13.

Pulling the monstrosity of (hetero) normativity out of the closet

Teacher education as a problem and an answer

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Background to the monstrous spectre of (hetero)normativity

For the purposes of this chapter we suggest that (hetero)normativity[1] is a 'malaise' and a 'monstrous spectre', a menacing form of 'symbolic violence' in classrooms within universities, schools and early childhood centres. It is time to bring it out of the closet, not because it is hidden from view but because it is ubiquitous as a naturalised or taken-for-granted practice in the closets of our perceptions. As authors and activist teacher educators/academics/researchers working in a range of education settings, we are committed to changing the status quo by challenging this malaise and monstrosity. The question we face is: *How might (hetero)normativity be exposed, challenged and addressed within initial teacher education (ITE) programmes?*

In this chapter we introduce and contextualise the issue of (hetero) normativity within our own ITE programmes, and identify some useful concepts. We provide a narrative that illustrates (hetero)normativity in education within Aotearoa/New Zealand. Writing in a manner so you, the reader, can 'perch on the periphery' and 'listen in' to the issues and dilemmas we are contending with in our work, we apply Bourdieu's theoretical framework to aid reflection. Our chapter concludes by offering some questions to consider how we, and you, might negotiate our situated practices to accost the spectre – that is, how we might expose and challenge heterosexuality and educate for positive change in relation to sexual diversity in schooling and teacher education.

1 While sex/gender/sexuality is our focus we see normativity as a bigger issue in which heteronormavity is manifested, hence our use of (hetero)normativity. We use heteronormativity when referring to others' work.

Over 15 years ago, Eyre (1997) noted that the term homophobia 'diverts attention away from larger social forces that support and maintain the normalisation of heterosexuality as well as away from the growing collective political activism of gay and lesbian groups' (199). At that time, heterosexism and heteronormativity were fairly new concepts in popular and academic discourse. According to Rubin (1993) the 'charmed circle' of normative heterosexuality, referred to in this chapter as (hetero)normativity, was characterised by a married, monogamous, procreative male–female heterosexual couple, who had a private sex life and did not use sex toys or pornography. The malaise – the durable social signs that seem so obvious that they avoid recognition, critique, challenge or change – has meant that normativity, in the form of heteronormative discourses that include heterosexism and homophobia identified in the charmed circle, still operates in contemporary times. Normativity – a set of ideas, attitudes, biases and discriminations – can shape the way people think, speak and act, and serves to 'other' those marginalised or alienated by the normalised or dominant identities, positionings and practices. The socially constructed 'normal' becomes naturalised and assumed.

Sedgwick (1990), among others, argues that normative understandings of gender and sexuality preserve heteronormativity. These understandings permeate our educational institutions such as schools, early childhood centres and sites of teacher education (Carpenter & Lee 2010; Ferfolja 2007; Meyer 2007; Prettyman 2007; Wickens & Sandlin 2010). Despite the development of critical theory, queer theory, seminal texts[2], and research showing how teachers have been able to counter heterosexism and improve conditions for young people in relation to sex, gender and sexualities[3], issues associated with (hetero)normativity are enduring and pervasive. While some positive changes are documented, educational institutions remain guilty of exacerbating heterosexism and homophobia through heteronormative discourses (Clark 2010; DeJean 2010; Hermann-Wilmarth & Bills 2010; Stiegler 2008; Wickens & Sandlin 2010). Many scholars argue that ITE programmes should incorporate into their curricula topics ranging from sexual orientation to heteronormativity (Bower & Klecka 2009; Clark 2010; Rofes 2005; Talburt 2004). The North American activist research project between teachers and teacher educators, *Acting Out* (Blackburn, Clark,

2 Such as Sears & Williams' 1997 *Overcoming Heterosexism and Homophobia: Strategies that work.*

3 For example see Athanases & Larrabee 2003; Robinson & Ferfolja 2008; Russell, Seif & Truong 2001; Wyatt et al. 2008.

Kenney & Smith 2010), captures some practices and reflections on anti-homophobic work. In a New Zealand context, Carpenter and Lee (2010, 115) noted that:

> *The problem [in our teacher education institution] appears to be how to build the bridge from where we are now – a situation where the hidden curriculum is heteronormativity – to an ideal faculty world where all groups and individuals are included and affirmed – where diversity truly means diversity – and which meets basic human rights obligations.*

Like others before them, Carpenter and Lee argued for change and proposed actions to disrupt the hidden curriculum of heteronormativity. While they were referring specifically to their institution, their problem resonates with ours.

Setting the scene

We, the authors of this chapter, work with pre-service 'emerging teachers'[4] in a contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand education setting. We have tried many suggestions from authors mentioned above, and more, as we assist educators to affirm sexual diversity and enhance learning possibilities for all. Our objectives are first, to aid emerging teachers to expose and destabilise normativity. Second, we aim to promote social inclusion through the understanding that diversity is often hidden and powerfully used. Third, we want others to recognise that they may be influenced by conscious and unconscious choices in their own embodiment of education. Finally, we want to encourage a critical education that generates positive outcomes for everybody. In these tasks we have experienced mixed results and associated complexities, as will be conveyed in our fictional narrative below.

We start by introducing a framework rooted in Bourdieu's (1991; 1998) concepts of *field*, *habitus*, *capital*, *symbolic violence* and *doxa*. Next we draw on field texts (Clandinin & Connelly 2000) – including emerging teacher surveys, anecdotal memories associated with our teaching, personal academic journal entries, and emerging teacher correspondence, which record and reflect on recently encountered situations related to sex/gender/sexuality. From these texts we create an interim research text (Clandinin

4 We are using the term 'emerging teacher' to refer to the student teachers in our pre-service programmes. This includes those in early childhood, primary and secondary education cohorts.

& Connelly 2000) in the form of a co-constructed fictional narrative. The narrative involves several characters: emerging teachers, teacher educators, and our imagined colleague Pierre. In it we dialogue with Bourdieu's concepts, and explore the logic of our teaching practices relative to notions of sex, gender and sexualities. In this way we hope to show how Bourdieu's concepts might translate in a conversation about (hetero)normativity, in order to help us understand our practices and devise ways to counter (hetero)normativity. Finally, we offer a series of reflexive questions to guide the next iteration of our practice, and perhaps yours. We seek to keep the 'idealistic' agenda alive, accepting that modest and reflexive attempts at practices that address our central question – how (hetero)normativity might be exposed and addressed within ITE programmes – are still valid. Positive transformation in the form of changing socialised norms may occur slowly, perhaps even only as intergenerational change (Bourdieu 1999). As the narrative shows, it is complex; there is no easy answer or clear 'one size fits all' path. As educators, therefore, we must continue to be diligent in our ITE pedagogical practices.

We are consciously telling a story embedded in contemporary New Zealand at the micro-level of the education *field* in which there are multiple players: emerging teachers in ITE programmes, the policy and institutional *doxa* of education/teacher education, and the schools and centres where emerging teachers experience teaching practice. At the same time our story is embedded in the macro-level *field* where (hetero)normativity is so taken-for-granted and unrecognised that we suggest it is a relatively unfamiliar concept to most people. This certainly holds true in our experiences with emerging teachers. We take the view that all of us need to 'do better' if the oppressive outcomes of (hetero)normativity are to be recognised and reduced.

Operationalising Bourdieu's concepts

Pierre Bourdieu was a well-known teacher, scholar, academic and activist in France in the latter half of the twentieth century. He was curious about how societies worked to (re)produce themselves. His desire for social justice meant he worked to expose violence in human practices at macro (society) and micro (individual) levels. What follows are brief plain-language explanations of concepts he developed in dialogue with his observations of the world – ones that challenge us to work in ways that bind theory and practice together.

Doxa

Doxa acts as an explanation of how (hetero)normativity can be so powerful that it is hidden. *Doxa* is 'an orthodoxy, a right, correct, dominant vision which has more often than not been imposed through struggles against competing visions' (Bourdieu 1998, 56). 'Straight' and 'gay' are not new terms for sexuality, yet the first is constructed as dominant, representing the norm, and the second as 'other', representing the marginalised and demonised. (Hetero)normativity then is understandable as a form of *doxa* – (hetero)*doxa* – a particular point of view, privileging that of the dominant. That these two constructs for sexuality are taken for granted as a catch-all for all forms of sexuality is an effect of (hetero)normativity.

> *[Doxa] presents and imposes itself as a universal point of view – the point of view of those who dominate by dominating the state and who have constituted their point of view as universal by constituting the state ... The major effect of historical evolution is to abolish history by relegating to the past, that is, to the unconscious, the lateral possibles that it eliminated (Bourdieu 1998, 7).*

In this case the diminished 'lateral possibles' include intersex, transgender, transsexual, pansexual, queer, lesbian, bisexual, gay, questioning and more. Having no perception or knowledge of what these laterals are, is an illustration of *doxa*. People who occupy the dominant space may not even perceive the common sense of a heterosexual world, as perception is the key to recognising difference and then embracing diversity. 'The primary experience of the world of common sense is a politically produced relation, as are the categories of perception that sustain it' (Bourdieu 1998, 56). We may use this concept in our consideration of sexualities, therefore, to ask:

- What *doxa* exist in teacher education and in the *field* of education?
- How do we sensitise both ourselves and emerging teachers to the orthodoxies?
- Who gains and who loses from the *doxa* that dominate?
- Which of the lateral identities are we familiar with?
- What processes operate to legitimate some while erasing others? How?

Field, habitus, capital and practice

Bourdieu used the term *field* to reflect relatively autonomous sets of social practices, such as education, medicine or media, often embodied in the practices of institutions such as schools, hospitals or television. While

integrated in policies, rules, regulations and historical ways of doing things, including taken-for-granted assumptions (*doxa*), these practices only come to life through humans embodying them in actions. Actual *practice* becomes pivotal to Bourdieu's explanation of what is going on. He used *habitus* to refer to our dispositions, attitudes and beliefs; our histories that work through our bodily practices; and our habits, often not at the conscious level and to some extent determined by the structures that socialise us to perceive and understand our world in a particular way. Where our *habitus* is valued within a *field*, we gain forms of *capital*, whether economic, social or cultural. To illustrate, a student announcing they are transgender who then loses friends, loses social capital and is valued less; an 'out' queer parent who is overlooked for the school board misses out on the prestige that might come from that position. Bourdieu believed, however, that we are able to reflect on what we do, and to change our dispositions, beliefs and attitudes, at the same time changing the social structures or *fields* to which we belong. With these concepts in mind, we might ask:

- How does our *habitus* challenge or reproduce (hetero)normativity?
- Which forms of *habitus* are strongly or poorly positioned within the *field*?
- What is valued and devalued in people and practices in relation to sex/gender/sexualities in education? Why and how?

Field and *habitus* are two sides of the same coin: they constitute each other. For example, in a teacher education class in which queer parents are never mentioned, (hetero)normativity plays out twice at the same time. It plays out in the *habitus* of the individuals who refer explicitly or implicitly to parents being a male–female couple, as well as in the *field* of education via supported structures, for example by a lack of acknowledgment of any parents who are not heterosexual. In educational settings, examples might include discouraging a boy from using a pink handbag; referring to parents without being explicit that alternatives to dominant heterosexual parenting exist; presenting only traditional parent/family representations in children's picture books; insisting on male–female partnerships for school balls; and the presence or lack of allied associations at the university campus.

(Hetero)normativity also plays out in the hidden curriculum. For example, diversity targets for teacher education are regularly associated with ethnicity and gender but not sexualities; teachers may refuse to acknowledge children's/students' sexuality; schools have 'boys' and 'girls' toilets; there are

difficulties in talking about sexuality across teacher education programmes other than in courses about 'diversity' or 'health'; and 'being out' in education settings is censored, especially for emerging teachers who are regularly counselled by peers, teachers and others to remain closeted while on practicum.

These are all illustrations of *symbolic power* and violence, forces that may not seem as important or recognisable as physical power and violence and are therefore perhaps even more powerful. With these things in mind, we ask:

- How do we recognise and critique *field* and *habitus* to understand what part teachers/teacher educators play in perpetuating (hetero) normativity?
- What forms of power, *capital* and violence are circulating?

Symbolic power, capital and violence

Symbolic power is 'invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it' (Bourdieu 1991, 164). Those who have *capital*, or value, have this power. With this authority they have more opportunity to frame those practices and dispositions that are most valued – and which they are already more likely to have. It is a bit like the rich getting richer because they possess *economic capital* to hire lawyers to find loopholes in tax laws, which enable them to profit. Heterosexuals value and reinforce heterosexuality as dominant and as the 'normal' way of being. Historically, there were advantages to being considered heterosexual; those who were not were encouraged to hide under the cover of that which had value: assumed heterosexuality (sometimes referred to as 'not coming out', 'passing' or being 'in the closet'). *Symbolic violence* occurs where the 'dominated lifestyles [e.g. queer] are almost always perceived, even by those who live them, from the destructive and reductive point of view of the dominant aesthetic' (Bourdieu 1998, 9).

Symbolic violence plays out when practices, embodied as the (individual or group) *habitus*, are complicit in one's own oppression. When this occurs it supports the illusion of the naturalness of the practice that counteracts one's own interest. Embedded in institutional structures, symbolic violence may become difficult to recognise, let alone to speak about and heal. This is because such structures become second nature and are 'common sense' practices within that *field*'s operation. For example, a negative and

homophobic response towards a transgendered peer from a 'closeted gay' pre-service teacher could be considered an act of symbolic violence, because the gay teacher is adding to his own oppression by devaluing his non-normative peer. Further examples of symbolic violence include lining children up as 'girls and boys'; assigning roles to students in school productions in ways that fit heteronormative stereotypes; only talking about diversity/inclusion in terms of disability; assuming heterosexual families are safe for children; imposing a religious belief system on classroom interactions; teaching sexuality as only biological reproductive sex; allowing students to opt out of sexuality education; avoiding discussions of cisnormativity for fear of being outed; or introducing a lecturer's same-sex partner to students as a 'colleague' rather than partner. These practices can trap already marginalised people into no-win situations, adding more *symbolic violence* to the taken-for-granted state of (hetero)normativity. With these ideas in mind we ask:

- How might we value all forms of sexuality using different forms of *capital*? What do teachers/teacher educators do to contribute to or counteract *symbolic violence* in relation to sex/gender/sexualities?

As we reflect on our practices with emerging teachers, in the narrative that follows, we use Bourdieu's concepts of *doxa*, *field*, *habitus*, *capital* and *symbolic violence* as a framework for understanding 'what is going on'. We illustrate the complexity of 'where we are now' (Carpenter & Lee 2010, 115) as we ask ourselves, our readers, our future students and our colleagues, 'Where to next?' This questioning is vital if we are to resist the malaise of the status quo and honour basic human rights as we challenge (hetero) normativity.

(Hetero)*doxa* of practices in relation to sex, gender and sexualities in our courses: An interim research text

'Well THAT was interesting,' says James, an emerging teacher in the PGDip primary programme, sitting down in his usual chair in the student cafeteria for morning break, '– NOT,' he followed up quickly. 'There's just too much to know and figure out. There's the policy on sex ed that the school has to follow, and the health and physical education [HPE] curriculum document the lecturer said there are two of, but I still don't know what I've gotta teach.'

'Yeah, there's a lot to cover,' says Matt, sitting in his usual place. 'When you asked that question about the two curriculum documents I think Debi

was trying to explain that the 1995 curriculum document was like a previous version of this 2007 one. It has more detail but still doesn't spell out the key area of learning [KAL] for sex ed. I think the school will sort it all out before it gets to us. I only want to teach the little kids so I won't have to teach any of that stuff anyway.' Overhearing this conversation while waiting for his colleagues lisahunter, Debi and Janette to arrive, Pierre recognises these ideas as *doxa*. From Matt and James's conversations he identifies their dominant views: that young people should not/cannot be sexual, and therefore sexuality education should not be taught in lower primary, let alone early childhood education.

'Yeah you will, and its sexuality education, not sex ed,' pipes up Sarah from the next table, where she is nursing a coffee after having left the lecture early for a phone call from her daughter's crèche. 'It's supposed to be taught across the levels but it includes stuff like belonging and relationships – and that *Curriculum in Action* resource *Positive Puberty* looks helpful. All *we* ever got at school was birds and bees stuff in Year 7, boys in one class and girls in the other, at least until we got into biology in Year 11. My parents never told me anything, but I talk to my eight-year-old about people being different, about his gay uncle, about reproduction and about treating people how you'd like to be treated. It's all of that stuff too.'

Matt and James look at each other, raising eyebrows at the word 'gay'. 'How do you know what's "age appropriate" stuff, like it says in that Family Planning resource?' Matt asks Sarah. 'I haven't got any kids, so why don't they just tell us do this in Year 1, that in Year 2, and all that?'

Pierre listens intently to Matt and James as they reflect on what they are learning. He knows their ideas, values and beliefs about education are being challenged, their *habitus* reviewed, and that they are possibly reformulating their ideas about sexuality education. James continues, 'I didn't need to know anything until I was, well, you know ... a bit older, and it all came pretty natural. All you need is a good-looking chick.' He laughs, doing a high-five with Tony who catches the 'I didn't need to know' throwaway line. 'But I don't want to be accused of anything! Remember what they said about male teachers being really careful because of that paedophilia suspicion stuff.'

James sits forward and speaks in a lowered voice, 'If we follow the Bible and go with abstinence and love, there's nothing they need to know except maybe wet dreams and periods.' Pierre notices *symbolic violence* as James uses religion to suggest his peers avoid teaching sexuality education in a critical way. James continues, 'There's too much else to worry about, like

passing the maths assessment. If we ever have to teach anything, they'll tell us. I know you can get away with saying very little, according to a couple of church friends who are already teaching.'

'I guess you're right,' Matt replies, standing up. Joining the queue behind Leanne and other secondary undergrads, his ears prick up on hearing the word 'sex'. Pierre follows and overhears Leanne mention how she likes the idea of telling the kids about making their 'sexual debut' as opposed to the deficit perspective of 'losing your virginity'. 'A sexual debut,' she says, 'to me brings a positive perspective to a normal and healthy life experience – rather than "losing" something, we are gaining something; rather than becoming "less than" we become "more than" we were before.' Pierre notes that he is observing a change in *habitus* as these students reflect on their classes, where possibilities for alternative world views are explicitly facilitated; and how the teaching has disrupted their prior thinking, producing a cognitive conflict for new possibilities.

Leanne looks to Connie, her classmate, who responds, 'The biggest strategies I had for teaching sexuality this year were creating clear boundaries and making sure all my students were clear on them to ensure their safety. Once these were established, I saw that students were comfortable with each other and with talking about this topic. Then we could start covering the big stuff about sexuality. I think that because my associate teacher is lesbian herself, students felt like they could open up to her. Especially one student who was transgender – she became a lot more confident in the class.' Pierre notes an example of the positive uses of *symbolic power* as he listens. A teacher, someone with authority in the classroom, has openly shared her sexuality with the class and given sexuality *capital.* This has opened the door, sanctioned the exploration of difference, and challenged (hetero) normativity.

'What? The kids actually knew she was a leso?' Matt asks. 'A transgender in the class? Glad I'm not teaching in secondary school. I like it clean cut, boys here, girls there. I don't know what the lecturer was going on about, that we should "avoid saying boys and girls". That's so gay! Wait until I tell the boys about this story.' Pierre shakes his head at the (hetero)*doxa* and sighs, recognising that such attitudes are common in his experience of emerging teacher *habitus*. This did not bode well for emerging teachers challenging (hetero)normativity in the schooling *field*.

Rose, also in the secondary group, adds, 'On both my teaching practicums it was really interesting to discover that all students, both males and females

and mainly in Year 9, were absolutely fascinated by sexuality education. They were really interested and eager to learn about it. Until high school they had been left in the dark about the topic. Yet it was obvious some students in the class had already had experiences with sex and sexuality. To me this reinforced that maybe their parents or previous teachers had not been teaching sexuality education at all. Whereas I believe what was taught in our health course – that "sexuality happens throughout our life" – so shouldn't students have some knowledge of the broad topic before they enter high school? Students were a bit embarrassed to engage at times, but once I showed them there was nothing to be embarrassed about, they were all go! It's really important to create a safe environment where everyone can participate, no matter what their experiences with sexuality have been.'

Debi, Janette and lisahunter, their arms full of laptops and books, walk through the doors and head for Pierre, who is now sitting in the corner. They exchange smiles and Debi offers to get coffees. The others sink into their chairs, each having just completed a two-hour lecture. Janette had emailed the previous day, wanting to debrief about a scenario she had just marked from her Year 3 early childhood education class. Her student responses to the assessment were strongly heteronormative, despite Janette's purposeful teaching for social justice, equity and inclusion.

lisahunter nods. 'It's similar in primary. In the official documents I can read "social justice", "learning for all", "inclusivity", and "teaching for difference", but trying to paint a picture for the emerging teachers brings mixed reactions. They imagine the *field* of education from their experience as school students. Today I was telling them how the old curriculum had more detail, painting a fuller picture about what constituted HPE curriculum. They struggled to interpret the current document, even though I'd already shown them examples to illustrate the seven key areas of learning, one being sexuality education. Their HPE world was really opened up from the norm of their experience. You should have seen some of their faces when I explained what they could teach in sexuality ed. Many didn't even realise sexuality ed was part of HPE, according to the survey of their background knowledge I did with them before the course.' lisahunter flicks through the papers tucked in the picture books *Best Best Colors* and *My Princess Boy* that were shown in the lecture. 'There are some who keep calling the subject 'PE' and ignoring the health aspect of it, but the majority are onside and accept that health is important, so they've been open to understanding that there's scope for topics through HPE. It's just having enough time to

really unpack their *habitus*, their taken-for-granteds, and to broaden their minds, that's hard! It's been a long road trying to expand their imagination beyond sport, games and food and nutrition. See,' she says, pointing to the page with the graphs from the survey, 'I asked them about their confidence in addressing sexualities education with their students. I know Debi also asked those questions at the start of last year – she told me that 100 per cent in the secondary programme were not confident about teaching sexuality education.'

'In my group about half were very confident or confident,' continues lisahunter. 'The really confident ones were positive and said things like, "I feel very comfortable in teaching sexualities education – an important topic for students to know about." The next group seemed pretty open: "I will be confident once I have learned the material! Not phased by any content; I'm comfortable talking openly with young people and looking forward to learning what the professional guidelines for teachers are." Quite a few didn't answer the question though so I'm wondering why. Some aren't comfortable but raise some important points, like these ones.' She points to the last three responses, reading them aloud: '"My concern is teaching this in a class where there is a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, teaching this area to year 5/6 boys who are Somalian and Muslim"; "Doesn't concern me as long as I am well prepared"; "A very important topic, even more so in our over-sexualised culture".'

Debi returns with coffees. 'I just ran into some of my students in the line, the ones I have for secondary health. Rory was telling me about his prac. There's good stuff happening in some schools, but it's pretty rare. He had limited time teaching and few opportunities to observe planned teaching of sexuality content. His school's approach was based around students learning to form their own ideas around issues. Far less time was spent saying things like "don't have sex because you will get pregnant". Students were asked what they thought instead of the teacher telling them what they should think. I asked him if he feels prepared to teach sexuality education and challenge heteronormativity. He thinks so. He mentioned the tools that he had seen me use would be of great help when dealing with heteronormativity, yet he reflected that on his first placement he had reverted to a form of fear-based sexual reproductive health/sex education as opposed to healthy relationships education. It just shows how difficult it can be to change *habitus*, but at least he's now conscious of it and looking out for heteronormativity raising its ugly head. I should have asked him how he might use what I taught him!

I also asked if I'd encouraged him to think about discussing diversity like inclusion and LGBT, and if so, how? He said I'd made him think a lot more about diversity. He said he now considered others who he may normally have forgotten, when talking in other classes. For example, when they were discussing forming relationships with students, the question was raised: "What if a student is gay?" People had different views, but on a personal level Rory felt he had learnt the necessary skills to approach the situation in a positive way.'

As time is running out, Janette passes a page to Debi, Pierre and lisahunter, saying, 'I had this scenario for students to respond to.' They all read:

> *Caleb, a boy in your centre, has two mothers. One brings him to the centre and the other collects him. A staff member who always opens the centre in the mornings did not realise his mothers were in a lesbian relationship and is now ignoring the mother that drops Caleb off in the mornings. You have also observed her behaving negatively towards Caleb when she speaks and interacts with him. What will you do?*

'I use a "heterosexual contextual twist"[5] scenario that really gets them thinking about how ridiculous these sorts of behaviours are,' says Debi. 'So you turn these sorts of scenarios on their heads. As an example, in this case you might present the scenario as if the parents were heterosexual and the lesbian teacher behaves negatively towards the parents when she realises they are straight. Then ask students to respond and see what their responses are!'

'When students were reflecting on this clearly homophobic behaviour towards a same-sex-parented family, several students responded by stating, "It's not the child's fault her/his parents are gay." Others suggested that regardless of the teacher's personal feelings about homosexuality, they have a professional responsibility to welcome and respect this family and others. Other students referred to work by Burt and Klinger Lesser (2008) suggesting that our religious beliefs or ethnic values shouldn't get in the way of the education/care we give to children. What do you think?' Janette asks.

Pierre comments that this scenario exemplifies how the orthodoxy

5 A contextual twist is taking normalised experiences and twisting the context to allow for understanding of marginalised groups. As an example see: www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=XM2J7nOp3nU#action=share

of heternormativity is entrenched, but since the students were critically discussing the scenario there was space for the *field* and *habitus* of early childhood education and its teachers to rethink their practices in the future. His view is that the scenario facilitates students, in a straight world, to be agents of change – but there is a long way to go. 'Remember that article by Alex and Nic[6] though, there are real dilemmas for queers doing anti-homophobic work in ITE and schools. It can be a double bind, an unsafe space that devalues those already devalued. Straight teachers with the capital need to know about queer theory.'

'What are you working with? What's the habitus and consensus among students? Not that I want to encourage normative consensus!' laughs lisahunter.

Janette responds, 'While most identified shifts in their thinking through researching and responding to the vignette, and most acknowledged the overt homophobic behaviour described in the vignette was unacceptable, very few responded to the broader contextual issues like heteronormativity. This was despite having several relevant extracts in their course readings.'

lisahunter nods and crunches her paper cup in frustration, saying, 'We've got so far to go.' The others lament that there is much work to do at the class, department and institutional level. 'I wonder what it will take to get heteronormativity out of the closet? What would we need to create an environment where doing stuff like this wouldn't even be seen as risky?' asks lisahunter. Debi rolls her eyes, 'Well, we've got to keep trying to break through this heteronormative malaise.'

Ten triggers to (continue to) break the (hetero)normative malaise

Bourdieu noted that social sciences are 'concerned with figuring out and understanding the true causes of the malaise that is expressed only through social signs that are difficult to interpret precisely because they seem so obvious' (1999, 628). His theoretical contribution asks us to go beyond appearances and to understand how we, as agents, (re)produce society through the politics of cultural authorisation (Adkins 2004). Bourdieu offers

6 Gunn, A. & Surtees, N. (2004), 'Engaging with dominance and knowing our desires: New possibilities for addressing sexualities matters in early childhood education', *Journal of the New Zealand Educational Administration and Leadership Society, Special Issue: Social Justice* 19, 79–91.

an 'explanatory power' (Skeggs 2004, 19) and methodological framework that can assist educators in affirming sexual diversity and enhance learning possibilities for all.

To conclude, we offer suggestions about how one might go beyond appearances, using the questions we list below. You could reflect upon the narrative to check how you might 'recognise' Bourdieu's concepts at play. You might apply these questions to your own social spaces including those related to education. You might also use them as a way to analyse your teacher education curriculum, whether as teacher educators or as emerging teachers. Let's talk ...

1. Why pay attention to (hetero)normativity in the *field* of education?
2. What are the social origins of normativity, heteronormativity, heterosexism, homophobia, transphobia, intersexism, queering, etc?
3. Where are we (*habitus* and *field*) now in terms of embodying or challenging (hetero)normativity?
4. What are the sex, gender and sexuality orthodoxies of our everyday lived experiences in teacher education faculties, early childhood centres and schools?
5. How can we sensitise ourselves to these *doxa*?
6. Who gains, loses, is visible or absent, and who gets to (re)legitimise or challenge such *doxa*?
7. What are the violences of (hetero)normativity in classroom practices and education?
8. What practices (de)stabilise (hetero)normativity?
9. What practices can we trial to expose (hetero)normativity and now also homonormativity[7], instead embodying diversity?
10. How can we be more powerfully positioned to work towards inclusivity and diversity, challenging (hetero)normativity?

The situation for the *field* of teacher education is clearly complex with multiple agents either resisting or facilitating an awareness of, and changes to, (hetero)normativity. The malaise towards (hetero)normativity suits those with heterosexual capital, to the point where it is often not even a

7 Homonormativity is described as the normalisation of ways of being according to homosexual categories, for instance, a 'lesbian'. Stereotypes frame the normalisation which perpetuates stereotypes and generalisations, e.g. 'flamboyant gay', 'butch lesbian', etc. It also points to the adoption of heternormative practices in queer encounters, e.g. masculine and feminine parent roles played out by same-sex couples.

perceivable problem. Worse still, the *symbolic violence* towards those already disadvantaged by (hetero)normativity means they may be complicit in maintaining a system that marginalises or alienates them. This chapter illustrates the monstrous spectre of (hetero)normativity that, for most of us, is still in the closet. The door continues to be forced open, however. Working with concepts such as Bourdieu's helps illustrate how we might practise differently in teacher education.

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