



Countering heteronormativity and cisnormativity in Australian schools: Examining English teachers' reflections on gender and sexual diversity in the classroom

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Generating understandings to combat cisnormativity and heteronormativity.
- Examining teachers' reflections about LGBTQI issues, curriculum and literacy.
- Presenting a Bakhtian/Foucauldian model to reveal teacher discourses.

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ABSTRACT

Examining the voices of English teachers regarding the extent to which Australian high schools are providing inclusive environments, this paper aims to generate deeper understandings about countering cisnormativity and heteronormativity. Drawing on a qualitative study conducted in Western Australia, the theoretical framework meshes the lenses of Bakhtin (1981) and Foucault (1995) to create an emergent model, integrating concepts such as the panoptic surveillance, dialogic utterances and heteroglossic language. Results reveal how teacher discourses concerning the provision of LGBTQI curriculum and resources, link to networks of power, and are imbued with a multiplicity of patterns, tensions and contradictions.

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1. Introduction

Despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and significant progress in the Western World towards equality for people of diverse genders and sexualities, the struggle against discrimination, homophobia and transphobia remains intense and is often anchored in a plethora of complex and competing discourses (Ferfolja, 2015; McGregor, 2008; Nash & Browne, 2015; Rayside, 2008). Both in Australia and internationally, multiple examples illustrate how achievements for LGBTQI human rights have been obscured through resistance or ambiguity towards educational, social or legal reforms. When Barack Obama's Department of Education announced federal anti-discriminatory legislation to protect the rights of transgender students to affirm their gender

identity with respect to toilet usage, media reports of America's "profound gender anxiety" (Green, 2016, p. 2) overshadowed reforms, as numerous states announced their defiance of federal government directives (Redden, 2016). In Australia, Commonwealth reforms have arguably reduced discrimination against same-sex couples in areas such as superannuation, social security, taxation and child support (Australian Government, 2008). Although legislation for marriage equality was recently passed in the Australian parliament, many LGBTQI¹ identifying individuals continue to face high degrees of interpersonal and institutional discrimination, especially in education and healthcare.

Our focus in this paper is on the Western Australian context.

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¹ The term LGBTQI refers to the community of individuals identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning and/or Intersex. More broadly, the term may also refer to friends or allies of individuals identifying with the LGBTQI community. It is acknowledged that terminology with reference to this community is contested and the community itself is heterogeneous.

While the WA School Education Act (1999) clearly stipulates that government schools must provide for the ‘educational needs of all children’ (p.2), there is no specific reference to addressing the needs of LGBTQI students or their representation in the curriculum. Parallel to WA and national curricula, numerous government and community organizations have made concerted efforts over many years to implement equity reform for diversity of gender and sexuality, suggesting that local educational discourses cannot be viewed as passive (Thompson, Renshaw, & Mockler, 2015). Despite the democratic intentions underpinning local organizations, factors such as restricted funding and resources, exemplify how the politics of gender and sexuality evolve under complex and contested social regimes and hierarchies (Butler, 1990; Connell & Pearse, 2015). As per Connell (2011), a societal project of moving towards gender democratization requires, both locally and globally, a long-term re-balancing of power, at the institutional and individual levels. Nonetheless, this local work in WA is testimony to many emerging educational sites, whereby stakeholders contribute democratically to disrupting oppression through nuanced pedagogy, which acknowledges intersections between race, class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality (Ferfolja, Criss Jones & Ullman, 2015).

Central to this policy ‘dispositif’ (Bailey, 2013) is an understanding about the role of the Safe Schools Coalition in the provision of safe and inclusive schools, specifically for programming and professional development around gender and sexual diversity. Rather than relegating responsibilities and resources to Education Departments themselves for such provision, the federal government funded the Safe Schools Coalition to undertake this role, thereby allowing schools to opt in or out of such professional development. In this way, responsibility is shifted from the system, to individual schools, for ensuring gender and sexuality education. Notwithstanding, the state government of Victoria decided to take full responsibility for the Safe Schools Coalition program, severing ties with the federal policy stipulation to ensure provision of LGBTQI inclusive education.

Against this policy backdrop, in this paper we are concerned to investigate the networks of power and surveillance that are implicated in how a number of English teachers (of English Literature, English Language and General English) in Western Australia negotiate the teaching of gender and sexual diversity in their classrooms. Conscious of not wanting to present teachers as merely being acted on by policies and legislation in a way that portrays them as ‘docile bodies’ (Foucault, 1995), we are concerned to report on the rich insights yielded through our survey data into teachers’ understandings and navigation of regimes of heteronormativity and cisnormativity, in particular, with respect to curriculum, critical literacy and pedagogical deployment. Drawing on the theoretical work of Bakhtin (1981) and Foucault (1995), we uncover a politics of support and erasure in schools with regards to addressing gender and sexual diversity. Informed by queer and trans informed epistemologies, our analysis is mediated through multiple discourses and networks of power in historical and spatial relations involving class, race, culture, and place (Butler, 1993; Connell & Pearse, 2015; De Palma & Jennett, 2010; Lugg & Murphy, 2014; Sedgwick, 1990).

2. Review of literature

Persistently high degrees of homophobia and transphobia in Australian schools (Hillier et al., 2010; Robinson, Bansel, Denson, Oviden, & Davies, 2014) point to the privileging of a heterosexual and cisgendered world in which individuals are marginalized on the basis of non-normative gender expression, embodiment and sexual identity (Butler, 1993; Leonard, Lyons, & Bariola, 2015; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2011; Martino & Frank, 2006; Rands,

2009). Colliding with this regime of hetero and cis-normalization is Australian educational policy, notably, the Melbourne Declaration (2008), which espouses excellence, and equity, obliging all government and school sectors to provide students with high quality education that is free from discrimination based on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, pregnancy, ethnicity, relation, health, disability, geographic location or socio-economic background. Linked to a discourse of nationhood, the goals of the Melbourne Declaration resonate with Australia’s signature on numerous international treaties: “Australia values the central role of education in building a democratic, equitable and just society ...” (2008, p.4). However, irony lies in the exemptions for religious schools against anti-discriminatory legislation based on sexual orientation (Sex Discrimination Amendment: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status Act, 2013; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014). According to Norden (2016) on grounds of religious freedom, such exemptions allow students and staff to be treated ‘... in a way that could seriously impact on their proper growth and development, their freedom of expression, and their sense of personal values dignity if they are effectively denied the right to express the divergence of sexual identities that exist with any staff group or student community.’ (p. 3).

Aligned with the Melbourne Declaration, The Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2016), advocates for a nation which meets the needs of all young Australians to become actively informed citizens. Explicit is the expectation that personalized curriculum will be achieved through teachers’ guidance of all students towards successful lifelong learning. Under general capabilities, numerous interrelated components appear useful for scaffolding students (and school personnel) to develop an appreciation of diverse genders and sexualities. For example, through collaborative literacy tasks, students can: develop empathy and respect for others; understand the impact their values and behaviours have on others; be open to new ideas and question assumptions and meaning in texts. But absent from the discourse are references to LGBTQI lived and embodied experiences, suggesting a language of silencing, which fails to support the rights of people of diverse genders or sexualities (Ullman & Ferfolja, 2015). When advice is provided regarding student diversity, ACARA’s examples are limited to disability, gifted and talented and English as an Additional Language or Dialect. Furthermore, as per Blackburn and Smith (2010) and Kumashiro (2002), to combat heteronormativity and cis-normativity, educators must go beyond simple inclusion to present LGBTQI identities as intersecting with other factors, such as gender, class, race, etc.

In contrast to ACARA’s limited conception of student diversity, literacy is defined more broadly as students developing ‘knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society.’ (retrieved 29/11/17 from <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/english/curriculum/f-10?layout=1#level1>). From this perspective, becoming literate involves interconnected practices such as reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing, with print and digital texts, and is aligned with sociocultural research, extending literacy beyond classrooms to encompass everyday family, community and institutional apprenticeships (Cumming-Potvin & Sanford, 2015; Luke & Freebody, 1999; The New London Group, 2000). Outlined in the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority’s English curriculum, it is conceivable that student literacy dispositions and behaviours, such as “comparing and evaluating a range of representations of individuals and groups in different historical, social and cultural contexts”, be developed through literature, to facilitate critical discussions about human rights (retrieved 29/11/16 from <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/english/curriculum/f-10?layout=1#level10>). Nonetheless, despite the

value of literature for opening up critical conversations, few representations of LGBTQI young people exist in the Australian Curriculum or the English classroom (Blackburn, 2005; Rhodes, 2009; Thein, 2013).

In parallel, The Education Act of WA (1999) recognizes the rights and responsibilities of educational stakeholders, such as all WA children receiving a 'school education'. Whilst the discourse regarding the equitable nature of this education is largely missing and the mention of LGBTQI topics is absent, the Act clearly stipulates that government schools must provide for the "educational needs of all children". (p. 2) More pointedly, The Western Australian School Curriculum and Standards Authority (2013), which resonates with the Melbourne Declaration (2008) and ACARA (2016), highlights guiding discourses such as concern and respect for others, commitment to pursuing knowledge and achieving one's potential, accepting one's self and others, social, civil and environmental responsibility. (retrieved 28/11/17 from <http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/resources/outline-downloads>). Embracing diversity is viewed as all students' right to an equitable education, which is upheld by the United Nation's Conventions on the Rights of the Child. Also suggesting commitment to student rights, The WA SCSA (2013) states that through materials, procedures and policies, education must be inclusive of all students' strengths and needs. "Differences in ... ethnicity, language (linguistic background), culture, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation or geographical location should not be allowed to detract from a student's access to the high quality education that is their right." (Retrieved 29/11/17 from <https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/principles/guiding-principles/student-diversity>).

Still, challenging heteronormativity and cisnormativity to instil inclusive school ideologies and practices remains an urgent issue in Australia and internationally; significant aspects of this process include teachers and the formal and informal curriculum (Garcia & Slesarsky-Poe, 2010; Taylor et al., 2011). Although The National Council of Teachers of English and The National Association for the Education of Young Children have recommended many measures to assist teachers to incorporate LGBTQI themed literature in American elementary and secondary classrooms, similar to Clark (2010) and Blackburn (2004, 2012), Thein (2013) noted that LGBTQI topics are rarely included in the pedagogy of language arts teachers and school personnel intervene inconsistently to combat negative comments about homosexuality or gender expression. Puchner and Klein (2011) explained this phenomenon as an informal dichotomy between teachers being sympathetic towards the rights of LGBTQI students, but preferring to re-direct uncomfortable questions, for example, to health classes or parents. In our own research, we have reported similar conclusions in Australia as teachers appeared to self-censure their pedagogical repertoire due to discomfort with the topic of non-normative genders or sexualities or the perceived risk of being admonished by school administrators or parents (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2011).

Acknowledging the limitations of a literature-based approach in a social justice curriculum, Blackburn (2012) suggested nonetheless that poems, writing and narratives can provide agency to those who are silenced. In a similar vein, Pearce, Gardiner, Cumming-Potvin, & Martino, 2016 contend that infusing LGBTQI themed literature in classrooms can extend pedagogical knowledge to address questions pertaining to heteronormativity, trans inclusivity and gender democratization. Therefore, critical literacy, which encourages students to understand and challenge complex themes from diverse perspectives, can represent a significant element in combatting heteronormativity and cisgenderism schools (Logan, Lasswell, Hood, & Watson, 2014; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2017; Woolley, 2015). Countering the dominant neo-liberal

political climate, which serves to normalize students and essentialize literacy in Australian schools in technical rationalist terms, this article is inspired by the traditions of queer and trans theory in which teachers aim to help students understand and change the world through addressing broader questions of cisnormative and heteronormative privileging (Kumashiro, 2002; Rands, 2009; Stryker, 2006). Drawing on key concepts from Bakhtin (1981) and Foucault (1995), the present article offers queer and trans informed understandings regarding the perceptions of WA high school English teachers as they navigate the complex territory of text selection in relation to developing safe, welcoming and inclusive school environments, which respect the rights of all students, in particular those who self-affirm as LGBTQI.

3. Theoretical framework

To unravel the complex discourses of high school English teachers surrounding the rituals of heteronormativity and cisgenderism in schools, we thread together theoretical concepts of Bakhtin (1981) in the area of language and literacy and Foucault's (1995) seminal work on punishment, discipline and the panoptic power. Firstly, we draw on a Bakhtinian (1981) perspective, which interprets language as multi-layered, dialogic and co-constructed through present and past speakers and interlocutors. Linking language to sociocultural history and a "contemporary reality" of individuals who hold diverse opinions, Bakhtin (1981) asserted that from "... diversity of speech and voice, there comes about a new orientation in the world and in time (including the 'absolute past of tradition' through personal experience and investigation." (p. 44); hence, language represents "... a living mix of varied and opposing voices [raznorecivost']," which develops and renews itself. (p.67).

Of particular interest for our analysis is Bakhtin's explanation of language diversity via heteroglossia, referring to all utterances, which are characterized by tensions between attempting to separate texts and respecting "the power of the particular context" in which utterances are made (Holquist, 1981, p. 8). Although an individual's voice may be projected on the surface as unified, on a deeper level, Bakhtin argues that utterances express a multitude of meanings, some intentional, others unintentional (Holquist, 1981). In this sense, words can be viewed as sliding through layered 'loopholes', which encapsulate semantics and temporality; indeed in the past, present and future, the meaning of our words are imbued with personal experiences, contexts, indecisiveness and on-going reflection (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 35).

Originally conceived for literary analysis of the novel, Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) theoretical concepts have been increasingly of interest to educational scholars since the 1990s (Matusov, 2007), particularly for literacy and teacher education. For example, Britzman (1991) argued that presenting a range of dialogic discourses to student teachers, widens their opportunities to conceptualize their own practices and negotiate professional teacher identities. Drawing on the work of Bakhtin (1981), Howie (2008) also asserted that acknowledging English teachers' past, present and future can develop ethical understandings for the "teacher self" (p.103), particularly in a neo-liberal "climate of contestation" (p. 103).

Of significant interest to our analysis, scholars in the field of gender and sexuality (Francis, 2012; Killelea McEntarfer, 2016; Ruffolo, 2009) have highlighted the work of Bakhtin (1981) in underscoring the fundamental role that language in context plays in nuancing theories regarding the performance of gender and sexuality and the queer politics of becoming. Channelled largely through a complex and sometimes discordant repertoire of post-modernism and poststructuralism, queer theory rejects polarized and simplified explanations of human experiences, with proponents arguing '... that human cognizance of lived possibilities is

more complicated and subject to variation than essentialized, binary categories of male/female, man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual ...' (Nash, 2010, p. 581). We acknowledge that some trans scholars have expressed reticence over the application of queer and feminist studies, for example, through the emphasis on Butler's (1990) work, which highlights the role of gender performativity and language, while seemingly skipping over individually constructed knowledge and experiences (Namaste, 2000; Rubin, 2003; Stryker, 2006). However, more recently, Stryker (2017) argued that in sections of trans communities, Butler's (1990) metaphor of gender as 'bodily inscriptions' (p. 128) has sometimes been historically misinterpreted as reductionist acts of bodily performance, thereby suggesting a potential misalignment with the lived realities of transgender individuals. Rather, Stryker (2017) elucidates that Butler's evolving premise of gender encompasses broad notions of performance, language and communication, within complex contexts of reality and representation. Thus, gender includes '... all of the innumerable acts of performing it: how we dress, move, speak, touch, look. Gender is like a language we use to communicate ourselves. The implication of this argument is that transgender genders are as real as any others, and they are achieved in the same fundamental way.' (2017, p.52). In this regard, deploying the work of Bakhtin (1981) to promote conversations about non-normative gender and sexuality in educational contexts, we also attempt to reconcile some of the troubled conceptual spaces concerning the embodiment of transgender individuals, which have divided queer theory, early waves of feminism and transgender studies.

Concepts such as dialogism, argued Ruffolo (2009) speak to "highly complex negotiations that do not reduce bodies to their 'individual' contributions ..." (p. 67); in this sense, all language is connected, while utterances have the potential to create something new, based on socio-historical contexts. Heteroglossia represents a framework which respects the contexts of "dialogical becomings" (p. 61) and unveils the depth and tensions inherent in utterances (Ruffolo, 2009). From this framework, the utterances of a single individual represent diverse viewpoints, which coalesce and collide through the past, present and future and are mediated through sociocultural and historical circumstances (Bakhtin, 1981).

As educational researchers increasingly highlight the tacit and active mechanisms of heteronormative practices in schools (Robinson et al., 2014; Sauntson, 2013, p. 395), Francis (2012) argued that the appeal of Bakhtin lies with an alignment to feminist and Foucauldian lenses. Such perspectives consider present and past socio economic politics and shifting societal norms, "... illuminating the social constructions of 'good', 'virtuous', 'appropriate' and 'natural'" (Francis, 2012, p. 3). As such, Foucault's (1995) concepts of power and surveillance are particularly helpful for examining how the interplay between language, English teachers' perceptions and institutional curricula is implicated in regimes of heteronormativity, heterosexism and cisgenderism. Foucault (1970, 1978) argued that over many historical periods, topics such as sexuality have been socially constructed, and regulated through institutional mechanisms, which are upheld through factors such as pedagogy, libraries and textbooks; such regimes of truth force binary divisions to exclude certain categories of individuals from society, such as prisoners, 'homosexuals' and individuals suffering from mental illness.

It is this unveiling of regulatory practices to expose institutional fallacies about "what is normal and thus what is abnormal" (Ball, 1990, p. 6), which has attracted many educational scholars to the work of Foucault, especially as it relates to the politics and history of gender and sexuality. In teacher education, Goldstein (2004) and Bushnell (2003) argued that Foucault's work is useful for unpacking a new neo-liberal panopticon, one that relies on fear and lethargy of individuals, but also on media formulated crises and accountability

measures, to legitimate American educational strategies such as *No Child Left Behind*. In the Australian high school Catholic setting, a limited number of researchers have also drawn on Foucault's concept of regimes of truth to interrogate how adolescent boys constructed and performed genders in alignment with networks of power (see for example, Martino, 2000). More recently, drawing on a Foucauldian framework to study Australian schools, Gray, Harris, and Jones (2016) concluded that LGBTQI teachers are marginalized through "a space of exclusion", through which discourses construct and re-construct heteronormativity (see also De Palma & Atkinson, 2006). Conversely, such scholars also reveal how teachers actively challenge such discourses in counter-hegemonic ways through their own pedagogical practices and relations in local school communities.

In this sense, in secondary and primary schools, power involves multiple processes, patterns, origins and locations, which '... overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, support one another, distinguish themselves from one another according to their domain of application ...' (Foucault, 1977, p. 137). Of particular utility for our analysis is Foucault's (1995) appropriation of Bentham's (1843) metaphor the panopticon, to explain the constant and all-consuming nature of school surveillance via the architectural image of the "tower", which is located at the centre of "an angular building" (p. 200). Extending Bentham's metaphor, Foucault (1995) elaborates on how this architectural arrangement offers productive insights into the working of power through the operation of surveillance as a spatial and material phenomenon that results in self-regulatory practices. This notion of panoptic power with its self-regulatory effects is helpful in making sense of how teachers navigate and negotiate discourses of gender and sexuality in the English classroom.

4. Methodology and methods

The study's research methodology privileged understanding of the local context in relation to the world, society and its institutions through sustained processes and lived experiences (Tracy, 2013). Funded by a Young and Well Cooperative Centre research grant, the study aimed to develop inclusive educational communities, which respect the human rights of all students, including those who self-affirm as LGBTQI, non-binary or otherwise outside of the 'heterosexual matrix'.² Valuing the fundamental right of every child to an education of quality, inclusive educational communities respect and represent differences; such communities are committed to breaking down actual and potential forms of exclusion and provide LGBTQI affirming students with a voice to construct their identities (Gilles & Carrington, 2004; Singh, 2011; Slee, 2001; Trueba, Takaki, Munoz, & Nieto, 1997).

Conducted in Western Australia, this largely qualitative project featured on-going collaboration between the researchers and key stakeholders from the LGBTQI community. To capture contextual factors for making sense of data, qualitative methods aimed to examine participants' perceptions in relation to individual experiences (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). This article focuses on

² Aiming to improve well-being for young people, The Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre (Young and Well CRC) has united researchers, practitioners and young people through partnerships between universities, community organizations and the Australian Commonwealth Government. The Young and Well CRC has collaborated with approximately 75 partners, such as WA Aids Council (Freedom Centre), Beyond Blue, National LGBTI Health Alliance, The Commission for Children and Young People, City of Melbourne, Department of Justice Victoria, Murdoch University, The Australian National University, Queensland University of Technology, University of South Australia, Western Sydney University, Edith Cowan University, The University of Melbourne, Flinders University and RMIT University.

online qualitative survey data, which investigated the perceptions and pedagogical reflections of high school English teachers regarding topics inclusive of diversity in gender and sexuality. In this way, the research strategy did not attempt to control variables, but to ascertain a 'snapshot' of the English teachers' thinking at one point in time (Kelly, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003). The data provided glimpses into teachers' negotiations of employing LGBTQI themed texts under specific heteronormative and cisnormative conditions of surveillance. With guidance and approval from the Institutional Human Research Ethics' Committee, open-ended survey questions were carefully planned so that participants could articulate their perceptions regarding questions such as: In your view, to what extent are secondary schools providing a safe and welcoming environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex (LGBTQI) students? To what extent do you think that LGBTQI issues are included or addressed in the secondary English curriculum? Are you aware of specific resources or texts that deal with LGBTQI issues or themes, and are used in the English classroom? Please describe these resources or texts, and how useful you consider them to be.

68 WA high school English teachers completed the online survey, which was distributed through LGBTQI news sites, Ally groups, professional networks, etc. In terms of teacher profiles, approximately 60% of participants had more than 15 years teaching experience, with the remainder having less than 15 years teaching experience. Approximately 70% of participants were currently teaching in the government school system, while the remaining participants were teaching in Catholic, Independent or other systems (with approximately 6% not currently teaching). Approximately 70% of participants were teaching in metropolitan areas with the remainder generally teaching in suburban, regional or remote settings. Although response items such as genderqueer, transgender or other were provided, approximately 90% of respondents self-identified as female with the remaining respondents self-identifying as male. Approximately 70% of respondents were born in Australia, with the remainder born overseas. The first language of approximately 95% of respondents was English with the remaining respondents having English and/or at least one other language as their first language. Approximately 70% of respondents were aged over 45 years, with the remainder being between 44 and under 25 years.

To promote reflexivity as well as data triangulation, researchers' reflections were significant for unravelling dynamic qualitative processes (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Several researchers (Adams & Jones, 2011; McDonald, 2013, 2016) have highlighted synergies between reflexivity and queer theory, such as breaking down pre-suppositions about what is normal in terms of constructing knowledge and identities. McDonald (2013) in particular, adopted a stance of 'queer reflexivity' to designate a 'reflexive questioning of the categories we use to identify people while recognizing 'the shifting nature of the researcher and participants over the course of the research process' (p. 127). Moreover, Ferguson (2013) argued that to transcend 'stagnant forms of scientific discourse' (p. 1) while embracing queer and trans approaches, qualitative research demands a non-binary interpretation of reflexivity, to allow for creativity and openness in data analysis. In this spirit, through a constant comparative approach, the researchers coded data with developing themes, first focused, and subsequently linked to concepts from the literature (Charmaz, 2006; Jones et al., 2014), while recognizing the shifting nature of power in relation to gender, sexuality, social class, race, etc.

Undertaking an iterative process of analysis, linking theory and practice, the authors acknowledged their own subjectivities while attempting to more deeply understand the world as represented through the participants (Crotty, 1998). For example, "Author 1", a

privileged white, middle class cis-identifying, heterosexual woman had been sensitized through her reading of queer and anti-oppressive literature to systemic and intersectional forces at play in the lives of gender and sexually diverse individuals (Kumashiro, 2002). "Author 2", also a privileged, white middle-class cis-identifying gay male with a history of classroom English teaching in high schools also brought a lived experience and a queer and trans informed epistemological grounding in reading literature centred on the lives and accounts of gender and sexually diverse people (Ahmed, 2006; Lane, 2009; Namaste, 2000; Stryker, 2006). While laying no clear claims to a subaltern status, such sensitivities and access to anti-oppressive, queer and trans informed scholarship equipped the researchers to understand their own identifications and locations in networked power relations, as gendered, raced, classed and able-bodied individuals, and attuned them to practices of *privileging* and *othering* in their own lives (Fine, 1994; Haraway, 1988).

5. Presentation of results

5.1. Inclusive secondary schools: a safe and welcoming environment

When invited to comment on the extent to which secondary schools were providing a safe and welcoming environment for LGBTQI students, approximately 75% of participants responded negatively or drew attention to competing negative and positive discourses. A recurring theme highlighted contextual factors, such as socio-economic status, religion, student population and educational programs, which were perceived to mediate school environments in relation to openness towards LGBTQI human rights. Acknowledging the multiple voices inherent in an individual's reflections, the dialogic nature of utterances can be framed through Bakhtin's (1981) concept of heteroglossia. For example, T 25 evoked complexity in her "experience of a single sex girls'" school, where the environment was "safe, physically and emotionally, but probably not yet welcoming". This utterance is illustrative of the heteroglossic tensions at play in this local single sex girls' school context, where on one level, T25 seems to acknowledge that there is a degree of security on the basis of gender affiliation and containment. However, T25's initial thought is undercut by a realisation that these spaces are simultaneously uncomfortable and precarious in terms of an anticipatory assurance of well-being, which is signified by the qualifier 'not yet'. There is also another layer of analysis here that speaks to a particular cisnormative logics and binary framing of gender (Rands, 2009; Serano, 2007), denying embodied differences and identifications which exist for any group of female students.

In addition, T 34 commented that,

'... some schools are working towards it [creating safe and inclusive environments] with Ally groups and supporting days like 'Wear it Purple' and IDAHOBiT, [International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia], which at least allows LGBTIQ students to feel supported and acknowledged on a couple of days through the year. Some schools also have adopted the "Beyond That's So Gay" program to try and eliminate homophobic language from the culture of some schools.'

Here, T34 reported that a safe and inclusive environment '... VASTLY depends on the school, whether or not it is single sex or co-ed, the socio-economic and/or cultural backgrounds of the majority of students.' Identifying layers of intervention, T34 begins by acknowledging the role that single day LGBTQI events can play in creating a safe and inclusive environment, but suggests the need for more sustained intervention over time to address 'homophobic

language'. The heteroglossic and polyphonic voice of the teacher is signalled by "at least", reflecting a degree of tension or slippage in discourse, which oscillates between varying levels of awareness, from an understanding that one-off events are insufficient, although not entirely inadequate, in terms of addressing a politics of recognition of gender and sexual diversity. T34 then shifts to considering a more programmatic intervention for eliminating anti-homophobic language, but qualifies that safety and inclusivity depend on the individual school, including mediating factors such as school type, socio-economic and/or cultural backgrounds. Noteworthy about the layered dimensions of awareness is that there appears to be some foreclosure around the need to address transphobia and bi-phobia, which speaks to many teachers' limited levels of awareness with regards addressing gender and sexual diversity (Rands, 2009).

Bakhtin's (1981) distinction in heteroglossia between authoritative discourses and internally persuasive discourses helps to elucidate internal tensions within the utterances of some respondents. Authoritative discourse refers to individuals' tendency to assimilate external ideologies, often through allegiance to institutions or political power, which preclude questioning or negotiation, while Internally Persuasive Discourse symbolizes one's inner speech, which is open to dialogical relations. Internally Persuasive Discourse may also oppose authority through personal opinion, which is not necessarily supported by external authorities or acknowledged in society. Some teachers, for example, commented that religion impacted school environments in relation to LGBTQI rights and the extent to which LGBTQI topics are addressed in the secondary English curriculum. T 9 indicated, for example, that "Catholic education has a long way to go", while T44 drew on their experience teaching in a Catholic school to describe how this context mediated staff discourses "... it is difficult for staff to openly support gay rights etc. although most do." Acknowledging that teachers were cautious in anticipation of parental "backlash" regarding LGBTQI topics, T44 elaborated that "for obvious reasons ... we have to be careful what is said to students in case parents get angry". Highlighting the complex layers of tension across school environments, T43's utterances pointed to range of mediating factors, such as: diverse teacher voices with 'individual classes', 'Catholic teaching about homosexuality in Religious Education', a trend of 'homosexual' issues being absent from the curriculum and a caution about maintaining '... the Catholic ethos of the school':

I think this depends largely on the teachers involved. The Catholic teaching about homosexuality is certainly taught in Religious Education; however, it depends on the teacher what they say to individual classes. Homosexuality is not usually an issue explored in our texts studied, as we have to be careful to maintain the Catholic ethos of the school.

As per Bakhtin (1981), such utterances point not only to a dominant doctrine, but also to the multiplicity of individual voices on which dialogization depends, with language differences evolving through diverse themes and dispersing '... into the rivulets and droplets of social heteroglossia ...' (p. 288). Embedded in the heteroglossic nature of such utterances are tensions between traditional and innovative forces; as language develops and shifts through past, present and future, temporality plays a role. For example, in an Irish educational context imbued with Catholic traditions, O'Donoghue and Guerin (2017) argued that a complex tapestry exists with regards to implementing new school interventions amidst practices such as homophobic and transphobic bullying; teachers' and students' unease with discussing such topics and the absence or presence of school stakeholder relationships can support or restrict the application of interventions.

Furthermore, Bailey (2016) recounted the complexity of introducing new policy guidelines aiming to counter homophobic and transphobic bullying in a mainly denominational primary Irish education system, which has historically, defined transexuality and homosexuality as a sin. Unveiling tension between T43's internally persuasive discourse indicating that inclusion of LGBTQI topics was complex and mitigated through Catholic teachings as well as the approach of individual teachers, T44 asserted that in Catholic schools "... no student would be discriminated against on the grounds of these issues "

Emerging from this micro-layer of language pertaining to the individual student in a Catholic setting are broader concerns about human rights and anti-discriminatory legislation, speaking to Bakhtin's (1981) assertion that language remains inherently dialogic and positioned through the colliding interests of multiple social groups. A salient example is illustrated through the Ontario Government's 2012 passing of Bill 13, which allowed Gay-Straight Alliances to be established in all public and private schools in Ontario, Canada. This legislation was met with lengthy, mediatized debate, particularly between the Ontario government and one Catholic school board that banned Gay-Straight Alliances, based on the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association's position that GSAs countered Catholic values and traditions (Martino, 2014; Liboro, Travers, & St John, 2015; Nonato, 2012). As the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association supported student rights to establish GSAs (Boudreau, 2012) and some students resisted the banning of GSAs, the heteroglossic nature of the debate intensified as concerns were raised over the terminology defining GSAs, which could be perceived as excluding some members of the LGBTQI community, such as trans or bisexual people (Pike, 2012). But more profoundly, the institutional reaction against GSAs in Ontario unleashed an epistemological critique about the legitimacy of government funding in a Catholic system which appeared to breach the constitutional rights of LGBTQI self-affirming students via a doctrine of 'love of the sinner, hate the sin', thereby unveiling contradictions in pastoral care. (Martino, 2014, p. 1; Callaghan, 2014, p. 29). Whilst Rasmussen (2015) argued that differences between the Canadian, Irish and Australian education systems must be considered when contemplating rights for religious and sexual freedom, and religious exemptions, such controversies on the international front reinforce Bakhtin's (1981) premise that words are necessarily imbued in a complex contour of semantics as well as historical, political and legislative contexts.

As the theme of discrimination was re-voiced through teachers' responses, T1 identified their school as a place where bullying through misplaced humour stifles individuals' rights: "It still seems to be a place where joking about being different is okay but being it is not." Bakhtin (1981) argued that all situations are historical, with individual and systemic shifts in social boundaries unfolding slowly in complex and interrelated ways. Significantly, the image of an unsafe place alludes to Western Australia's strong legacy of homophobia in education, public services, accommodation, etc. (Flood & Hamilton, 2005; Kendall, 1996). Until 2002, WA remained the only Australian jurisdiction to possess an age of consent of 21 years for same sex relations, whereas for heterosexuals, the age of consent was 16 years (Law Reform, Decriminalization of Sodomy Act, 1989, WA Parliament). Equally discriminatory, until 2002, the 1989 Education Act's proselytizing clause, stipulated that WA teachers were not allowed to *promote* homosexuality, which limited the type of information teachers could provide to students and included a stipulation that *promoting homosexuality* was against the law (Carbery, 2014; Malek, 2006).

Another recurring theme regarding the extent to which secondary schools are providing a safe and welcoming environment for LGBTQI affirming students highlighted the allegiance of

teachers to the school in which they taught, a discourse which positively underscored one institution's openness over the failure of others to foster such necessary conditions. T20 stated, for example, that although the majority of schools were not providing a warm and welcoming environment for LGBT identifying students, she was "proud of the response" of her school. Other schools, continued T 20 "... don't have the transparency that our school has". As comparisons reverberated across participant responses, it can be argued that these teachers re-articulated competing narratives of allegiance and school performativity, resulting in a process of differentiating their own schools by 'othering' others deemed to be less inclusive.

Foucault (1995) argued that as individuals become entangled with the disciplinary principle of power, the institutional gaze is distributed and re-distributed from the hierarchy and throughout internal mechanisms, such as daily rituals, ceremonies, values and attitudes. Hence, across the physical design of the school, as well in broader architectural structures, the individual begins to take responsibility for regulating their own behaviour and that of others, in a complex network of self-observation and observation. Such regulatory norms, which involve some teacher participants demarcating other school spaces as not as inclusive, evoke a certain performative enactment of a celebratory safe schools anti-bullying discourse whose liberal renderings reflect a more official articulation of a centralized equity policy. In this sense, it is a manifestation of panoptic power articulated at the micro level of the individual teacher's citation of an institutional norm and discourse in constituting their schools as certain sorts of places. For instance, a *bad* school is one that does not provide a safe space or endorse an anti-bullying policy.

In this regard, T20, T43 and T26 engage in a surveillance of sorts that points to broader judgments about the quality of schools as safe and welcoming spaces. For example, T26 affirmed, "At our school we celebrate difference and students report that they feel safe and welcome." Similarly, T26 indicated, "Some schools discriminate against students who don't conform." T26 proposed that at previous schools, some students "... were not allowed to take a gay partner to the school ball". Similarly, T 43 recounted that in her current school, 'the environment is excellent and continuing to get better.' However, at T43's previous school, "... it would be a disaster for such students to openly admit their circumstances". The allure of such narratives which involve teachers differentiating schools on the basis of their commitment to inclusivity, is elucidated through the Foucauldian informed work of Ball (2000), arguing that individuals and organizations produce fabrications which are inspired by impression management, policy priorities and constraints (see Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2017). In this vein, teachers actively engage with official discourses about anti-discriminatory and safe schools in ways that highlight particular value judgments about the quality of a school culture concerning inclusivity, and how it is being enacted more broadly by other stakeholders.

5.2. The english curriculum: addressing LGBTQI issues

When teachers were asked to what extent they thought LGBTQI issues were included or addressed in the secondary English curriculum, approximately 83% of respondents indicated such issues were addressed somewhat, or not included. An overriding theme highlighted the perception that English teachers could employ certain texts to provide opportunities for students to engage with topics surrounding gender and sexuality (see also Pearce et al., 2016). However, the effectiveness of pedagogical moments to disrupt heteronormativity and *cis*-normativity appeared mediated by numerous contextual factors, such as text selection, attitudes of

teachers and the school community, with many responses referring to the limitations imposed by an external Authoritative Discourse (Bakhtin, 1981). Bushnell (2003) argued that external discourses, linked to recent educational reforms, might subordinate teachers and limit their professional opportunities to act autonomously. Rather than being afforded opportunities to act and reflect collaboratively within their communities, teachers are monitored daily by schools and externally based institutions within a panopticon of surveillance (Foucault, 1995).

For example, T32 raised the issue of how surveillance of a curricular nature, was regulated by mandatory text selection in English. "Some texts we study do allow the exploration of these [LGBTQI] issues but they are not mandatory". Similarly, T 44 detailed their perceptions about the curriculum's insufficient inclusivity, while alluding to restrictions placed on teachers' text selection and opportunities to facilitate class discussions: "I think it could be a lot more inclusive but we are restricted to what types of texts and the depth that we go into when discussing it as a class." Whilst T21 also invoked their pedagogical practice employing a particular text, limitations related once again to parental surveillance in a religious environment. "I usually do address this by use of *Mum's the Word*. However, some of the students at my present school will have to be excluded on religious grounds and a parent's request."

Underpinning contextual constraints in the English classroom, the perpetual flow between teachers' external and internal surveillance and regulation (Foucault, 1995) can also serve to obscure or erase the representation of LGBTQI lives. For example, below, T4's language candidly acknowledges how the absence of texts depicting lesbian or transgender students in the English curriculum may limit the discourse defining 'normality'. On a broader level, T 4's comments affirm that since the 1970s, characters, which self-identify with the LGBTQI community, have been increasingly depicted in multi-modal texts (Logan et al., 2014):

In Year 10, we study the novel *Jarvis 24* by David Metzenthen. A minor character, Mikey, is gay and has left home because his family do not accept this ... but students accept him and do not bat an eyelid about his sexuality. Novels/films with characters who are gay are no longer unusual. They have been normalised. Nobody cares or notices. It is no big deal. However, I am yet to teach any texts which deal with lesbian or transgender characters

But disquiet lingers regarding the portrayal of LGBTQI characters and assumptions about educational stakeholders' responses to texts concerning diverse gender and sexuality. While the desire to include LGBTQI perspectives in young adult literature is laudable (Banks, 2009), T4's testimony alludes to the unsettling power of heteronormativity and *cis*-normativity, which can be subtly produced "... as much through what is not iterated as through what is explicitly stated or enacted." (Saunston, 2013, p. 395). With respect to T4's acknowledgment that trans or lesbian literature had not yet been utilized in the English classroom, Frohard-Dourlent (2016) argued that although they may be supportive of trans identifying students, teachers can be restricted by their own cisnormativity and normalized ways of communicating with students, as well as the tendency for school policies to focus mainly on anti-bullying practices. More generally, Bedford (2009) commented that empowering teachers is only one aspect of transforming schools to challenge heteronormativity and gender binaries, which also requires engagement from other school stakeholders as well as those from the broader community; reinforcing this recommendation, Kosciw, Greytak, Giga, Villenas, and Danischewski (2016) underscored the importance of comprehensive policies, in which

teachers and other school staff members collaborate to support LGBTQI self-affirming students.

As participants described the limited extent to which LGBTQI issues were included or addressed in the English curriculum, the theme of surveillance and self-surveillance was reiterated through a number of teacher responses. Whilst the subject of English can be characterized by a centralized force attempting to pull together a multiplicity of voices (Bakhtin, 1981), the theme of surveillance also points paradoxically to the work of Garcia and Slesaransky-Poe (2010) who concluded that in many cases, the absence of intervention to interrupt heteronormativity, and we would add, cisnormativity, through curriculum, was related to teachers' "lack of knowledge about how to respond appropriately, as well their own blinders about personally held prejudices and assumptions." (p. 245) (see Payne & Smith, 2014).

T5's perceptions, for instance, focused on how the appropriateness of LGBTQI content may be queried, and how students may react negatively. "... t is an area which is still cloudy in terms of appropriate content for some and may also illicit a negative response from students" (T5). Acknowledging that LGBTQI issues are included in the Curriculum in "... a limited way," T41 re-voiced the idea of appropriateness, asserting "... that is as is should be." In this case, T41 highlighted a perception that high school students were 'impressionable' and introducing LGBTQI issues could provoke confusion in adolescents. "Students at this age are very impressionable and making this any sort of a focus could cause emotional confusion" (T41). In this vein, tensions between teachers' language and attitudes are significant, with LGBTQI topics typically perceived as irrelevant or uncomfortable for educational institutions (Carpenter & Lee, 2010; Sedgwick, 1990).

5.3. Deploying critical literacies: against the grain of surveillance and self-surveillance

Approximately 51% of respondents indicated that they were aware of specific resources or texts dealing with LGBTQI issues, with 35% of respondents describing these resources and their usefulness. These teachers highlighted the novel as the most popular text form. Other genres included films, television series, short stories, plays, classical literature, (e.g. the work of Shakespeare), still images, newspapers and non-fiction texts, such as documentaries. A number of respondents narratively framed text selection, describing their pedagogical repertoire as secondary English teachers facilitating critical literacy discussions, which could be viewed as pushing away from a centrifugal force (Bakhtin, 1981).

T8 commented on their work deconstructing notions about gender. "I use a short story called 'Blurring the Boundaries' where the narrator's identity remains concealed but presumed to be male. It is revealed that they are female only in the final paragraph. I use it as a discussion point." Although this short story limits gender representations to male and female, T8's deployment of the subject pronoun 'I' in relation to interrogating texts and facilitating a discussion with students appeared to embody an internally persuasive discourse, which potentially brushes against the grain of regulatory external surveillance (Bakhtin, 1981; Foucault, 1995). Similarly, T9 describes below how they used the novel *Destroying Avalon* (to facilitate "conversation about gender and sexuality"), but due to surveillance and the potential of parental backlash, the text had not been 'revisited'.

I have used *Destroying Avalon* (Kate McCaffery, 2006) in a year 10 classroom before, which did have some success with driving conversation about gender and sexuality, however the faculty frowned upon the use of the text due to the possibility of it offending parents, and it has not been revisited this year (T9).

T9's testimony about the censoring of *Destroying Avalon* (McCaffery, 2006) in the English classroom illustrates how through surveillance, disciplinary power is woven systematically through the practices, aims and economy of an institution (Foucault, 1995). The integrated system of power is exerted through "... a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally; this network 'holds' the whole together and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another ..." (Foucault, 1995, p. 177). Thus, it can be argued that through a top down intervention, the "faculty" exerted disciplinary power over one teacher's text selection. Yet the power was also linked to the lateral network embodying the parental community, or in this case the fear of "offending parents"; enacted through surveillance, such power plays out in teachers' pedagogical repertoire through caution or avoidance and is re-circulated across the institution (Malins, 2016; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2011; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2014; Taylor et al., 2011).

Despite this curricular censorship, performed and effected through institutional gestures, attitudes, images and discourses (Butler, 1990), T20 related how they broadened textual and thematic selection by presenting a short story and a feature film which engaged students to unpack representations of gender, sexual diversity, race, marginalization and sub-cultures, through a lens of building alliances among different communities:

There's one short story I use about a bisexual / gender queer teenager (girl), whose gender isn't revealed until the end of the story. Kids enjoy it, it makes them think about the assumptions we make as a culture / society and it makes them question if it matters how someone looks, who they're attracted to or how they identify. I often shows excerpts from 'Priscilla Queen of the Desert' when I am teaching feature film - specifically the scene where the drag queens perform for the aboriginal community in the outback - and we discuss the marginalisation of certain sub-cultures /people and how that is brought together. I know of others who have used the short story I sourced in a similar way, as I took the idea of using 'Priscilla' in that way from someone else (T20).

The scaffolded use of texts and their integration into a unit of work that addresses the complexity of gender and sexuality is evident here (see Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2017; Ryan, Patraw, & Bednat, 2013). For teachers wishing to integrate LGBTQI themes in the English curriculum, queer and trans theories in conjunction with critical literacy, which question taken-for granted assumptions and view texts as embedded within social, political and historical institutions, can provide useful pedagogical opportunities to counter heteronormativity and cis-normativity (Malatino, 2015; Staley & Leonardi, 2016). T20's explicit reference to genderqueer youth also signals a gender complex and non-binary understanding, one that speaks to a more *universalizing* rather than *minoritizing* approach to addressing gender and sexual diversity in schools (Rands, 2009; Sedgwick, 1990). Malatino (2015), for example, argues against an inclusive educational approach that merely focuses on the trans individual as object of the teacher's pedagogical gaze for teaching about gender diversity. Such a focus rejects representations of transgender subjects as "exceptional beings that expose the rigidity and coercion implicit in gendering processes" (p. 402). Rather, Malatino advocates a pedagogical commitment and strategies involving the deployment of texts that illustrate the ways in which "trans experiences "resonate with other types of struggles and complexities with gender normativity" (p. 406). In this respect, T20's pedagogy of critical literacy to examine "the marginalization of certain sub-cultures" in the English classroom attests to the

hopefulness of broaching discussions about diversity in gender and sexuality in ways which acknowledge the impact of societal disparities and intersecting categories, such as language, socioeconomic status, race, spirituality, age and disability (Blackburn & Smith, 2010; Burke & Greenfield, 2016).

While T8, T9 and T20 have progressed towards supporting inclusivity for LGBTQI affirming individuals through critical literacy, which can lead all students to broader discussions about anti-oppressive education and the role of citizenship in social change (Burke & Greenfield, 2016; Kumashiro, 2002), these three teachers represent a small minority of respondents. As commented T33, the role of the teacher is crucial to acknowledging diversity in gender and sexuality in the English classroom; in fact, many teachers may simply not consider these topics when sourcing texts for curricular planning:

... this [including LGBTQI issues in the secondary curriculum] is only something that is included IF the specific teacher involves sources relevant texts. If this doesn't cross his/her/their mind, then it's entirely possible that there could be no comment or recognition of LGBTQI kids/people/issues in the English classroom from one end of the year to the other (T33).

It is also noteworthy to mention that despite T8, T9 and T20's implementation of critical literacy activities, to disrupt discriminatory school practices, particularly in relation to addressing gender complexity and transgender informed understandings and erasure (Namaste, 2000), long-term and sustainable planning is required, with appropriate connections to epistemologies that reach beyond the tokenistic embodiment of trans individuals (see for example, Malatino, 2015; Peters, 2006; Wyld, 2015).

6. Discussion

In contexts privileging heterosexist and cisgenderist discourses through formal and informal curricula, discussing topics pertaining to diverse gender identities and sexual orientations can be challenging for many educators (Meyer, Tilland-Stafford, & Airton, 2016; Murray, 2015). For Meyer (2007), "Queer theory offers ... a lens through which educators can transform their praxis so as to explore and celebrate the tensions and new understandings created by teaching new ways of seeing the world." (p. 15). In fact, Kumashiro (2002) argued that teaching from a queer and anti-oppressive perspective involves challenges, such as accepting that there will be discomfort during which learners must re-think existing knowledge, pre-suppositions and prejudices about the definition of normal.

Methodologically, it is important to acknowledge that participants in this research project are not representative of all English secondary teachers and responses were gathered at one point in time, which represents a limitation of surveys (Walter, 2010, pp. 151–182). Below, Fig. 1, through a set of concentric circles indicating that all inner circles are encompassed by the outer circle, represents a Bakhtinian and Foucauldian infused lens to examine the inter-related discourses underpinning high school English teachers' reflections about the extent to which schools are perceived as welcoming and inclusive of LGBTQI issues. Based on the authors' epistemological reflections through the various stages of engagement with the literature and data analysis, Fig. 1 represents an exploratory framework, rather than a prescriptive tool, which has been applied outright to the data set. At the heart of the lens, the inner circle represents a plurality of dialogic utterances through the concept of heteroglossic language (Bakhtin, 1981). These dialogic utterances are characterized by on-going struggles between internal persuasive discourse, allowing teachers to freely recount their

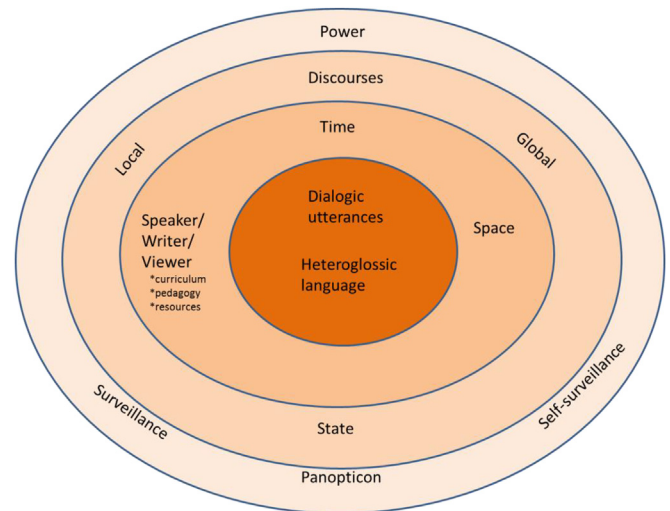


Fig. 1. Teachers' reflections: A Foucauldian and Bakhtinian lens.

narratives using personal mannerisms, accents and editing, and authoritative discourse, representing dominant and inflexible language that often envelops teachers from an external vantage point (Bakhtin, 1981). Whilst Bakhtin's authoritative discourse points to a dominant or monoglossic language, Francis (2012) explicated that on a nuanced level, Bakhtin painted official national languages as fluid and embedded in dialogue between self and others, via multiple and interrelated modes, such as speaking, reading, listening, writing and critical thinking.

Fig. 1's second concentric circle highlights fluidity between time and space, which Bakhtin (1981 p. 274) described as *chronotope* or literally time/space, including the significant, complex and non-linear impact of history on heteroglossic language. Interwoven with space and time, the vision of one speaker, writer or viewer, shifts and alters heteroglossic language; on an institutional level, in practical terms, time and space are represented through key indicators, such as curriculum, resources and pedagogy. Represented through a third concentric circle, heteroglossic language coalesces and collides with local, global and state discourses. Finally, the outer concentric circle illustrates the 'architectural figure' of Bentham's 'Panopticon' (Foucault, 1995), operating in schools through a disciplinary network of regulatory surveillance and self-surveillance which, in this paper we have highlighted, is implicated in heteronormative and cisnormative systems that inform teachers pedagogical understandings. Despite the limitation of a single snap shot in time, the survey allowed for a structured yet flexible approach to examining a range of sub-topics across respondents from a wide variety of contexts (Patton, 2002). As we have illustrated through employing survey data, the panoptic network of power is evident in practices of regulatory surveillance that emerge in teachers' reflections on LGBTQI inclusive curriculum and pedagogy in the space of the English classroom and beyond. However, through a Bakhtinian lens we have also been conscious of wanting to illustrate how such surveillance and regulation cannot be seen simplistically and in an over-determining sense as an inevitable constraint.

Interwoven with Foucault's regimes of panoptic surveillance, Bakhtin's (1981) concept of heteroglossia, which views language as dialogic utterances consistently mediated through the discourses of decentralization and centralization, also sheds light on the tensions inherent within and across teachers' perceptions about broaching matters of diversity in gender and sexuality in schools:

Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance, the utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualized embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well

(1981, p. 4).

In this sense, time, space and context intersect with dialogic utterances (Francis, 2012; Ruffolo, 2009), with results highlighting many responses characterized by tensions and ambiguity, evoking the push and pull between teachers' authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse (Bakhtin, 1981). For example, whilst some respondents highlighted the perception that English teachers could employ literacy resources to provide opportunities for students to engage with topics surrounding gender and sexuality, these teachers also suggested that the effectiveness of disrupting heteronormativity and cis-normativity was mediated by numerous contextual discourses, such as text selection, attitudes of teachers and the school community. From this perspective, spoken, written or visual language is viewed as inseparable from context (Santaemilia & Bou, 2008). Consequently, teachers are understood not so much as passive recipients of regimes of hetero and cis-normalization, but as actively negotiating their pedagogical understandings and perceptions of and interactions with other educational stakeholders, such as students, families, co-workers and the public (Bushnell, 2003, p. 257). This acknowledgment of the interwoven and sometimes conflicting nature of individual and communal discourses sheds light on the results of Van Leent (2014) who described the pedagogy of some Australian teachers for addressing LGBTQI issues in the classroom as avoidance, uncertainty or strict segregation of home versus school curriculum.

Thus, teachers' comments reflect the extent to which a number of secondary schools are providing a safe and welcoming environment, an English curriculum and literacy resources, which respect the rights of LGBTQI affirming students. For example, narratives of teachers' allegiance to their schools with their official commitment to creating safe spaces reverberated with teacher comments unveiling regulatory norms governing the terms of practices of external and internal surveillance, particularly with regards to the pedagogical space for enacting the English curriculum through the selection of literacy resources. However, as we have seen, such iterative discourses enable school authorities and teachers to maintain an erasure and silencing of LGBTQI representation, while still investing in a logics of maintaining a commitment to ensuring school safety for all students. The constant ebb and flow of disciplinary power thus sheds light on the apparent disconnection between some teachers' seemingly supportive discourses, and their unwillingness to 'go out on a limb' to interrupt heterosexist or heteronormative discourses (Clark, 2010).

More recently, Clark (2016) argued that the historical vestige of institutional discrimination against LGBTQI individuals in Australia must be examined through current anti-discriminatory legislation exemptions for religious schools. Although in Australia, diversity exists across an increasingly significant religiously affiliated sector (Maddox, 2014) and transgender issues have not been specifically discussed in religious exemptions, Norden (2016) suggested that the assumption of heterosexuality and exclusion of diverse sexualities with which students and staff in Catholic high schools may self-identify, could breach the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, Evans and Ujvari (2009) elucidated that

religious exemptions may send a message that '... discrimination is relatively minor in comparison to other forms of harm against which the law protects and from which most religious schools have no exemptions.' (p. 42).

Even when teachers deploy a pedagogical repertoire to address LGBTQI topics, as unveiled in T4's comments about the novel *Jarvis 24*, if experiences pertaining to diversity in gender and sexual orientation are portrayed only through minor characters plagued by family difficulties, it would seem reasonable to assert that the English curriculum remains dominated by heteronormativity and cis-normativity, implicitly positioning individuals who do not fit the norm as abjected victims with the risk of casting them "... as abnormal and thus inferior ..." (Blackburn & Smith, 2010, p. 625). In stating, "Nobody cares or notices ..." T4 appears to suggest that, at least in one classroom, differences in sexual orientation or gender will not detract from a student's right to access high quality education through curriculum (<http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu/au>). However, if educational stakeholders adopt dismissive attitudes towards the depiction of LGBTQI lives, the necessity of interrogating the status quo in the English curriculum remains decidedly pressing.

Indeed, the current focus on a national Australian curriculum, with a companion state document (WASCSA English Scope and Sequencing), is testimony to the eclipsing of knowledge pertaining to topics, such as diversity in genders and sexualities, over the elaboration of traditional literacy skills, such as grammar and phonemic awareness. Furthermore, following T9's critical deployment of *Destroying Avalon*, the school's censorship highlighted the controversial nature of the novel's subject matter. Ironically, the novel's plot is driven through the story of a cis-gendered, heterosexual identifying female high school student, while the one character perceived to be 'gay', is allocated a secondary role, and ultimately does not identify as 'gay' or queer.

7. Concluding remarks

With specific reference to the Western Australian context, this paper was concerned to investigate how high school English teachers navigate and negotiate the teaching of gender and sexuality in their classrooms. Despite the pedagogical repertoire of some English teachers and the existence of state discourses, such as the Western Australian School Curriculum and Standards Authority (2013), stipulating that differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, language ethnicity, linguistic background, socioeconomic status, disability or geography must not detract from students' right to obtain a quality education, our survey data reinforce the results of Rhodes (2009) who argued that representations of LGBTQI lives are generally non-existent in the English classroom and the Australian curriculum. Our research also suggests that while the voices of English teachers collided with multiple state discourses, such as The Education Act of WA (1999) and the grass roots work of government and volunteer organizations aiming to advocate for the human rights of the LGBTQI community, homophobia, heteronormativity, cisnormativity and transphobia continue to impact negatively on student well-being in schools (see Martino, 2000; Hillier et al., 1998; Hillier, Turner & Mitchell, 2005; Hillier et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2014; Ullman & Ferfolja, 2015). It is also noteworthy that national discourses such as the Melbourne Declaration (2008) espouse high quality education, free from discrimination regarding gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, pregnancy, ethnicity health, geographic location or economic background, while appearing to trump sociocultural diversity over allegiance to centralized academic excellence, via a high stakes National Assessment Program.

Rather than celebrating human strengths and differences, a high

stakes' assessment discourse can normalize the enactment of literacy through performance, thereby objectifying teachers and students in the ways they contribute to the global economy (Hynds, 2014). Reinforcing the challenges of progressing towards equality for people of diverse genders and sexualities in the Western World (Ferfolja, 2015; McGregor, 2008; Nash & Browne, 2015; Rayside, 2008), such contradictions speak to the push and pull of heteroglossic language, which falls, retracts, rebounds, and resonates locally, nationally and globally (Bakhtin, 1981). Meshing the lenses of Bakhtin (1981) and Foucault (1995) through concepts such as heteroglossia and surveillance, this WA study reveals the uneven and dynamic nature of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1995), and how local, state, national and global networks of governance impact on the provision of LGBTQI curriculum, pedagogy and resources.

Gathered under Western Australian neo-liberal governance, our survey data illustrate how teachers grappled with, at the prospect of introducing LGBTQI topics into the curriculum, and reveal that their voices were imbued with a multiplicity of tensions, contradictions and silences, but also possibilities (Bakhtin, 1981). As such, in support of the human rights of LGBTQI self-identifying students and their families, the Bakhtinian-Foucauldian lens presented in Fig. 1 allows for an emergent re-conceptualization of the epistemological basis for generating pedagogical insights and understandings about gender and sexual diversity in schools. Applied to future critical inquiry, we view the utility of this framework as exploring heuristic insights into the deployment of theory and understanding of the 'dispositif' (Bailey, 2013), with implications for making sense of the constraints and possibilities that govern how teachers think about their pedagogical engagement with gender and sexual diversity in schools. Exemplified through our engagement with the survey data, we see our research as providing a window onto a particular enactment of a dispositif, understood as a historically contingent and evolving network of "discursive and non-discursive [institutional, administrative and pedagogical] elements" (Bailey, 2013, p. 3). Ideally, to unravel the complex landscape of policy and education reform as it relates to how heteronormative and cisnormative governance impacts English teachers, and how they are mobilizing against it (Authors, under review), this concept of a 'dispositif' as a heuristic device (Bailey, p. 3) has the capacity to guide empirical investigations across a range of educational contexts. This exploratory framework considers shifting networked sites of administrative governance and elements such as time, space and diverse language modes, including digital texts and media.

Under current global political trends dominated by Donald Trump's discourse of American nationalism and fear of difference, the panopticon, as illustrated in Fig. 1, takes on a pivotal role through disciplinary practices of surveillance, judgments, expectations and demands flowing from and to wider discourses of accountability (Ball, 2000). Against this backdrop of neo-liberalism featuring an English curriculum that implicitly discourages teachers from initiating conversations regarding diverse genders and sexualities (Sauntson, 2013), our fusion of Bakhtinian and Foucauldian lenses reveals how authority, tensions and slippage interweave in teacher discourses and can be contextualized locally, nationally or globally through power and surveillance. These concepts are central to generating insights into how English teachers make sense of their pedagogical commitments to addressing gender and sexuality in the classroom.

Undoubtedly, English teachers and their enactment of the formal and informal curriculum are significant in refining resistance against a mode of governance which erases LGBTQI affirming individuals or relegates them to an abjected status as victim or other (Foucault, 1995; Garcia & Slesarsky-Poe, 2010; Rasmussen,

2006; Taylor et al., 2011). Hence, anti-oppressive education as well as queer and trans-informed scholarship are salient for critical changes in the English curriculum and teacher education. To this effect, in selecting meritorious LGBTQI literature that enables the disruption of curriculum through critical literacy and queer theory (and we would add Trans theory), Logan et al. (2014) proposed reflective questions such as: "What are the disciplinary and interdisciplinary connections with the text? Which salient content is conveyed by reading this text? In what way would an adolescent read this text?" (p. 32) Encouraging pre-service teachers to engage with challenging conversations about religion, gender identity and sexuality, the work of Killelea McEntarfer (2016, p. 117) emphasized the usefulness of Bakhtin's (1986) dialogic approach to enable "productive discussions across difference", allowing participants to better understand the embodiment of their own narratives and those of their peers.

Notwithstanding this productive curricular work, to support equality for all educational stakeholders, particularly LGBTQI affirming students, our Bakhtinian and Foucauldian analytic framework needs to be considered within a larger body of applied work in the fields of gender, queer, trans and feminist studies. Despite the significant role of teachers in countering heteronormativity, cisnormativity, transphobia and homophobia in schools, our results reinforce the conclusions of Bedord (2009) and Meyer et al. (2016), suggesting that for equality of LGBTQI affirming students, sustainable systemic change requires long-term collaboration with multiple stakeholders including parents/carers, principals, teacher educators, government and community representatives, as well as an intersectional approach to gender and sexuality, which considers race, ethnicity, class, religion, etc. Our research and its grounding in queer and trans-affirming epistemologies supports such a holistic community project, and sees an urgent need for policy reform encapsulating the multiplicity of diverse elements, such as discourses, ontology, history and practices that circulate and re-circulate in local and global education systems (Bailey, 2013).

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