very confident as a professional.

As I am comfortable with the issue I would be happy in addressing LGBT in my class. I would however like to know more of some of the legal and policy information. I am legally uninformed.

LGBT aspects most confident about addressing?

All.

People with transgender not being mistreated.

N/A

Shutting down the use of gay as a bad thing.

That it is a part of a persons identity, bullying etc.

Discrimination where clearly covered by the equality act. Also stereotypes and effect of language.

Sexual preference – I have personal experience and knowledge of how to address/tackle issues in the classroom.

Homosexuality as there is generally more information about this in the wider community.

Equality, rights and being treated fairly.

I don't know.

LGB as they are common issues in schools.

Not sure.

LGBT rights and negative attitudes.

Equality for all.

LGB issues – as I have gay friends who have experienced life being open about their sexuality.

All.

LGBT aspects least confident about addressing?

Is it nature or nurture that determines sexuality? Nobody knows this and it can make some situations difficult to deal with.

Most of this topic.

How to work with homophobic students and what to do if a student confided that he/she is LGBT.

Religious issues in the classroom.

Not sure as I have not yet been informed of all the issues surrounding it.

Issues relating to employment and issues of religion, esp Islam

Transgender – no personal experience/knowledge.

Transgender, not a topic I am aware of.

Transgender and Bisexual issues. Also what to do if a student comes out to you.

I don't know.

Transgenders.

All as I feel I have no knowledge.

Parents/adults with homophobic attitudes.

DNA.

Transsexual. I do not have any friends who are transsexual and therefore I have not discussed the experience.

Don't know.



### Important to teach about LGBT issues in school?

Yes. It's how society changes, grows and adapt through knowledge and understanding.

I think it is important to stress that all people deserve respect irrespective of their life choices.

Yes, it allows students to address different types of sexuality as schools can often emphasise straight as being the norm and gay as being the other – most students refer to being straight as being normal.

Yes, so that children can be happy and safe. Too much rubbish in the world, they don't need to add to that (the fear etc of being LGBT)

Yes as often those that do come under this category fail to get mentioned and also I have witnessed many homophobic remarks on school settings.

Yes. The word gay is banded around. The impact on gay students is not taken seriously.

Yes, in the same way people should not be judged on race/religion – it is normal and should be addressed in such a way that people don't question it.

Yes I do, even if one does not agree with LGBT, a pupil needs to be aware of these issues.

Yes, from the perspective of equal opportunities treatment.

Yes, I think that it is important because it helps dealing with discrimination, prejudice and bullying at school.

Yes it is. It is not right to treat people/discriminate against them as they are human beings with rights.

Yes, discrimination and equality is a big topic we focus on in citizenship and we need to teach pupils about how important it is that we are all equal and in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain.

Yes! As important as race and gender equality. Pupils need to be respectful, open and understanding.

Yes as a wide range of opinions exist in society.

Yes, it is a relevant and important issue in society.

Yes, though as part of wider equality issues. LGBT is just one area where inequality needs to be tackled.

### Important to address physical bullying of LGBT?

Yes. All bullying should be dealt with and never ignored!

Yes because all mistreatment is wrong.

Yes, because if it's not dealt with, LGBT students may be afraid to speak out about bullying but with the levels of homophobia I witnessed it undoubtedly occurs. Definitely needs to be addressed.

Yes, too easy not to see the physical aspect and imagine only verbal. This can lead to attitudes such as 'get over it' which aren't helpful.

I think it's important to address all types of physical bullying. It's not right to bully any type of human being.

Yes. I imagine it's a huge issue of mental health, poor self-esteem and depression issues. It is bullying and unacceptable in any terms.

Yes – address it as you would any other type of bullying.

Yes of course, it is not justifiable to discriminate against someone because they are LGBT.

Any sort of bullying needs to be addressed seriously.

I think it is important to address.

Yes because it highlights how it can affect lives of people. It is not justifiable to physically bully someone in any circumstance.

Yes because physical bullying is the worst and happened to me over supposedly being gay because a friend out of school was and we were friends.

Yes. No bullying is acceptable but abuse on this level can ruin lives.

Yes, totally and area that needs to be addressed.

Yes. I see it as being as serious as racism. Could lead to depression/self-abuse/abuse of others etc.

Yes. All types of violence in school is unacceptable. Awareness of the issues needs to be given a higher profile.

### Important to address verbal bullying of LGBT?

Yes, all bullying should be dealt with.

Yes, verbal bullying can have a huge impact on students and should not be tolerated.

Yes, kids don't realise the power of words.

Yes as this can lead to attitudes such as 'get over it' which aren't helpful.

Yes, it's a form of bullying that harms people.

Yes. I imagine it's a huge issue of mental health, poor self-esteem and depression issues. It is bullying and unacceptable in any terms.

Yes, verbal bullying is wrong.

Yes as verbal bullying can be worse than physical bullying as this is not necessarily seen by others.

Any sort of bullying should be addressed seriously.

Yes as it has emotional/social effects on LGBT students.

Yes it is. It is just as bad as being racist which is not tolerated verbally.

Yes because physical bullying is the worst and happened to me over supposedly being gay because a friend out of school was and we were friends.

Yes. No bullying is acceptable but abuse on this level can ruin lives.

Yes, it's discrimination and it's not acceptable behaviour in school or society.

Yes. I see it as being as serious as racism. Could lead to depression/self-abuse/abuse of others etc.

Yes. All types of bullying in school is unacceptable. Awareness of the issues needs to be given a higher profile.

Should using 'gay' be challenged by teachers?

Yes, but it can be tiresome. The term gay may become an unused word as the derogatory nature grows.

Yes because it could offend people.

Yes, it is associating being gay with something negative, enforcing homophobia.

Yes, if not, you perpetuate the status quo.

Yes, as you are associating gay with negative connotations.

Yes, although the Oxford English Dictionary now includes this definition of the word. It has an impact on gay pupils because of negative associations.

50/50 – children's choice of slang changes daily. Meaning of gay has changed – happy/sexuality/rubbish.

Yes it should be, especially when it does not need to be used.

Yes, because it may be offensive.

Yes, because that sort of vocabulary is demeaning. It's like saying nigger to a black student. It would not be ok for a pupil to say they had black friends, then call something rubbish a nigger, claiming they didn't mean it in a racist way, so why is it ok for a pupil to use that as an excuse to use the word gay?

Yes it should, because if it was the word nigger or paki it would be challenged in the first instance. If I called something like a computer 'paki' just because I understand paki means rubbish, would that be acceptable? No, so the same should stand for gay.

Yes, because it scares people even more afraid to come out and is the wrong word to describe the issues. The word means happy not sad.

Yes and no. Yes because it is poor use of vocabulary. No because language changes and for many pupils the word does not relate to homosexuality.

Yes, it is also unacceptable.

Yes, it suggests that gay is bad.

Yes I do. The word gay used in a negative context should not be allowed.

How could your university improve training in LGBT?

Give us some background on why it is wrong, the consequences and tactics to deal with it in every day school life.

Advise us on how to deal with sensitive/difficult situations.

Yes.

Offer more than a 30 min session.

Provide sessions on it.

Provide some.

Specific training sessions.

Have sessions on this at university and even lectures.

Inform us about how to deal/what to do in general scenarios.

A specific session could be planned and delivered. Case studies, how to respond to different situations, what sort of language should we use, how should we phrase what we want to say.

They should ensure every PGCE student teacher is trained.

Yes.

Sessions like this.

A dedicated session to help challenge negative....

Include a training session on the issue.

Have a session on the subject. Knowledge is key. What are all the issues relating to LGBT.

### University Three

Female 10  
Male 0  
(One male student absent)

#### Ages

21-25 – 6  
26-30 – 2  
31-35 – 1  
36-40 –  
41-45 –  
46-50 – 1

#### Aware of Equality Act?

Yes – 8  
No – 0  
DNA – 0  
Vaguely – 2

How many accurately described Equality Act out of 8 who said they were aware of it...?

8

Along the right lines....

1

How has the university prepared you for addressing LGBT issues?

Sessions on how to deal with LGBT issues in subject studies.

It hasn't, we watched a video on it – haven't gone through how we would attempt to teach a lesson on it.

Not in much detail. Just the basic details on the law but not really how to deal with it.

Some discussion in citizenship studies and (limited) at London Met.

Very well. Many discussions and videos surrounding issues. Particular emphasis on tackling the use of the word gay as a slur.

Watched a video, discussed some scenarios in subject studies.

Awareness of homophobic bullying session in subject studies, video.

We have had tutorials in our subject.

Subject studies with course leader on tackling homophobic bullying.

Through subject knowledge lessons time was taken to focus on homophobia in schools and identify what homophobic bullying may look like.

How prepared do you feel to address LGBT issues in lessons?

Very. I feel comfortable dealing with any issues that arise and confident handling them.

I'm happy to talk about it, would be unsure on how to go about it.

Not very prepared.

Not at all. I'm about to go into second placement and I feel I probably learnt more from experience as a TA than on course.

Positive. Enthusiastic. Have considered several strategies already. Am looking forward to challenging assumptions and helping pupils to have an open mind about the LGBT community.

Not fully – particularly in whole class discussions as pupils are encouraged to have their own opinions, so not confident on how to tackle this, other than telling them that homophobic comments are wrong (the students also know this and tell me!)

I don't think you can ever be fully prepared as each scenario is different.

I feel confident. We are a lot more open than we ever have been and most recognise that sexuality doesn't have an impact on who you are as a person.

Not particularly confident – could be better.

Not prepared enough. I would still like more guidance.

How prepared in dealing with LGBT issues around the school?

Confident to handle issues but not confident that I will have the time to deal with every issue that I see/hear around school.

With staff in the staff room I don't mind. Happy to stop kids using word gay for everything. I don't feel comfortable doing a whole assembly on it but that goes for any subject really.

Not very prepared.

Not very. Will look at school rules and behaviour management/pastoral care and will talk to mentor at school about it.

Need to read up – Stonewall etc.

Positive. Am happy to consider workshops and INSET days around the subject, to help address the school ethos and help prepare staff to deal with tackling LGBT issues (ie bullying, that's gay etc)

Only in terms of giving rule reminders for inappropriate comments, also it is not consistent with other teachers as some let it just pass, which makes it harder to tackle.

At this stage not comfortable until settled in school, same for all behaviour issues. When settled, very.

Not very confident. I need to find out about the school policy.

Not very sure about addressing LGBT issues.

Not prepared enough.

LGBT issues most confident with addressing?

Homophobic bullying, common misconceptions.

Lesbian and gay – not sure about how to deal with transsexuals. Maybe a lack of understanding.

The law.

Possibly homophobic language as it's easy to identify and challenge amongst pupils.

All. Very close to many LGBT people, very comfortable discussing issues and have real life experience with friends to back up my knowledge.

I wouldn't say there is one area that I am more confident with.

Laws - based on degree knowledge. Equality and disrespectful language – personal views.

All aspects. I grew up in a very open society and have no issues about addressing LGBT issues.

Right to be treated equally, right not to be discriminated against purely on basis of sexuality.

Homophobic comments, LGBT bullying.

LGBT issues least confident with addressing?

DNA

Transsexuals. Lack of understanding.

Bullying.

Challenging homophobia in a school culture which does not challenge homophobia.

Any issues where I am presenting as the expert above and beyond what LGBT people might say about themselves ie if I claim that being gay = born that way, yet I have gay friends who say they chose to be gay.....they know best.

Whole class situations as previously explained, balanced between opinion/homophobia.

Transgender – lack of knowledge only legal.

Transgender. I know very little about this area.

LGBT in church as priests.

LGBT students confiding in teachers. I would not know how to deal with this situation more effectively.

Important to teach LGBT issues in schools?

Yes. It means children leave school with a better understanding of people and can lead to more social harmony.

Yes, I believe in equality for all. Not everyone agrees with everyone, but there should be respect and dignity for all.

Being confident in what you believe without having to be tormented for it.

Yes – equality.

Yes, because a lot of children are brought up in homophobic families. It's cruel not to support those who might be gay as they grow up.

Very! To combat ignorance, to include LGBT youngsters and because any discussion of society should include all members of that society.

Very, as inappropriate/homophobic comments should not be tolerated or ignored, as what often happens. Other pupils will then feel this behaviour is acceptable and gay/lesbian students will be affected.

Yes, equality/awareness/transient society.

Yes, we need to talk about discrimination on all levels in order to address it.

Yes, to prepare pupils for life out of school. One can have opinions but they can't be based on ignorance.

Yes, to highlight homophobia and stamp out prejudice and discrimination.

Important to address physical LGBT or perceived LGBT bullying?

Yes. No child should ever be bullied or made to feel inferior by anyone else because of their sexuality. Better education leads to less ignorance which leads to better acceptance.

Yes!! Unfair for anyone. No one should be subjected to that kind of treatment.

Yes – nobody should be physically harmed for any reason.

Yes of course. Any bullying is totally unacceptable. Need to address why the bullies have targeted LGBT (do they have issues that need to be explored?)

Very. First, it is important to tackle any bullying for any reason, Secondly because LGBT individuals will often face further bullying outside school and possibly assault/murder. Needs to be addressed to change attitudes and hopefully have knock on effect in society. Also give students safe space and suitable learning environment.

Any type of bullying should be tackled consistently.

Yes, all physical bullying should be addressed.

Yes. Teenagers can be very cruel to each other and physical bullying is also a crime.

Yes. Pupils need to put themselves in the position of others. Ask students – is it really that terrifying knowing someone in your school is gay? Pupils need to accept that outside of school particularly in workplaces one can face disciplinary action for homophobic comments.

Yes as bullying comes in many different forms. Students need to recognise all forms of bullying are wrong.

Important to address verbal LGBT or perceived LGBT bullying?

Yes – same as before, can be very offensive.

Yes – again I hate bullies and can't stand for it against anyone for any reason.

Yes - this could be more upsetting and occurring more often and can go unnoticed.

Yes – unpleasant and perpetrates a culture of intolerance.

It wears you down. Constant association of gay = negative. Important to analyse language for what it says about power and oppression in society.

Yes as any type of bullying should not be tolerated or seen as a joke which some students claim.

Yes – all verbal bullying should be addressed.

Yes, bullying of any sort is wrong and it should be addressed accordingly.

Yes, pupils are well aware of what they are doing and need to be corrected and told how mean it is to continually verbally abuse.

Yes, to highlight another form of LGBT bullying.

Using word gay should be challenged?

Yes, it is not acceptable as it infers homosexuals are rubbish or sad.

Yes! Something I like to think I do, just so it removes the negative use of the word.

Yes - otherwise it would seem acceptable and could lead to other name calling.

Yes – because it is inherently homophobic.

Always. Should be seen as completely unacceptable in all circumstances – like racist slur.

I don't think all students use the word meaning to be offensive but it should be challenged because it's offensive to gay people as it infers that gay is rubbish.

Yes – and if done consistently by all, will prevent word being used.

It depends on the context in which the word is being used. Words evolve...gay word has evolved – happy to homosexuality to naff.

To be honest, not sure. Feels like nit-picking and pupils will carry on saying it regardless.

Yes.

How could university improve LGBT training?

More sessions on it.

Spend more than an afternoon. Talk about what transsexuals are – mind set, is it confusion? Science behind it so we can understand it better.

More sessions on how to deal with it in real life cases.

Give us sessions like this.

Could give more sensitivity training in handling issues of religion and sexuality.

Give more examples and scenarios.

Whole cohort training – not just for citizenship trainees.

They could do a lecture on it.

Not sure.

Details of methods in how to deal with numerous LGBT issues and ways in which we as teachers can be consistent with this.



## Appendix 6 – Tabulation of vignette responses

### University One

#### Scenario 1

**Tell student that comment is inappropriate, respect everyone and understand that it shouldn't be an insult to be gay.**  
**Ask student why they said it and what they meant by calling an object gay.**  
**Tell them not to use the word in a derogatory manner as it is a matter of someone's choice and that it's just as bad as being racist/sexist.**  
**Question use of word gay. Explain implications of the word and how it can be seen as discriminatory. Ask how someone who is LGBT would feel.**  
**Correct terminology of the word, identify that it is inappropriate. However, this is an ideal – I may just let it slip and carry on walking as I wouldn't want any come back on me ie – think I was gay**  
**Tell student we don't use that word in school in that context and that it is inappropriate.**  
**Continue walking as gay is not being used offensively amongst young people at the moment. If he said it loud, maybe I would say 'gentlemen move on'.**  
Point out that it is not boring and that some people actually enjoy reading. Also point out the bad use of the term gay, saying it might offend people.  
**Ask student what they meant by term gay. Remind them that using a term like that in a derogatory way is inappropriate and could upset other people.**  
**Confront pupil and explain that what they said was offensive.**  
**Explain to student that what they have said is inappropriate and could be offensive to others. Explain they need to think carefully about their choice of words.**  
**Ask them to come and see me at lunch. Take names and inform HOY if they didn't show up. I would not shout at them, but get them to explain themselves and tell them why they shouldn't be saying those kinds of things.**  
**Speak to the pupil and remind them that it's inappropriate to use such terms inside and outside of school.**

#### Scenario 2

**I don't feel confident in my knowledge/experience/training in being able to handle this situation.**  
**Tell them I would need to take this to the CPO, but the student could continue talking to me if they felt comfortable.**  
**Before talking to the student let them know that whatever is said has to be passed on. I will also send student to the CPO to talk as well as support them.**  
**Discuss with the student that they can access groups in the community which can help people who are gay come out. Explain that I am willing to support them in this and help link up with the organisations or counselling service in school who they can talk to about how to deal with telling people.**  
**State that I can't promise confidentiality. Talk to the pupil, reassure them, ask questions like are they in a relationship, bullying, could they discuss with their parents. Identify other members of staff or organisations they can turn and talk to. Inform my HOY or mentor. Follow up and discuss at a later date.**  
**Tell student that what is being said you will have to pass on, but listen to what the student would like to express on the situation.**  
**Ask 'why are you upset?' Comfort student within professional boundaries. Continue to talk unless student raises issues of harm, when I shall have to stop him and say I have to tell.**  
Explain about CP issues whilst calming them down. I would suggest that there are specialists in the area who they can talk to who can offer them more info/guidance on the topic.  
**Ask them what they would like me to do eg. Do they need support in telling other people? Would they like more information on being gay and how to approach coming out and accepting it? The focus would be on trying to enable them to be comfortable with the situation.**  
**I have absolutely no idea, maybe refer pupil to someone or organisations who specialise in advising pupils, not sure.**  
**Explain that they shouldn't be upset or worried but also explain that you will have to let CPO know as it's in their best interests. Explain that as a teacher you have to do what is best for them and by letting someone know you are acting in their best interest.**  
**Tell them that I am here to support them and I would tell him/her that I have to inform the CPO who will keep it confidential.**  
**Try to calm them down but say that as it's clearly upset them, I will need to inform other staff at the school (as it may impact other lessons).**

### Scenario 3

Respond to the parent with more information about the rights respecting educational policy. But I would also be looking to SLT with support in this area.

It is not against the law to teach these topics and their comments could be. Teachers are to cover such topics and you are more than welcome to take it further.

It is my responsibility as a teacher to teach about all rights and that there is nothing against the law about teaching gay rights. I would also give the parents examples of where gay rights have been protected and legalised gay unions in the UK.

It is an issue which is part of the teaching in discrimination and it is important for young people to be taught about the implications of discrimination on any group. There is no law against it!

Identify it is a human right and essential in their learning. Society should treat everyone as equals and this must be established in schools. I would suggest if they have any further problems to discuss it with the head as it will continue to be taught in schools and lessons.

Tell the parent that it is part of citizenship education to make children aware of their rights, equality and diversity. In order to help them become informed citizens.

“Go ahead, the principal/head is right there”. I know I would have prepared such a lesson with care and thought to avoid such an instance so would be quite happy to defend my corner.

Sat that firstly this is not true or the place to bring up such a matter and take them aside with my HOD (if I had time or arrange another appointment) to address the issue. I would point out that it is not illegal – people need to explore diversity.

The issue of discrimination is written in the curriculum and the law. It is illegal to treat anyone differently based on their sexual preference, therefore teachers have a duty to convey this message of understanding, acceptance and equality to their students. If they are still unhappy I would encourage them to speak to a senior member of staff.

I have no idea what to do.

Explain that the issue of homosexuality is not illegal and that it is important that students are aware of diversity. Give them the option of discussing it with SMT but explain that controversial issues are an essential element of their child's learning. Explain that education them is not forcing them to be homosexual but making them comfortable and aware of the differences.

Tell them to go to the HOD or headteacher because I will be teaching it and I don't want to argue with them. They can take their complaint to SMT.

I would stay calm (shocked!) and say I understand they have their personal opinion about things in life, but that the school (and government) state to teach equality across the curriculum and that I'd be happy to discuss with the Head and LEA.

### Scenario 4

Ask the student to stay behind and have a private conversation explaining that regardless of your or others sexuality, you should feel safe around adults. I would clear up those misconceptions and clarify these.

Why would the parents bring them up gay? Also why would one of the parents fancy you?

Tell student that what he has said is inappropriate and stereotyping against gay people is not right. I would also sanction him/her to let them know that such comments are not acceptable.

Explain that this is not the case and that you cannot bring someone up to be gay. Also that the likelihood that a gay man would fancy a young person just because he is gay is a ridiculous assumption.

State the response is not acceptable. Identify the human rights and laws around this, ask pupil to stay behind after class (to discuss this further with him and identify errors and opinions).

Tell that student that whilst we do appreciate all students' opinions, their opinion is not based on any facts and is therefore not appropriate

“That is not appropriate” I would have to dissect what was said to explore the ignorance and deal with the misconceptions.

Point out that you can't say that as gay people are not like that. I would also speak to him at the end of the lesson to address the issue.

Encourage the student to research the issue of gay couples bringing up children. I would also ask him to think about what he is saying, its discriminatory manner and the way this could have an effect on the people around him – it could be harmful.

Conduct a lesson on preconceptions/misconceptions to address pupils concerns, this may highlight the opinions of other pupils.

Get the student to explain why he felt this could be an issue. What makes him think that the parent or homosexual person would be attracted to them? Raise issues of prejudice and stereotypes and get the student to think about problems these cause in other issues such as racism, xenophobia etc

Talk to the child, say they need to think about what they are saying and how it is untrue. I don't know what else I could do without being insulting or condescending.

Try to stay calm (!) and open it up to the class pupils to discuss whether they agree/disagree with the reasons given (this is a very hard scenario!) Try and add some 'science' from me as the teacher and focus on equality issues.



## Scenario 5

**Suggest to SLT that they needed to send this member of staff on training to be more tolerant of others amongst other things.**

**You are in the wrong profession. You are not allowed to bring your own points of view into a class. You need to put your own points of view aside.**

**I would tell her not to teach citizenship as citizenship is all about inclusion.**

**Explain that it is an important aspect of the teaching about discrimination and ask her if she would prefer me to take over this lesson.**

**Identify that this is an issue as equality is essential in the work place. Inform your HOD and that it needs to be addressed. Personally I would not want her to teach this area as there may be bias in her teaching approach.**

**Teachers have to be objective irrespective of their beliefs.**

**I understand your concern, however as a professional you are required to depersonalise the delivery of your lessons.**

**Now if you need support in delivering the lesson I can arrange a TA and book you on training in the topic.**

**Explain that as teachers we need to be able to distinguish between our professional and personal life. Teaching someone about it does not mean you have to believe in an issues. As citizenship teachers you can identify/highlight different perspectives to how an issue can be viewed.**

**Explain to the member of staff that I would need to refer the issue to a more senior member of staff given the responsibility of her role as a teacher and the discriminatory nature of her comments.**

**I have no idea.**

**Speak to the teacher and explain that it is an essential part of the curriculum and by her refusing, she could be promoting discrimination. Tell her to observe other teachers teaching the topic so she can see that the lesson isn't about promoting homosexuality but promoting acceptance and diversity - ask her how she would feel if someone refused to engage with her because of her religion/race/ethnicity.**

**I don't know what I would do. Maybe tell him/her that it is not something she can opt out of. If she fails to comply then inform SMT. She doesn't necessarily have to believe in those views but she has to educate the children on LGBT.**

**Speak to her at first, outlining why it needs to be taught and that if she can't teach the area, she shouldn't be teaching at all. If she refuses, I'd go to the HOD/head teacher. She must teach it (I think!!) if it's in the POS.**

## University Two

### Scenario 1

Ask what they mean by gay. Explain it is a word used to put down homosexual people and that it isn't ok. However, if I were feeling tired or jaded I would ignore it.

Depends on the situation – either say “please don't say comments like that, it is not appropriate” or I may just ignore it, especially if they are the sorts of pupils who are likely to challenge me back for defending LGBT.

Tell the student that it is not appropriate to use the word gay when talking about something they don't like.

Speak to boys in corridor “Boys I don't think it's an appropriate thing to say in school”. Depending on context, take child into an empty classroom to explain that gay isn't a bad thing and its use in that way could offend others.

Comment on how it was an inappropriate usage of the term. Explore the term usage in lessons.

“That's not appropriate language. If you don't understand what it means, come and have a chat with me after school”.

Why is it gay? Explain that it's not the best phrase to use, could be offensive to some. Need to be more considerate of others feelings.

Call pupil over and ask “why have I called you over?” Explain to pupil such terms are offensive to use and in future should I hear it again, they'll be consequences.

Use the behaviour management system for outside the classroom eg – verbal warning and say why it's given.

Say the language you used is not appropriate, express your opinions in a more appropriate and articulate way.

Tell student that it is inappropriate and offensive to use that term in that manner.

That is not the word that really describes the meaning of what they are getting at and in the dictionary they should find another word. But in a light hearted manner and only if I knew them.

Challenge the attitudes towards the book club. I wouldn't necessarily challenge the use of the term gay unless it's related to a person.

Challenge behaviour, homophobic comment is not acceptable, sanction student according to school policy.

Tell student it is inappropriate language and tell them to see you after school for a discussion about his comments.

Call student over and explain why that use of language is not appropriate. I would also ask the student to give me his/her name so I could inform the tutor.

### Scenario 2

Explain that the information they give me is confidential. Explain they can come and talk to me but that there are people who would be more experienced or better to talk to. Give them details of local LGBT youth group and encourage/support them to contact that group.

I honestly would not know what to say. I would want to know why they were upset and what concerned them.

Unsure.

“I'm glad you felt you could come and talk to me about this”? “Why do you feel like I'm the only person?” Document conversation. Keep door open so not too private.

Give a positive response and show empathy towards the students especially as this is a huge step for them. I would either research on how and what I could do to help the student with this unless I felt I couldn't help and then I would ask the child if I can break the confidence to ask someone else for help.

“OK – that's really good that you've told me”. Suggest it may be good to talk to some other people in similar situations about what this means and how you could handle it (eg thinking about your family) Try and find out information about support groups, websites etc. Consider referral to CP team if any concern about them.

Try and understand why they are consumed with panic. Assure them that you won't say anything. Remain supportive and try and address the issues they raise. External support groups for additional support and mentoring.

Tell them there is nothing wrong with being gay and if he wants to talk about it with me now or at a later date then he can do. Also if he wants to speak to someone else like a school guidance counsellor to just be able to share his concerns when I am not available.

Ask if they would like to talk about it at the end of the school day or whether they would like to receive support from the guidance counsellor on how to deal with their identity.

Comfort student, say that he/she shouldn't be worried or embarrassed because it is not something he/she should be. Also I would direct him/her to talk to somebody at school who has responsibility/expertise in that area. Maybe counselling service?

Talk to the student about the process of becoming older and emotionally aware of feelings and relationships. Tell him it is natural to feel uneasy about new changes in life.

Get tissues, stress that this will remain confidential as long as they are not in danger. I would tell them that I have gay friends and I grew up in an area where it was frowned upon but that I didn't care because you are who you are and true friends value that. I would offer weekly meetings to talk.

I would assure them that their feelings are perfectly natural and that I would never judge them. I'd tell them that loads of people in the world are gay and that it's perfectly acceptable and nothing to be ashamed about. If they are still nervous, I would imagine (but not question) that it had to do with other people reactions ie, parents, friends. I would invite them back for a talk later.

Support student. It is not a crime to be gay. You do not need to take further action as it is not a CP issue, but if student connects it with bullying then raise with other members of staff/SMT.

Talk to student but leave the door open. Tell the student that you are happy to talk to them about it but make it clear that if they disclose anything of great concern, you will have to inform someone else ie CPO.

“OK, it's fine that you've told me, what would you like me to do? I'm always here to talk” Difficult scenario.

### Scenario 3

Take a hard line with the parent. We do not discriminate against homosexuals, full stop. Invite them to speak with the head, explain complaints procedure.

Ask my mentor for advice. Tell the parent that their concerns will be taken into account.

Explain to the parent that the curriculum requires me to educate young people about tolerance and focusing on homosexuality is an important part of this. Homophobia is an issue that needs to be addressed, as no student should be targeted simply because they are gay.

Apologise that they feel this way. As a non-affiliated religious school we are obliged to teach these issues according to the local PSHE curriculum, however parents are advised to withdraw their children in writing from lessons which they are not comfortable with.

Refer this situation to a senior member of staff.

Calmly explain to the parent that there is no such law and in fact the opposite is true. The equality act requires LGBT students to be treated equally. It is a duty of the school as a public body to make sure gay people are not discriminated against. Parent is welcome to speak to head teacher.

Explain that we do not promote one sexual preference or another. However the need to explain both sides to every story is part of the job. Sexual discrimination/prejudice is no different to racial prejudice and needs to be addressed equally. Also affects young people who may be confused – it is a transitional age.

Speak to the head teacher, but tell parents they are entitled to their opinions but it is my duty to ensure all pupils are aware of the different types of discrimination out there and if they have an issue with it then speak to the head teacher and there is no laws prohibiting me from teaching this.

As a teacher and fully aware of legislation about teaching such issues, can clarify with parent what is within the framework of the NC.

It's ok to be gay and this topic is taught not only by myself but other teachers in the school. Feel free to inform whoever you want to. I would also remind the legal aspect of this issue.

Explain that it is my duty to teach about diversity and that we are entitled to be treated equally as human beings and not victims of discrimination.

I'm afraid I disagree with you completely and how people are bullied, discriminated, beaten and killed because of this issue so if they wish to complain I will assist in arranging a meeting.

If you would like to withdraw your child from parts of the curriculum then they should take it up with the HOD or head teacher.

Try to defuse the situation, but explain the topic is important to educate young people about. Ultimately if the parent wishes to complain, deal with the complaint with the head. Do not concede to intimidation.

Tell the parent that there is no law about teaching homosexuality and it is ok and acceptable. Invite them to come in and have a meeting with them and other interested parties ie SMT and PSHE and C teachers, campaigners etc

Inform SMT/head of the incident. I would correct the parent by saying that there is not such a law. Basically I would take the complaint away and pass on the information – there is no point in having an argument.

#### Scenario 4

Open up a discussion in the class about whether homo/heterosexuality is genetic or driven by nurture. Have a poll in the class about how many pupils fancy everyone of the opposite sex and explain being gay doesn't mean you fancy everyone of the same sex either!!

Tell the child that it is inappropriate for them to make such comments. I would try and explain that despite a couple being gay it would not necessarily mean they can't be good parents.

Gay people will not impose sexuality, in the same way a straight person wouldn't. If you take that reasoning, then you would never go to anyone's house as you would worry a father would hit on you. No adult should hit on a child, regardless on sexuality.

"In citizenship all opinions are valid but you must justify your opinions with fact and evidence, not just assumptions or feelings" then ask class if anyone can think of evidence or examples to rebut the students comments. You could use this also as a point to make some wild stereotypes about pupils in the room, which can lead to discussion about why stereotyping is wrong.

That is the same as saying that a female student won't go to a straight dad's house, perhaps show this comparison.

Emphasize there is no evidence you can 'make a child gay'. Many gay people grow up in straight families. Why would she assume the gay mum fancies her? Does she think every straight dad fancies her??

Accept that everyone is entitled to their opinion and try to ease out why they hold that view. Explain that sexual preference is personal choice and not something you can catch. Homosexual people have heterosexual parents.

Would she be worried about having her straight friends dad fancying her?

Let comment go in the class to avoid confrontation with other pupils. Ask pupil to stay behind after lesson then speak to her about her comments. I would also inform tutor about these comments to ensure there is no future confrontation with other pupils.

Clarify that in a human rights lesson we learn to appreciate the rights entitled to every person, including the freedom to express themselves. Question students views on whether or not their opinions are prejudiced and what affect that has on human relations.

What you are saying is an example of stereotyping and prejudice. I would give examples that disagree with her point of view. I would also say that sexuality is not determined by upbringing, it's something natural. Also ask her if she'd go to her house if her parents were straight.

Explain that it doesn't work like that and homosexual couples are just as able at bringing up a child as other people. It's like saying a heterosexual couple could fancy her if she went there – nothing to do with gender.

That answer is totally unacceptable and demand an apology in front of the class. We will look into the opinions next lesson to show that gay parents are no different.

Acknowledge the response and remind the class that citizenship lessons are a place where ideas and thoughts can be expressed and discussed. But I would then remind them that offensive comments will not be tolerated so I'd give the pupil a chance to rephrase her comments before explaining that homosexuality does not work that way.

Challenge prejudice but aim to educate student. Sanctioning the student for disrespectful comments may backfire and simply entrench views. Educating about prejudice is the solution.

Either – open it up to debate/discussion and maybe include myself in the debate, why would this be a problem just because they are gay. Or, stop that specific train of thought and discuss it with the student/other students concerned after the lesson.

Engage with the first point and dismiss the second. I would correct the student on her position. Therefore I would have an LGBT session in one of my future classes.

## Scenario 5

I would check the schools equal ops policy with reference to exclusions around religious beliefs to see if this is permitted. Seek advice from my manager on how to take it forward from there.

Seek advice from other members of staff. I would advise the person to leave their personal preferences and religious ideas aside and teach it objectively.

Just because you have your own views, you should not be imposing these on students. You are there to teach, not dictate.

Speak to HOD, or if I am HOD, speak with teacher to discuss if problems could be resolved or find a different teacher to teach module.

Take the lesson, or tell the teacher that you are teaching about a certain lifestyle and not promoting/pushing it upon students.

I would have to acknowledge his right to his own religious views. I would probably make clear I disagree and don't think any religion justifies. I would wonder if his contract of employment allows him to do this given that promoting equality is a duty of public bodies.

Offer to take class for him. Personal opinion should not dictate how subject content is delivered. The need is to present a balanced view is paramount to helping create balanced non-discriminatory individuals. Entitled to their opinion, but should not bully/infect that view as the only perception.

Teaching topics is not about him or his beliefs and it is not about whether homosexuality of right or wrong but ensuring pupils are fully aware of the issues surrounding it.

As that another teacher may deliver lessons on LGBT issues instead as you want staff comfortable with what is being taught.

It's not acceptable, whatever his religious beliefs are, he has to respect others. I would ask him to empathise....what would you think if I told you RE should not be taught as I find your religion 'disgusting'. I would also make a formal complaint as it's discrimination.

Take into consideration his religious beliefs, but to refer to homosexuals as disgusting is highly unacceptable and makes me question their professionalism.

That's perfectly acceptable and I would find another teacher to take that lesson. However, I would also make sure they know I am unhappy with their views and if they mention this to the pupils I will seek for them to be out of my department – minimum.

Acknowledge his religious reasons for not wanting to teach LGBT issues and equality. But I would then lodge a complaint/report about the teachers' discriminatory comments.

Difficult to handle. However, ultimately teacher should not teach a lesson. If a teacher cannot teach without being impartial, or without being prejudice then they should not teach at all.

Not entirely sure! Suggest teacher doesn't teach the lesson? Or explain that it is a subject that is set in the school agenda and you have to teach it, unemotionally?

I don't think I'd really engage. I'd report the comments to my line manager, school policy, legal aspects would have to come into it.

## University Three

### Scenario 1

Stop the child and explain that his remarks were inappropriate. Ask him to apologise. Pass his name onto his form tutor and explain the incident to them.

Stop them and tell them to think about what they were saying.

Ask what they understand by the word gay? What is it meant to mean?

Stop student and ask them to explain comment. Ask why it may be inappropriate. Tell them that homophobic language is unacceptable.

Stop students and ask them to repeat it. Ask them to come see me at lunchtime/detention. Discuss hate speech with them.

Rule reminder for inappropriate language/comment.

Ask child what they mean. Explain word gay can be used as happy or gay in sexuality so which did he mean. Follow school sanction for inappropriate language.

Ask pupil whether he knows what the word means and reprimand him accordingly. I will explain that it is inappropriate to use such words.

Ignore the comment probably (honestly).

Stop the student, inform him that his comment was inappropriate. Get him to reflect on how this would make another student/gay student feel.

### Scenario 2

Tell child that there is no need to be sad or upset. He should feel comfortable with who he is. Reassure child that I won't tell anyone else. The situation is in his control. Offer support if he needs it.

Tell them there is nothing wrong with how they felt. If it was a CP issue, I would say that I need to pass information on if they were at risk. Pass on some advice leaflets or someone they could talk to about it because I wouldn't know how to relate to it.

Ask if they want to talk about it and support from outside independent bodies. Is it just something they want to talk about or are there any problems?

Tell them it's good that they've told me. That it's a brave first step. Offer to get them reading material. Gently find out how certain they are. Point them in the direction of someone who is gay/lesbian on the staff and might be able to offer more help – or local youth group. Talk about how/when to discuss with family/friends.

Reassure them that it's ok, that there's nothing wrong with being gay. Ask if they have/would speak to someone else ie trusted family member or join a support group for young gay adults.

Ask them to come back at another time, then ask someone for help on dealing with this situation.

Reassure child not to be nervous or upset and explain you are happy to talk to them but maybe should consider telling friend/family member.

I will ask him how he knows he's gay. I will try and get more information from him eg. How his family would react if they found out. I will seek his permission to speak to pastoral about the issue. I will also say he can come and speak to me.

It's ok, you have a right to feel how you do. Don't apologise for who or what you are. It's not your goal in life to please other people. I understand this is difficult but don't put yourself down. I would then inform SENCO to be aware of possibility of bullying.

Ask if student feels confident enough to also confide in family members, close friends. Reassure student that they have nothing to be ashamed of.

### Scenario 3

Respond politely but firmly that what I am teaching is well within the curriculum and if he would like to make a complaint to the head teacher he can, but for now, please leave.

Assure them that whatever is being taught was in accordance with the NC. I would probably refer them to a HOD or head teacher.

If there is a problem then the parents should speak to the head about it and it is something that they can exclude their child from if they are uncomfortable. However the lessons will carry on for everyone else.

Respond that it is not illegal to discuss issues relating to sexuality – PSHE statutory provision. Offer to provide information for parents. Explain that student has an entitlement, but that parents concerns will be passed to HOY.

Advise that you have the full backing and support of the head teacher/LEA. Ask them why they think it is wrong. Point out that many people are bullied in school/workplace for being gay, and that they wouldn't want their child to be bullied. Advise that the law protects on the basis of discrimination due to sexuality.

Explain to parent that what is being taught is within the school curriculum, that the school does not tolerate/encourage racist/homophobic attitudes. Refer them to SMT.

Remind parent of the equality act and correct law and welcome them to have conversation with head teacher regarding the NC.

Seek advice from the head teacher. There may be a complaint in the process. Discrimination of any type is wrong and I'll try to explain that to the parent. Also it is part of the NC.

I'm not enforcing any personal views on the child. Raising awareness of LGBT. Discrimination isn't tolerated in the real world of work. Many people have beliefs that don't support LGBT but it is not illegal to be taught about the issues that surround that community of people. I'm not insisting any personal view to influence.

I would be taken aback by the parents comment and inform them that as part of citizenship education NC guidelines students must learn about issues of prejudice and discrimination. Direct parent to make a formal complaint to the head teacher.

### Scenario 4

Tell child that what she has said is a matter of opinion, not fact. Ask her to do some research on the matter looking at gay/lesbian adoption to broaden her knowledge. Tell her we can have a discussion at a lunch time once she has fully researched issue.

Tell class everyone is entitled to opinions but some things can hurt or offend people and should not be said and not even thought of in that way.

Ask them why they feel like this and what makes them think this would happen. If the other child is there then ask them to apologise and explain the consequences.

Ask whether the class can provide reasons why that comment might infringe on the human rights of another student. Reminder that all comments should be made with an awareness of impact on rest of class. Suggest that the comment is offensive. Ask student to wait behind and talk.

Ask if they are only straight because their parents are straight? They will probably say no. Then ask if gay people were raised by straight parents too? They will probably say yes. Say that it doesn't matter what your parents sexuality is, you will make up your own mind. In regards to the mum fancying her, does she worry about her friends dads fancying her? How is that different?

Ask student to give reasons for attitude, explain that homophobic comments are the same as racist comments, which the school does not tolerate.

Remove child from classroom as a last resort – would begin by telling views are inappropriate and unkind and explain how out human rights are equal for everyone. If child refuses, then remove them.

Stop the lesson to have a class discussion. I will do this as it is a serious issue and I will probe the student to tell me why they think the way they do. I will then give some scenarios, but in a heterosexual context and ask the pupil if she would refuse to go to the straight friend's house.

"Get over yourself – highly unlikely! That's like saying someone's dad will fancy you automatically just because you are a girl. You can have your own personal views on the LGBT community but be realistic in your reasoning."

Let the student know that what they have said is inappropriate and prejudiced. Talk to the student after the lesson about the views they have expressed.

## Scenario 5

He should not impose his personal opinions on others. If he feels uncomfortable teaching because of his religious views then this is fine, but please do not share your personal prejudice or opinions with others as they could find them offensive.

When you signed up for the job, you knew you had to teach these issues – sex ed. Check if he's has the choice of opting out. Probably would even tell him it's sick to have views like that in this day and age.

Explain the importance of sticking to the scheme of work and if there are any issues to speak to someone further up.

Refer to HOD. Say this person is not appropriate for a teacher of this subject. If the teacher is still going to teach citizenship, arrange to replace him/her for these lessons.

Warn him that this is unacceptable conduct/speech and that he is jeopardising his position in the school. Advise that you will speak to the head teacher. If I was gay, I might well think about instigating a complaint about harassment/bullying on the basis of sexuality.

Go for help.

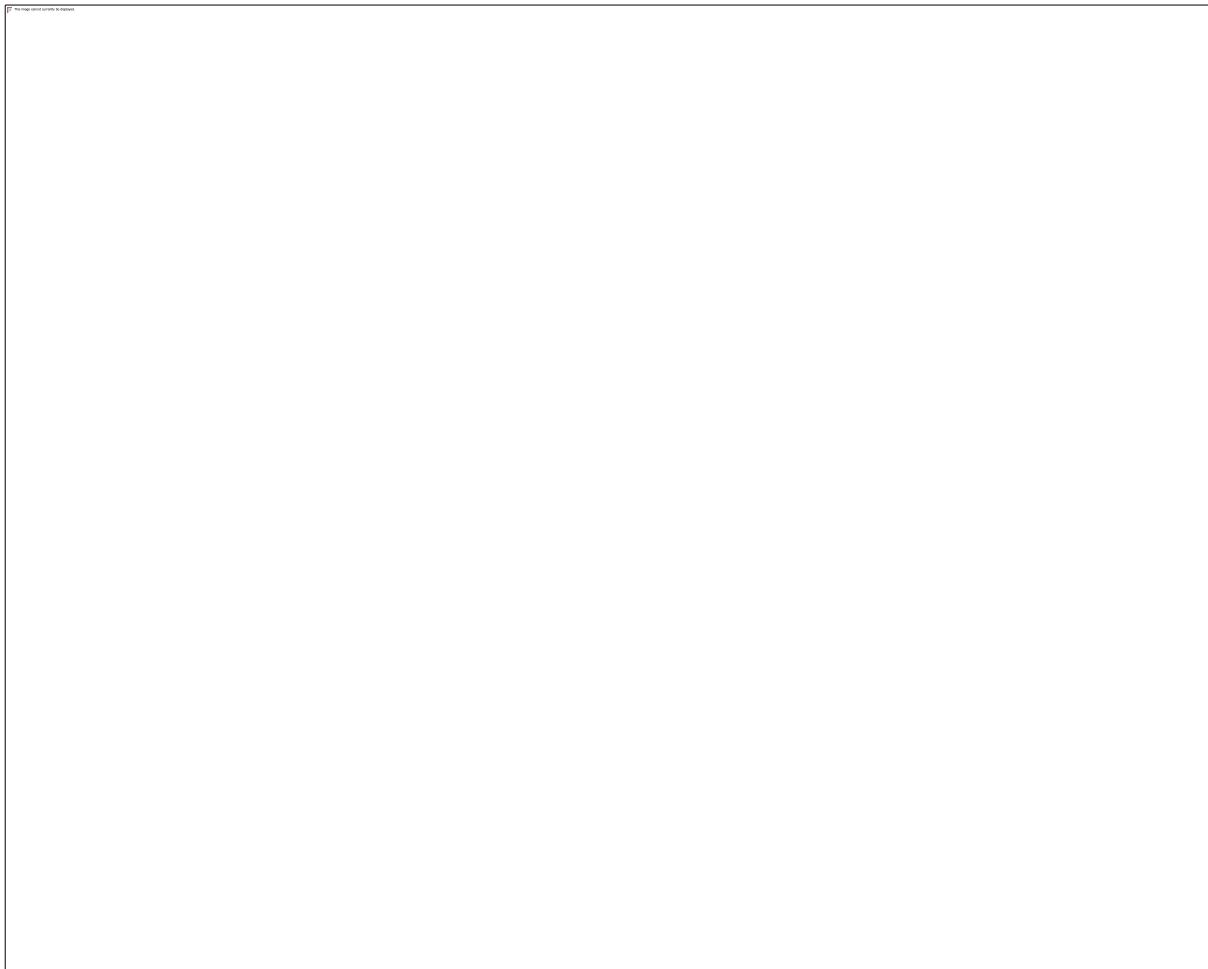
Encourage by explaining that they are not teaching that it's ok to be gay, but can teach about the laws on it, religious views on it. Use 'concepts' through 'processes' to teach different views/opinions but respect we show to LGBT. If it fails then refer up.

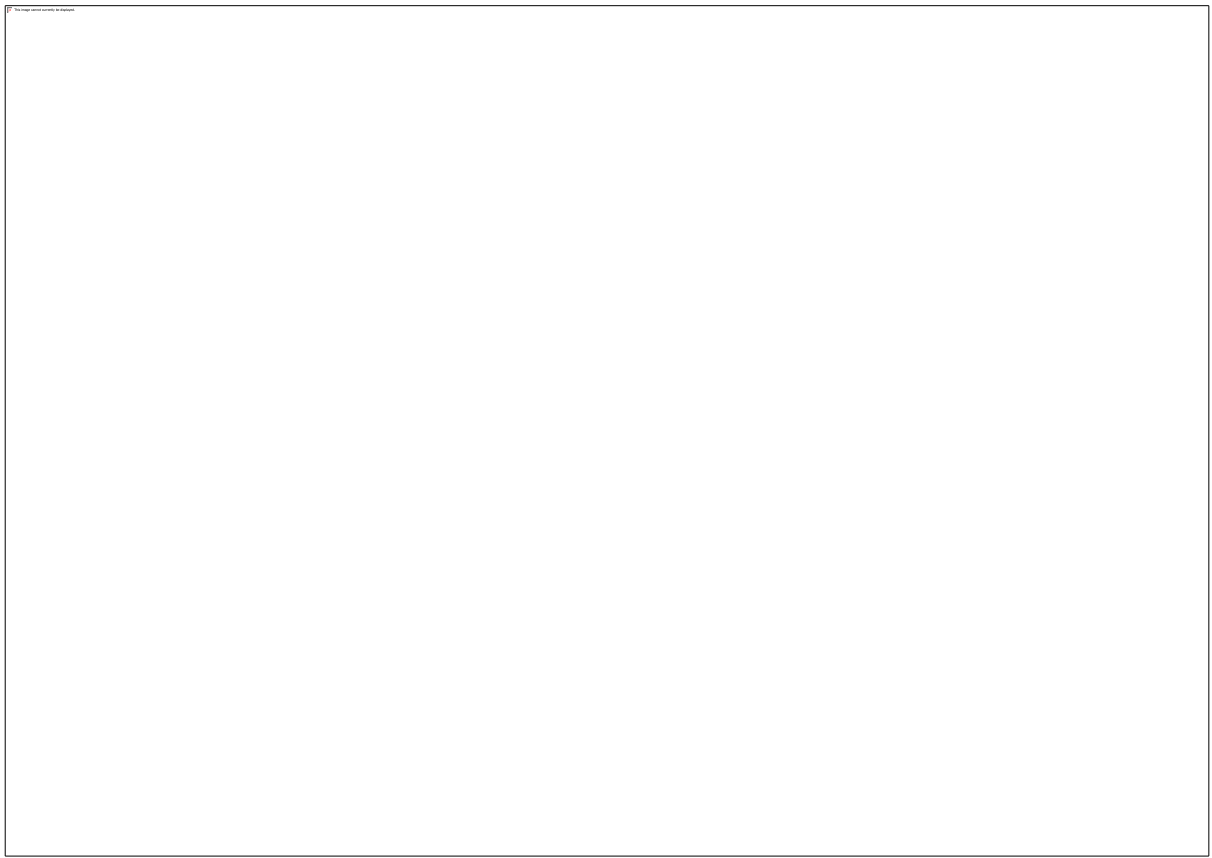
As I understand it, teachers are required to teach all subjects except RE. We can go through the lesson plan and give both sides to the topic. The lesson doesn't need to reflect the teachers opinion.

Try to reach a compromise. But I would seek advice as to what to do. Otherwise I would simply take ownership and teach the lesson.

I would be shocked at this point of view. I would refer this to the schools head teacher/SMT, expressing my concern.







### University Three

#### How has the university prepared you for addressing LGBT issues?

- ✓ Lessons on how to deal with LGBT issues in subject studies.
- ✗ It hasn't, we watched a video on it - haven't gone through how we would attempt to teach a lesson on it.
- ✓ Not in much detail. Just the basic details on the law but not really how to deal with it.
- ✓ Very well. Many discussions and videos surrounding issues. Particular emphasis on tackling the use of the word gay as a slur.
- ✓ Watched a video, discussed some scenarios in subject studies.
- ✓ Awareness of homophobic bullying session in subject studies, videos.
- ✓ We have had tutorials in our subject.
- ✓ Subject studies with course leader on tackling homophobic bullying.
- ✓ Through subject knowledge lessons time was taken to focus on homophobia in schools and identify what homophobic bullying may look like.

#### How prepared do you feel to address LGBT issues in lessons?

- ✓ Yes. I feel comfortable dealing with any issues that arise and confident handling them.
- ✓ I'm happy to talk about it, would be unsure on how to go about it.
- ✓ Not very prepared.
- ✓ Not at all. I'm about to go into second placement and I feel I probably learnt more from experience as a TA than on course.
- ✓ Positive. Enthusiastic. Have considered several strategies already. Am looking forward to challenging assumptions and helping pupils to have an open mind about the LGBT community.
- ✓ Not fully - particularly in whole class discussions as pupils are encouraged to have their own opinions, so not confident on how to tackle this, other than telling them that homophobic comments are wrong (the students also know this and tell me).
- ✓ I can't think I can ever be fully prepared as each scenario is different.
- ✓ I feel confident. We are a lot more open than we ever have been and most recognise that sexuality doesn't have an impact on who you are as a person.
- ✓ Not particularly confident - could be better.
- ✓ Not prepared enough. I would still like more guidance.

#### How prepared in dealing with LGBT issues around the school?

- ✓ Confident to handle issues but not confident that I will have the time to deal with every issue that I see/hear around school.
- ✓ With staff in the staff room I don't mind. Happy to stop kids using word gay for everything. I don't feel comfortable doing a whole assembly on it but that goes for any subject really.
- ✓ Not very prepared.
- ✓ Need to read up - Stonewall etc.
- ✓ Positive. Am happy to consider workshops and INSET days around the subject, to help address the school ethos and help prepare staff to deal with tackling LGBT issues (ie bullying, that's gay etc).
- ✓ Only in terms of giving rule reminders for inappropriate comments, also it is not consistent with other teachers as some let it just pass, which makes it harder to tackle.
- ✓ At this stage not comfortable until settled in school, same for all behaviour issues. When settled, very.
- ✓ Not very confident. I need to find out about the school policy.
- ✓ Not very sure about addressing LGBT issues.
- ✓ Not prepared enough.

## Example of coding for vignettes one and two

### University One

- Scenario 1**
- Ex** - Tell student that comment is inappropriate, respect everyone and understand that it shouldn't be an insult to be gay.
- Eq** - Ask student why they said it and what they meant by calling an object gay.
- Eq** - Tell them not to use the word in a derogatory manner as it is a matter of someone's choice and that it's just as bad as being racist/sexist.
- Eq** - Explain implications of the word and how it can be seen as discriminatory. Ask how someone who is LGBT would feel.
- Eq** - Correct terminology of the word, identify that it is inappropriate. However, this can be said - I may just let it slip and carry on walking as I wouldn't want any consequences - think I will say HR.
- Eq** - Tell student not to use that word in school in that context and that it is inappropriate.
- Eq** - Continue walking as gay is not being used offensively amongst young people at the moment. If he said it loud, maybe I would say 'gentlemen move on'.
- Eq** - Point out that it is not boring and that some people actually enjoy reading. Also point out the bad use of the term gay, saying it might offend people.
- Eq** - Ask student what they meant by term gay. Remind them that using a term like that in a derogatory way is inappropriate and could upset other people.
- Eq** - Confront pupil and explain that what they said was offensive.
- Eq** - Explain that what they have said is inappropriate and could be offensive to others. Explain they need to think carefully about their choice of words.
- Eq** - Ask them to come and see me at lunch. Take names and inform HGV if they didn't show up. I would not shout at them, but get them to explain themselves and tell them why they shouldn't be saying those kinds of things.
- Eq** - Speak to the pupil and remind them that it's inappropriate to use such terms inside and outside of school.
- Scenario 2**
- DK** - I don't feel confident in my knowledge/experience/training in being able to handle this situation.
- DK** - Tell them I would need to take this to the CPD but the student could continue talking to me if they felt comfortable.
- DK** - Before talking to the student let them know that whatever is said has to be passed on. I will also send student to the CPD to talk as well as support them.
- DK** - Explain that I am willing to support them in this and help link up with the organisations or counselling service in school who they can talk to about how to deal with telling people.
- DK** - Explain that I can provide confidentiality. Talk to the pupil, explain that if they are in a relationship, ask questions like are they in a relationship, how often do they discuss with their parents, identify other members of staff or organisations they can turn to and talk to.
- DK** - Tell student that what is being said you will have to pass on, but listen to what the student would like to express on the situation.
- DK** - Ask 'why are you upset?' Comfort student within professional boundaries. Continue to talk unless student raises issues of health when I shall have to stop him and say I have to tell.
- DK** - Explain about CP issues whilst calming them down. I would suggest that there are specialists in the area who they can talk to who can offer them more info/guidance on the topic.
- DK** - Ask them what they would like me to do eg. Do they need support in telling other people? Would they like more information on being gay and how to approach coming out and accepting it? The focus would be on trying to enable them to be comfortable with the situation.
- DK** - I have absolutely no idea, maybe refer pupil to someone or organisations who specialise in advising pupils, not sure.
- DK** - Explain that they shouldn't be upset or worried but also explain that you will have to tell CPD as it's in their best interests. Explain that as a teacher you have to do what is best for them and by letting someone know you are acting in their best interest.
- DK** - Tell them that I am here to support them and I would tell him/her that I have to inform the CPD who will keep it confidential.
- DK** - Try to calm them down but say that as it's clearly upset them, I will need to inform other staff at the school (as it may impact other lessons).

### Scenario one

- P = Punish/Sanction
- Ex = Explanation of 'gay'
- ND = Not deal with / ignore
- Eq = Incorrect use of language
- HR = Fear of heteronormative perpetuation
- I = Inappropriate
- D = Derogatory / offensive
- Eq = Equal to Racism

### Scenario Two

- CPKOP = Child Protection involvement
- R = Reasonable / support
- C = Comfort
- DK = Don't know
- I = Give or find information for them
- RE = Role encapsulation
- HELP = Ask someone else
- CoW = Counselling considered
- P.O. = Pass info on / break confidence

# University Two

## Scenario 1

- Ex - Ask what they mean by gay. Explain it is a word used to put down homosexual people and that it isn't ok. However, if I were feeling tired or jaded I would ignore it. <sup>ND</sup>
- Ex - Depends on the situation - either say "please don't say comments like that, it is not appropriate" or I may just ignore it, especially if they are the sorts of pupils who are likely to challenge me back for defending LGBT. <sup>W, R</sup>
- Ex - Tell the student that it is not appropriate to use the word gay when talking about something they don't like. <sup>W, R</sup>
- Ex - Speak to boys in corridor "Boys I don't think it's an appropriate thing to say in school". Depending on context, take child into an empty classroom to explain that gay isn't a bad thing and its use in that way could offend others. <sup>O</sup>
- Ex - Comment on how it seems an inappropriate use of the word. Explain the term usage in lessons. <sup>Ex</sup>
- Ex - Why is it gay? Explain that it's not the best phrase to use, could be offensive to some. Need to be more considerate of others. <sup>Ex</sup>
- Ex - Call pupil over and ask "why have I called you over?" Explain to pupil such terms are offensive to use and in future should I hear it again, they'll be consequences. <sup>P</sup>
- Ex - Say the language you used is not appropriate, express your opinions in a more appropriate and articulate way. <sup>S</sup>
- Ex - Tell student that it is inappropriate and offensive to use that term in that manner. <sup>S</sup>
- Ex - Challenge the attitudes towards the book club. I wouldn't necessarily challenge the use of the term gay unless it's related to a person. <sup>W, R</sup>
- Ex - Tell student it is inappropriate language and tell them to see you after school for a discussion about his comments. <sup>ND</sup>
- Ex - Call student over and explain why that use of language is not appropriate. I would also ask the student to give me his/her name so I could inform the tutor. <sup>P</sup>

## Scenario 2

- R - Explain that the information they give me is confidential. Explain they can come and talk to me but that there are people who would be more experienced or better to talk to. Give them details of local LGBT youth group and encourage/support them to contact that group. <sup>T</sup>
- ND - I honestly would not know what to say. I would want to know why they were upset and what concerned them. <sup>T</sup>
- ND - Unsure. <sup>T</sup>
- ND - "I'm glad you felt you could come and talk to me about this?" "Why do you feel like I'm the only person?" Document conversation. Keep door open so not too private. <sup>P, O</sup>
- R - Give a positive response and show empathy towards the student, especially as this is a huge step for them. I would offer support and what I could do to help the student with this. I feel I couldn't force and then I would ask the student if I can break the confidentiality to ask someone else for help. <sup>W, R</sup>
- R - "OK - that's really good that you've told me". Suggest it may be good to talk to some other people in similar situations about what this means and how you could handle it (eg thinking about your family) Try and find out information about support groups, websites etc. Consider referral to CPD team if any concern about them. <sup>I</sup>
- R - Try and understand why they are concerned with panic. Assure them that you won't say anything. Remain supportive. <sup>I</sup>
- R - Tell them there is nothing wrong with being gay and if he wants to talk about it with me now or at a later date then he can do. Also if he wants to speak to someone else like a school guidance counsellor to just be able to share his concerns when I am not available. <sup>I</sup>
- I - Ask if he would like to talk about it at the end of the school day or whether they would like to receive support from the guidance counsellor. <sup>CPD</sup>
- CPD - Comfort student, say that he/she shouldn't be worried or embarrassed because it is not something he/she should be. Also I would direct him/her to talk to somebody at school who has responsibility/expertise in that area. Maybe counselling service? <sup>CPD</sup>
- R - Talk to the student about the process of becoming older and emotionally aware of feelings and relationships. Tell him it is natural to feel uneasy about new changes in life. <sup>CPD</sup>
- CPD - As long as they are not in danger, I would tell them that I have gay friends and I grew up in an area where it was frowned upon but that I didn't care because you are who you are and true friends make that. I would offer weekly meetings to talk. <sup>CPD</sup>
- CPD - I would assure them that their feelings are perfectly natural and that I would never judge them. I'd tell them that loads of people in the world are gay and that it's perfectly acceptable and nothing to be ashamed about. If they are still nervous, I would imagine (but not question) that it had to do with other people reactions ie, parents, friends. I would invite them back for a talk later. <sup>CPD</sup>
- R - Support student, it is not a crime to be gay. You do not need to take further action as it is not a CP issue, but if student connects it with bullying then raise with other members of staff/SMT. <sup>CPD</sup>
- R - Talk to student but leave the door open. Tell the student that you are happy to talk to them about it but make it clear that if they disclose anything of great concern, you will have to inform someone else. <sup>CPD</sup>
- R - "OK, it's fine that you've told me, what would you like me to do? I'm always here to talk" Difficult scenario. <sup>CPD</sup>

