



Something More to Tell You: Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Young People's Experiences of Secondary Schooling

Author(s): Viv Ellis and Sue High

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Something more to tell you: gay, lesbian or bisexual young people's experiences of secondary schooling

Viv Ellis^{1*} with Sue High²

¹University of Oxford, UK; ²University of Southampton, UK

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How do young people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (lgb) experience secondary schooling? How do they feel that questions of sexuality are dealt with in the curriculum and do they find this treatment helpful? This article presents the findings of a project that replicated Trenchard and Warren's 1984 study, *Something to tell you*. The findings are analysed and some suggestions are made as to changes in lgb-identifying people's experiences of schooling from 1984 to 2001. Finally, the article considers these changes in relation to the question of the 'effect' of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988.

In 1984, the London Gay Teenage Group published *Something to tell you*, a report summarizing the findings of a questionnaire survey of young people who identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (Trenchard & Warren, 1984). These young people were surveyed about various aspects of their lives and the report has been widely cited in the literature about young people, sexuality and, in particular, schooling ever since (for example, Clift, 1988; Harris, 1990; Town, 1994; Salisbury & Jackson, 1996; Mac an Ghail, 1996; Epstein & Johnson, 1998). In relation to the experience of secondary schooling, the report was interesting to us in two respects: first, it attempted to measure the incidence of discussion of homosexuality in curriculum subjects, as reported by these young people, and also to measure its helpfulness or unhelpfulness in their terms; second, it also attempted to measure the incidence of problems that these young people reported experiencing in school because they identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual (lgb).

Trenchard and Warren found that only 174 out of the survey sample of 416 recollected any 'mention' of homosexuality in secondary curriculum subjects. Just

*Corresponding author: Viv Ellis, Department of Educational Studies, University of Oxford, 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY, UK. Email: viv.ellis@edstud.ox.ac.uk

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over a quarter of this subset of 174 recollected this ‘mention’ as taking place in English lessons, with a similar number reporting ‘mentions’ in religious education (Trenchard & Warren, 1984, p. 56). Only 11 respondents reported any ‘mention’ of homosexuality in personal, social and health education (PSHE) or sex education lessons (Trenchard & Warren, 1984, p. 56). The overwhelming majority of this subset reported that these incidences of discussion were unhelpful to them, regardless of the subject in which they occurred. Trenchard and Warren’s report was also interesting to us in that the majority of the survey sample did not report experiencing any problems at school (in terms of, for example, bullying or isolation) because of their sexual identity (Trenchard & Warren, 1984, p. 59). Some 17 years on, we were interested to find out whether things had changed.

The intervening years have seen much social, political and institutional change. Trenchard and Warren’s work was undertaken prior to the introduction of the National Curriculum and to significant changes in assessment and testing. One might speculate that as the curriculum has become both increasingly strongly classified and strongly framed (Bernstein, 1975), teachers’ and students’ autonomy in transacting the curriculum has been reduced and this could have further marginalized discussion of sexuality and sexual identity. In addition, it was only in the later 1980s that the HIV virus was identified and greater attention given to sexual health and AIDS education in and out of school. And, from 1988 to 2003, an Act of Parliament made it illegal for local authorities to ‘promote homosexuality as a pretended family relationship’. Many have argued that Section 28 of the Local Government Act, however clumsy a piece of legislation, had a powerful symbolic effect both in signalling legal restrictions on the discussion of sexuality in schools and in reproducing inequality and prejudice more widely in society (Epstein, 2000, p. 387). The prospect of its repeal—first promised by New Labour prior to the 1997 General Election—certainly came to be seen as a key indicator of the success of the lesbian and gay rights movement.¹ Also, in recent years, the problem of homophobic bullying has been publicized in sections of the mainstream press² and research has reported—from the perspectives of both lgb-identifying young people and teachers—worrying levels of discrimination and prejudice in schools (Stonewall, 1994; Mason & Palmer, 1996; Douglas *et al.*, 1998). At the same time, there have been important developments in the available theoretical and conceptual frameworks surrounding sexuality which might be described as a shift from a liberationist or identity politics perspective based on notions of ‘authentic’ identity and community to post-structuralist and, more recently, queer theory approaches which regard identity (in terms of both sexuality and gender) as ‘performatively constituted’ (Butler, 1990, p. 25).³

With these changes in mind, Viv Ellis (working first with the University of Brighton and the Terrence Higgins Trust [South] and subsequently with Sue High at the University of Southampton),⁴ decided to replicate the Trenchard and Warren study with the intention of pursuing the following questions:

- How do young people who identify themselves as lgb report their experience of secondary schooling, particularly in relation to any problems they might have experienced?

- How do they feel that questions of sexuality and sexual identity were dealt with in secondary curriculum subjects and did they find this 'treatment' helpful?
- Have lgb-identifying young people's responses to these questions changed since 1984?

This article serves as an introduction to the research project and reports at a general level the results of the replication of Trenchard and Warren's work in 2001. It also makes comparisons with their historical data. Whilst recognizing at the outset that it is impossible to isolate the 'effect' of Section 28 in relation to the experiences of those in the 2001 sample, we end this article with some discussion about what it is possible to say about the differences in experience of the sample groups.

Replicating research: problems and possibilities

Something to tell you was a questionnaire survey distributed among the population of lgb-identifying young people in Greater London under the auspices of the London Gay Teenage Group. It was aimed at those young people under the age of 21 who identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual. It was distributed by volunteers through licensed venues, youth and community groups, support groups and through friendship networks. The questionnaire consisted of a mixture of open and closed questions and covered three key dimensions of young people's lives: education, employment and social lives. It was a long and detailed questionnaire that covered several pages. For the purposes of this research, however, it was decided to replicate only the section of the original questionnaire survey that dealt with education.

As the authors themselves acknowledged at the time (Trenchard & Warren, 1984, pp. 17–22), there were some problems in the design and the reporting of the original research. To begin with, for us as intending 'replicators', the research report did not include a copy of the questionnaire and did not include individual-level data for some variables. The first stage in our work, therefore, involved trying to trace the original researchers and their records. After considerable effort, we managed to locate Lorraine Trenchard and the project files (at the Hall-Carpenter Archive, the national Gay and Lesbian History Archive based at the London School of Economics and Political Science).

We were also concerned about the way in which some of the questions were constructed. For example, the question that asked respondents to consider how sexuality figured in curriculum subjects asked them in which subjects *homosexuality* was 'mentioned'. There are two concerns here: first, sexuality is already being presented to respondents in the reduced form of homosexuality (that is, as one particular identity or orientation); second, the word 'mention' is intrinsically imprecise as does not give any indication of the length, context, initiation or purpose of any utterance. In terms of references to 'homosexuality', we accept that this limits the scope of the research and focuses it exclusively on minoritizing discourses. This will have implications for our later discussion. With reference to the use of 'mention' as an indicator that homosexuality had been discussed, however, we would endorse Chadwick's view that 'there is virtually no such thing as an "offhand" or "passing" reference to homosexuality in

this society' (Chadwick, 1995, p. 33; see, also, Sedgwick, 1994). In other words, any 'mention' of homosexuality has significance that is worth investigating.

We planned the replication in two stages, the first of which used a paper-based questionnaire distributed through the same channels as Trenchard and Warren but in the Sussex city of Brighton and Hove. We chose to undertake this work in Brighton as this is where the lead researcher was based at the time and where contact had been established with the Terrence Higgins Trust and various lgb youth groups.⁵ Brighton and Hove is also known as a city with a significant minority population who identify as lgb. The second stage of the project involved the distribution of the same questionnaire via the World Wide Web. In this way, we hoped to increase the sample size and to reach as many young people as possible nationally. The URL for the questionnaire was publicized on websites aimed at lgb-identifying young people, on posters sent to all lgb societies and clubs in higher education institutions and on 'business cards' that were distributed via a mailing list of licensed venues serving the lgb community.

Some methodological issues

The research design—and in particular the means of distribution—raised some interesting methodological issues, of which we will now discuss three. Perhaps the most important of these is that any results we report are based upon the responses of a self-selecting sample (as was the case with the original study). As the questionnaire was conducted on a catch-all basis, no response rate could be calculated and consequently we cannot claim that our findings are either representative of the population (of lgb-identifying people under the age of 21, either in Brighton or nationwide) or generalizable to that population. This is a particular problem for researchers who work in this area and one that cannot be ameliorated easily. Nevertheless, we believe that our results—based as they are on a fairly large sample size—have coherence and significance.

The second methodological issue to consider was the mixed mode of questionnaire distribution (paper and World Wide Web). Before combining the 2001 Web and paper responses into one sample (and then making the comparison with the 1984 data), checks were made for mixed modes effects. The distribution of the samples collected by these methods differed on biological sex, employment status and age, but after controlling for these three background variables no significant mixed modes effects were found in the variables of interest. As Table 1 shows, the 2001 samples also differed from the 1984 sample on these variables. In order to combine the 2001 data and make viable comparisons with the earlier data, the 2001 samples were weighted separately to match the distribution of the 1984 sample on biological sex and employment status. It was not possible to weight the samples to match on age distribution because of the disparity between the age ranges of respondents in 1984 and 2001. As correlation was found between employment status and age, the weighting scheme partially compensates for the age difference in the samples, but comparisons between the two years should nevertheless be interpreted with caution.

Table 1. Biological sex, employment status and age group by year and type of sample

	2001 Web		2001 Paper		1984	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
<i>Biological sex</i>						
Male	204	77	64	54	279	67
Female	60	23	55	46	136	33
<i>Employment status</i>						
Employed	50	19	62	52	165	40
Unemployed	12	4	7	6	116	28
Student/trainee	199	75	48	40	133	32
Other	6	2	2	2	2	(<1)
<i>Age group</i>						
14–17					78	19
18	71	27	13	11	71	17
19	61	23	16	13	92	22
20	45	17	28	24	120	29
21–23	88	33	62	52		
Missing					55	
<i>Total</i>	265		119		416	

The effects of the difference in age structure were investigated by excluding respondents aged over 20 from the 2001 sample and comparing results for this subset with those for the whole data set. Ideally, respondents aged 14–17 would also have been excluded from the 1984 sample but this was not possible as individual-level data were not available for this sample from the Trenchard and Warren report. The comparisons showed similar results on all the variables of interest. Where there was no association with year in the full data set there was also no association with year in the subset, and where a significant association was found in the full data set the association was in fact stronger in the subset. The effect of excluding the older respondents from the 2001 sample is to increase the number of years between the school experiences of respondents to the two samples. The resulting stronger relationship with year therefore supports the hypothesis that a period affect exists.

Thirdly, we wish to comment on the attributes of Web-based questionnaires in relation to this work and to future uses in social research. The particular software used to design the Web questionnaire and manage it online allows the researcher to specify the length of the field for responses to open-ended questions. For this research, we left the field open-ended. We also provided an impersonal email address at the beginning and end of the Web questionnaire so that anyone who wanted to find out the institutional location of the research, or receive a copy of the report, could contact us. We found that the majority of the Web respondents (54%) took the opportunity to write more than two sentences in response to open questions and a significant minority (29%) contacted us by email. The email messages often thanked

us for giving the respondent the opportunity to take part but sometimes came in the form of a plea for help or support. For example, we felt that we were being drawn into a dialogue with one young woman in rural Wales who was looking for support in the process of identifying as lesbian. It seemed to us that this is a specific attribute of Web questionnaires—an effect that is particularly significant in research like this that requires high levels of disclosure and trust—which we described as an ‘invitation to dialogue’. The dialogic potential of the Web in social research is only just beginning to be exploited (for example, Dunne, 2002).

We did not regard the identity of the Web questionnaire respondents as in any way more problematic than those who replied on paper. We felt that if individuals wished to make multiple returns, this was equally likely to happen with paper versions of the questionnaire. In the event, we were not aware of any duplicate responses although we cannot completely rule this out as a possibility.

Comparing findings from 1984 and 2001

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked to indicate in which curriculum subjects the topic of homosexuality was mentioned. A list of subjects was provided and respondents were allowed to tick as many subjects as applied. Table 2 compares the responses to this question in 1984 and 2001. Subjects shown were mentioned by more than 0.5% of the sample in 1984 and by more than 4% of the sample in 2001.

There seem to be highly significant associations with the subjects English and PSHE/sex education and the year ($p < .001$). Many more reported homosexuality being mentioned in English and PSHE/sex education lessons in 2001 than in 1984.

Table 2. Comparison of 1984 and 2001 results for ‘mention’ question

Curriculum subject		Year 1984 (<i>n</i> = 416)	Year 2001 (<i>n</i> = 384)
English	Count	44	113
	% within year	10.6	29.6
PSHE/sex education	Count	11	89
	% within year	2.6	23.2
Religious education	Count	43	67
	% within year	10.3	17.5
Biology	Count	36	47
	% within year	8.7	12.3
Sociology	Count	19	39
	% within year	4.6	10.2
General studies	Count	12	16
	% within year	4.6	4.2
Art and design	Count	4	23
	% within year	1	6
Psychology	Count	2	21
	% within year	0.5	5.5

The same is true for art and psychology ($p < .001$) but still relatively few report mentions in these subjects. There were also significant associations with the subjects religious education and sociology and the year ($p < .1$).

As a follow-up to this question, respondents were asked whether they found homosexuality being mentioned generally helpful. Table 3 compares the responses to this question in 1984 and 2001, offering adjusted residuals and separating out those respondents who said that homosexuality hadn't been mentioned at all.

Table 3. Adjusted residual comparison of 1984 and 2001 results for question about 'helpful' mentions

Helpful mentions?		Year 1984	Year 2001
Helpful	Count	35	65
	% within year	8.4	17
	<i>Adjusted Residual</i>	-3.7	3.7
Unhelpful	Count	139	227
	% within year	33.4	59.3
	<i>Adjusted Residual</i>	-7.3	7.3
Not mentioned	Count	242	91
	% within year	58.2	23.8
	<i>Adjusted Residual</i>	9.9	-9.9
Total	Count	416	383
	% within year	100	100

An adjusted residual figure > 2 shows that a cell differs significantly from its expected value if there was no association. All cells in this table differ significantly at the 5% level.

Homosexuality was talked about more in 2001—only 24% said that it was not mentioned in any subject compared with 58% in 1984. There was an increase in the number who found this helpful (8% to 17%), but also a large increase in the number who said it was not talked about in a helpful way (33% to 59%). Respondents were then asked why they felt this was helpful or unhelpful in an open-ended style. The responses to this question will be discussed in the final section of this article.

Respondents were also asked whether they felt they had experienced any problems because they identified as lgb. Table 4 compares responses to this question in 1984 and 2001.

Table 4 shows a significant increase ($p < .1$) in the number of respondents reporting problems at school. As a follow-up, the next question asked respondents to indicate what sort of problems they had encountered. A list of problems was given and respondents were asked to tick all those that applied. Table 5 compares results for the type of problem experienced at school.

There were highly significant increases ($p < .001$) in reports of verbal abuse, isolation, teasing, physical assault, being ostracized and being subject to pressure to conform in 2001.

Table 4. Comparison of 1984 and 2001 results for 'problems experienced at school'

Problems experienced at school?		Year 1984	Year 2001
Yes	Count	164	194
	% within year	39.4	50.8
No	Count	252	188
	% within year	60.6	49.2
Total	Count	416	118
	% within year	100	100

Talking about homosexuality in the secondary school curriculum

This article is the first in a planned series that will focus on various aspects of the research. Future articles will look in more detail at the representation of sexuality—and the formation of identity—in relation to the secondary school curriculum and at the ways in which problems are experienced at school by young people. Greater attention will be paid to analysis of the qualitative data. In the present article, however, we confine ourselves to a summary analysis of the responses from the 2001 sample and refer only when appropriate to the 1984 data. We will also focus our discussion on the question of perceived helpfulness or unhelpfulness in talk about homosexuality in curriculum subjects.

In the 2001 qualitative data, there was a strong association between discussion of homosexuality in the PSHE/sex education curriculum and perceived unhelpfulness. The majority of the responses to the question about helpfulness or unhelpfulness focused on why discussion of homosexuality in curriculum subjects was unhelpful. Much of what follows, then, considers the reasons why the discussion of homosexuality in curriculum subjects was seen as unhelpful by the majority of lgb-identifying

Table 5. Comparison of 1984 and 2001 results for 'type of problem experienced at school'

Problems experienced at school		Year 1984	Year 2001
Isolation	Count	38	137
	% within year	9.1	35.9
Verbal abuse	Count	32	140
	% within year	7.7	36.6
Teasing	Count	20	118
	% within year	4.8	30.9
Physical assault	Count	19	59
	% within year	4.6	15.4
Ostracised	Count	11	54
	% within year	2.6	14.1
Pressure to conform	Count	11	88
	% within year	2.6	23.0
Other problems	Count	23	29
	% within year	5.5	7.6

young people in our survey. We should emphasize, however, that the responses to this question did not refer exclusively to the PSHE/sex education subject.

'Issue'-driven curricula and strategic essentialism

In writing about why she felt discussion of homosexuality in PSHE/sex education was unhelpful, one respondent commented:

In each PSHE lesson, we learnt about a different topic/theme every week, such as euthanasia, abortion, sexism, racism.

Homosexuality was just another topic.

Analysis of the qualitative responses suggests that this strategy of presenting sexuality and sexual identity in the single form of homosexuality is a reductive strategy that actively minoritizes students who are beginning to identify as lgb. This strategy may be a well-intentioned pedagogy in that it may often be motivated by high ideals of social justice and equality, but it locates difference (in terms of sexuality and identity) as a marginal issue for which work must be done to seek acceptance. British television viewers may be familiar with the BBC comedy series *The League of Gentlemen* in which the Legz Akimbo theatre-in-education company take their show 'Everybody Out!' into schools, deploying a variety of stereotypically (male) homosexual characters and situations to plead for acceptance (Dyson *et al.*, 2003). These were intentionally comic scenes but the point is a serious one: if sexuality is presented in a reduced form as (typically) male homosexuality, and this is represented as a 'controversial' issue, the highest educational aim is tolerance. Britzman (1995) describes this liberal educational project as one of an attempted 'identification with another'. How, she asks, is this meant to occur 'if one is only required to tolerate and thereby confirm one's self as generous' (Britzman, 1995, p. 159). Quinlivan and Town (1999), in a study of 20 young lesbians and gay men in New Zealand, suggest that it is a heteronormative pedagogy: 'fram[ing] their "problem as personal" and reinforc[ing] normalising discourses of heterosexuality' (Quinlivan & Town, 1999, p. 254). We would describe this emphasis on the personal and on 'authentic' difference, albeit motivated by a social justice or identity politics perspective, as strategic essentialism.

Pathologization

It was mentioned more like an illness than a way of life.

This comment from a male respondent captures another key strategy in the pedagogic relationship, and one that was strongly (but not exclusively) associated with discussion of homosexuality in PSHE/sex education and biology/science lessons. Another male respondent referred to: 'stacks of negative facts aim to put you off'. The pathologization of homosexuality—and its classification as a mental illness or an indicator of susceptibility to infection—has been a consistent discursive strategy since the early nineteenth century (Foucault, 1978) and we saw its continuation in the responses from the 2001 sample. There was some evidence of this in the 1984 data

(Trenchard & Warren, 1984, p. 57). There are two points we would like to make here, both of which are related to PSHE/sex education as a curriculum. The first is that best practice now suggests a ‘sex and relationships’ education approach.⁶ This is intended to redress what Quinlivan and Town, in their study, called a ‘focus on anatomy’:

the enacted curriculum perpetuated the separation of physical bodies from feelings and thoughts, which meant that issues of identity and feelings were ignored. (Quinlivan & Town, 1999, p. 246)

The second point is more general and in the form of questions. If we accept Carter’s point that sex education is inevitably beset by an ‘epistemological ambivalence’—that, unlike any other curriculum subject, it sets out to teach something without creating any real curiosity or interest (Carter, 2001)—is it the best site for the productive discussion of sexuality in terms of identity, power and difference? If, as others have suggested (for example, Kehily, 1996; Epstein & Johnson, 1998), sexuality is most usefully examined *textually*—as an aspect of culture and identity—is there then an argument for reconceptualizing education about sexuality across (or rather, throughout) the curriculum?

Teachers’ moral values and the use of power

The most striking set of responses to the issue of helpfulness or unhelpfulness suggests a more difficult set of questions about the power of individual teachers in the pedagogic relationship. The following comments are intended to be illustrative:

The teacher was a strict Christian and just said that it was a sin.

[An English teacher] refused to mark an essay on how Henry James’s sexuality influenced his writing.

My form tutor told my mother he thought I was a rent boy. I wasn’t but he knew I had a boyfriend in year 11.

Taken together, comments like these form the largest category of reasons in 2001 why the respondents felt that discussion of homosexuality in curriculum subjects was unhelpful. Drawing on whatever legal, religious or institutional frameworks for authority, these teachers—as reported by our respondents—had no compunction about demonstrating a form of prejudice that could have led to disciplinary action in the case of gender or ‘race’. Teachers and researchers, when teaching and writing about sexuality and social justice, sometimes focus on inequality and suggest ignoring the moral question of the ‘rights and wrongs’ of homosexuality. The evidence from this survey suggests to us that this ‘morally neutral’ approach is flawed and that, however problematic, the moral values of teachers—and how they are deployed—are vitally important. Johnson and Epstein refer to this problem more widely in society as ‘moral traditionalism’ and note its profoundly anti-educational character (Johnson & Epstein, 2000, p. 30). On the basis of the evidence in our survey, we would agree but suggest that far from being a unified and coherent discourse, moral traditionalism is inflected differently in relation to a wide range of values, beliefs and practices.

Concluding remarks: schooling and sexuality after Section 28

We would like to conclude by making a few comments about the comparison with 1984 and the changes we are suggesting have taken place. Whilst acknowledging the limitations of this study in attempting to compare like with like on a catch-all basis, we believe that the findings are sufficiently significant to bear further scrutiny. In particular, we would like to look at the question of the 'effect' of Section 28. As previously mentioned, it is impossible to isolate a 'Section 28 effect', particularly in a time of such significant social, political and institutional change. Nevertheless, claims are often made that Section 28 had the effect of 'silencing' teachers' and students' voices (e.g. Stonewall, 1994; Douglas *et al.*, 1998) or that teachers 'consistently err[ed] on the side of caution' (Epstein, 2000, p. 388) during the time of Section 28.

In this study, we found that the discussion of homosexuality (in terms of 'mentions') had significantly increased since 1984 and that the number who regarded this as helpful had also significantly increased. However, the way in which homosexuality was mentioned was still regarded as unhelpful by the majority of the young people in our sample and there were strong associations with this perceived unhelpfulness and the moral interventions made by individual teachers and in some of the minoritizing discourses of the PSHE/subject. We also found highly significant increases in the reports of problems that young people felt they experienced at school because they identified as lgb, with especially worrying increases in verbal abuse, physical assault and feelings of isolation.

This does not show that voices had been silenced or that teachers were necessarily exercising caution. On the contrary, some curriculum treatments of homosexuality may have actually reinforced the marginalization of young people who identified as lgb and framed this as a 'problem' over which they have some control. And some teachers appear to have taken the opportunity to promote homosexuality as intrinsically and inevitably wrong and cause for just punishment.⁷

We may not be able to say anything causally about Section 28 in this respect. And whilst supporting the view that it had a powerful symbolic action in society generally, we would suggest that its most important impact on schools has been to authorize the kind of moral interventions made by individual teachers in the lives of the lgb-identifying young people in our sample. The repeal of Section 28 removes that symbolic authority but we suspect that the repeal alone will have very little impact on how young people like those in our sample experience schooling. To make schools safer and more productive places for lgb-identifying young people (and, we would suggest, *all* young people) we believe it is important to acknowledge the significant cultural changes that have taken place around sexuality in the last 20 years and, as a matter of priority, to consider doing things differently. Firstly, we should recognize that strategically well-intentioned but essentialist pedagogies can be experienced as detrimental and that new approaches that regard sexuality as an aspect of culture and identity as socially performed can be experienced more positively. This shift may lead to teaching about sexuality across or throughout the curriculum in the same way as teaching about gender, for example.

Second, and most important, our research suggests that the ‘morally neutral’ approach is flawed and that challenging work with teachers—both pre-service and in-service—around their professional values and practice must address issues of sexuality and sexual identity. This will undoubtedly be difficult teacher education work that does not sit easily within the current training model. It does seem long overdue.

Notes

1. Section 28 was finally repealed in England and Wales in 2003. The devolved Scottish Parliament had repealed it in 2000.
2. Two cases in particular came to national prominence in the late 1990s. The first, in 1998, concerned the 15-year-old student, Darren Steele, from Staffordshire who committed suicide after a period of intense homophobic bullying in school. As far as is known, Darren never made any sort of public declaration or identification with reference to his sexuality. In the second case, 18-year-old James Hudson took the head teacher of his grammar school to court in 1999 for failing to punish another pupil who had broken James’s nose in a homophobic assault. And, in 2000, following the murder of Damilola Taylor, the *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Telegraph* newspapers reported that Damilola had been a victim of homophobic bullying prior to the attack.
3. For further discussion of queer theory in relation to education and schooling, see the special issue of the *Journal of Homosexuality*, 45(2/3/4) (2003), especially the articles by Pinar (pp. 357–360) and Halberstam (pp. 361–364).
4. The authors would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who have in various ways supported the research: the University of Brighton Education Research Centre, especially Rachel King, Linda France and Dr Carol Fox, all of whom were involved in the pilot study; Chris Woolls and the Terrence Higgins Trust (South); the University of Southampton Faculty of Social Sciences Research Fund; Lorraine Trenchard; Peter Birmingham, University of Oxford Department of Educational Studies; Dr Rosalyn George, Goldsmith’s College, University of London.
5. The Terrence Higgins Trust is one of the leading HIV and AIDS charities in the UK. Its key objectives include campaigning and education concerning the personal and social impact of the virus.
6. For the statutory basis for this approach, see Department for Education (1994); see Epstein & Johnson (1998) for further discussion.
7. When discussing the ‘effect’ of Section 28 on teachers in the classroom, there has been a popular tendency to focus exclusively on how some socially liberal teachers may have responded or how they feel constrained by this legislation. In the light of our research, we would suggest that this ignores an equally important issue, which is the way in which less committed (to ideals of equality and social justice) or more ‘moral traditionalist’ teachers have responded to the symbolic authority of Section 28.

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